

"بعيدا عن البيئة الآمنة": الاتجار بالأطفال في رواية كوربان اديسون رحلة عبر الشمس

"Away from the Protective Environment": Child Trafficking in Corban Addison's *A Walk Across the Sun*

دعاء صادق جعفر

أ.م.د. سهام خطاب حمدان

Mrs. Doaa Sadeq Jaafar (Researcher)

Asst. Siham Hattab Hamdan (Ph.D)

وزارة الثقافة والسياحة والآثار

الجامعة المستنصرية / كلية الآداب

Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities

Al-Mustansiriyah University \ College of Arts

doaa_sadiq_@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq

sihamhattab1970@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq

Abstract:

In his novel *A Walk Across the Sun*, Corban Addison addresses the issue of child trafficking, with a particular focus on young female trafficking. This global problem persists despite the implementation of laws and the international attention it has garnered. This paper aims to shed light on this issue by dissecting Addison's novel and highlighting the consequences of trafficking on the victims and society. The study employs a socio-psychological approach to underscore this issue's psychological and sociological effects on the children, their families, and their communities. Cathy Caruth's trauma theory and Bessel van der Kolk's studies on trauma and post-traumatic disorder (PTSD) are utilized to underscore the psychological consequences

of trafficking. Social studies are also employed to examine the social ramifications of trafficking.

الملخص :

في روايته "نزهة عبر الشمس" يناقش كوربان أديسون مشكلة الاتجار بالأطفال وبالأخص الفتيات. تعتبر هذه المشكلة أحد المشاكل والقضايا العالمية التي لم يوضع لها حد لحد الآن بالرغم من القوانين التي شرعت والتركيز العالمي على هذه المشكلة. تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على هذه المشكلة من خلال الغوص بداخل رواية أديسون التي تركز على هذه الظاهرة وتبعاتها. توظف الدراسة المنظور النفسي الاجتماعي لتسليط الضوء على العواقب النفسية والاجتماعية التي يعانيها الأطفال وأهلهم ومجتمعاتهم. تستخدم الدراسة نظرية كاثي كاروث للصدمة ودراسات ببسيل فان دير كولك حول الصدمات واضطراب ما بعد الصدمة لتسليط الضوء على العواقب النفسية للاتجار بالأطفال، كما يستخدم الباحثون النظريات الاجتماعية لعرض المشاكل الاجتماعية الناتجة عن الاتجار بالأطفال.

Key Words : human trafficking, child trafficking, Corban Addison, *A walk Across the Sun*, trauma

Introduction

The phenomenon of human trafficking may not be something new, but it has developed over time, and now it is targeting children, not only adults. According to United Nation's Convention against Transnational Organized Crime protocol, human trafficking is :

The recruitment, transportation, harboring, or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of, transfer force, or other forms of coercion, abduction, of fraud, of deception, of abuse of power, or a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the,forced labor or prostitution of others or other forms of sexual

exploitation services, slavery, or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs (Tully, 2005, p. Article 3).

Trafficking can be considered as a modern type of human slavery. The most recent slavery is the enslavement of African people, which was very common in the 16th century and continued till the 19th century by European countries and the United States. Slavery was lawful and legal until it was officially banned or abolished in Britain in 1807 and in the United States in 1820. Despite the abolition, slavery continues today, taking new forms and using new strategies (Giovagnoni & Schooneveld, 2022, p. 21).

According to the United Nations organization, Child trafficking is one of the worst forms of violence against children, affecting an alarming number of children globally. About one-third of the overall detected victims are children". In the world of trafficking, children are seen as objects and commodities that can be exploited, sold, and exchanged constantly. These children experience physical and psychological violence and even sexual abuse. They are deprived of their educational rights and the opportunity to live a good life (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).

Victims of trafficking are often relocated and kept away from their hometowns. Traffickers may also transfer them to other countries. This separation from family, friends, the original environment, and even the safety of their homes can cause considerable damage to the victims, leaving them weak and defenseless. The victims usually are abused physically and sexually; they are forced to work in bad conditions that make them almost enslaved people. Traffickers frequently warn their victims that if they try to flee or escape, they might end up physically harmed (Kendall & Funk, 2027, p. 32).

In their book *Trafficking in Humans: Social, Cultural and Political Dimensions* (2008), Sally Cameron and Edward Newman urge that social and economic issues can have an impact on the problem of human trafficking. Many traffickers commit such crimes for financial reasons. At the same time, economic pressure is the primary reason individuals can be easily tricked, pressured, or taken advantage of. Those who are in poverty also often have limited power, whether it be physical, legal, or political, to escape from labor that is coercive and exploitative (p. 2).

Cameron and Newman sum up the trafficking factors and divide them into two types. First is structural factors, which include economic factors such as poverty, globalization, deprivation, and immigration. Social factors like gender discrimination and marginalization. There are also ideological factors like stereotyping (general and cultural), racism, and xenophobia. War and other geopolitical factors are also part of the structural factors. The second type is proximate factors, which include poor laws regarding trafficking and migration and inadequate enforcement of the issued laws. Also, there is corruption, weak education campaigns, low awareness among susceptible communities, and poor responsibility of state organizations (p. 3).

Literature Review

Since the new millennium, tens of novels have been written tackling child issues, especially child trafficking. These novels are like *Anybody's Daughter* (2013) by Pamela Samuels Young, which tackles the story of a thirteen-year-old girl, Brianna Walker, whom someone on the internet tricks her, and she finds herself a victim of drug dealers and traffickers. *The Cruelty* (2014) by Scott Bergstorm follows a girl's journey to rescue her father after being kidnapped. In her Journey across

Europe, 17-year-old Gwendolyn Bloom is forced to be part of the arms smuggling and human trafficking world. Amita Trasi's *The Color of Our Sky* (2015) is a story of two young girls; one is part of the human slave trade world and the other is trying to save her. *A Girl In Traffick* (2016) by Mamta Jain Valderrama is about a poor girl from India named Juhi who is 12 years old. Juhi's father's kidney is stolen and sold in the black market. Juhi and her parents were kidnapped, and she is separated from her family; she has to learn how to survive in the world alone. All these girls suffer physically and psychologically.

A study titled "Theorizing Child Trafficking in Young Adult Literature: A Review of the Literature" (2016) by Faisal Alobeytha and others. This study attempts to choose an appropriate theory to explain the phenomena of child trafficking in literary works, especially young adult literature. A study titled "Child trafficking: Young People's Experiences of Front Line Services in England" (2018) by Alinka Gearon presents the experiences of 20 young children who have been trafficked into and within England. The study sheds light on victim's interactions with front-line services. These young people are victimized and punished by the services. The study concludes an urgent need for a sympathetic response to comfort and protect these youngsters. It is essential to take knowledge directly from the victims to improve services. Another study titled "Critical Stylistic Analysis of Trafficking Victims in Corban Addison's *A Walk Across the Sun*" (2023) by Rasha Tareq Awad Al-Zubaidi and Salih Mahadi Adai Al-Mamoori The study uses critical stylistic analysis to shed light on the crime of human trafficking, particularly women sex trafficking.

Background of the Novel

Corban Addison (1979) is an American writer. In addition to *A Walk Across the Sun* (2012), he wrote many other novels like *The Garden of the Burning Sand* (2013), *The Tears of Dark Water* (2015), *A Harvest of Thorns* (2017), and

Wasteland: The Story of Farm Country on Trial (2022). In his two novels, *A Walk Across the Sun* and *The Garden of the Burning Sand*, he sheds light on the issue of child trafficking. To reflect a clear image of the dark reality of child trafficking, Addison contacts a non-profit organization called "International Justice Mission." This organization is concerned with the issues of modern slavery and trafficking, and they sent him to India for six weeks. Addison went undercover and visited the dark allies in Mumbai, where children and young girls are abused. Inside the Indian's brothels, he saw with his own eyes how young girls are abused. These events inspired him to write this novel (Bernstein, 2023, p. 1).

Though Addison's *A Walk Across the Sun* is a work of fiction, it tackled a realistic issue: child trafficking. It is a modern form of child exploitation that involves children in forced prostitution, slave labor, and other inhumane things (Addison, 2012, p. 513). The novel is a story within a story. The first story follows the story of two sisters, Ahalya and Sita. As the Tsunami leaves the girls orphans as the result of the death of their parents and homeless as a result of their home destruction, they fall into the hands of traffickers. The girls are used for sex and drug trafficking and even for pornography. The girls go through hard times during their journey of trafficking, and they even are separated from each other.

The sub-story covers the story of a lawyer named Thomas Clarke, who, after witnessing a kidnapping incident and being affected by it, decides to leave home in the United States and go to India to work with an anti-exploitation organization called CASE. With the help of CASE agents, Thomas rescues Ahalya and sends her to a convent. Then, he promises her to find her sister. Later on, he traces Sita to France, but unfortunately, she is relocated again, and the traffickers sell her to a new web of criminals in the United States. Clarke's efforts result in rescuing Sita and the two sisters reunite.

So, *A Walk Across the Sun* sheds light on child trafficking in India, which is considered one of the biggest problems facing this country. Trafficking women, especially girls, is widely fruitful for traffickers, for they can be easily used in prostitution, pornography, and sex tourism. About 25,000 children are part of prostitution and sexual exploitation in big cities in India like Chennai, Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata, Hyderabad, and Mumbai. Some reports suggest that only in Mumbai are there 40,000 girls between the ages of ten to sixteen who are part of the commercial sexual exploitation (Ray, 2007, p. 74).

India is one of the countries in which child labor and child prostitution are acceptable and cannot be easily stopped. The problem of child trafficking in India in all its forms is such a serious matter, even though there is not enough information about it. But the one sure thing is that children are trafficked for many reasons to be used in activities such as agricultural labor, forced marriage, forced domestic labor, sexual purposes, informal work, adoption, and trafficking in human organs, etc. (Ray, 2007, p. 74).

Addison gives the reader a glimpse of what happens to young trafficked girls in India. Traffickers often target women and young girls who are impacted by poverty, lack of education and work opportunities. Usually, they promise these females good working conditions and fair pay to trick them into being part of their trafficking ring to be used later on for brutal things like prostitution (Kendall & Funk, 2027, p. 32).

Addison's novel is an admirable effort to portray the emotional and psychological effects of modern slavery on young adults. Throughout the novel, he delves into themes such as sexual exploitation, forced labor, and drug trafficking. Since Addison is a lawyer, he focuses his efforts on human justice. The story is close to real-life cases and engaging, with a good description of victims' emotions and

experiences. In Addison's novel, the emotional impact of rape, enslavement, and the loss of loved ones is vividly depicted (Chow, 2012, p. 1).

Socio-psychological analysis of *A Walk Across the Sun*

The global issue of human trafficking, and especially child trafficking, happens because of different factors, among them lack of awareness and poverty, and it causes psychological harm to the children (Edo, 2023, p. 1). A dangerous thing like the exploitation of children during trafficking leaves its traces on these young victims. According to The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), children and youngsters who are victims of trafficking, especially the trafficking for sexual purposes, often suffer from trauma and prolonged-term impacts on their mental and physical health (NCTSN, 2021). Victims may also face severe psychological consequences like post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, suicidal thoughts, anxiety, fear, guilt, shame, and other forms of mental issues (Hartmann, 2021, p. 1).

Trauma is one of the significant effects of trafficking. Trauma is originally a Greek word and means 'wound'. It was used to describe a physical wound. In his book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Sigmund Freud mentioned that trauma can not only affect the body but also the mind (Caruth, 1996, p. 3). Consequently, trauma becomes a word used to describe mental harm. According to the American theorist Cathy Caruth, trauma is "a shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but is, in fact, a break in the mind's experience of time" (Caruth, 1996, p. 61). Trauma is a psychological wound caused by a shocking event like war, rape, violence, or other incidents. It is followed by many feelings like fear and helplessness, where the memories of this event chase the victims even in their dreams. According to Caruth, trauma is stuck in the subconscious of the victims as a truth, and it is not available to the consciousness. However, the nature of this event

remains unknown to the victim (Ahmad, Bukhari, Khan, Ashraf, & Kanwal, 2023, p. 2).

In her book *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995), Caruth defines post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as " a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event " (Caruth, 1995, p. 4). PTSD is characterized by a delayed reaction to a traumatic incident. The reaction can include repeated disturbing dreams, thoughts, or behaviors associated with the event, along with emotional detachment that may have begun during or after the trauma. Furthermore, people with PTSD may also display increased anxiety and avoidance of triggers that bring back memories of the traumatic experience (Caruth, 1995, pp. 3-4).

In his article "PTSD and the Nature of Trauma" (2000), van der Kolk mentions that there are three main symptoms of PTSD :

1. Avoidance symptoms, which include avoiding everything that symbolizes the trauma, like places or thoughts. Also, victims might feel emotional detachment, numbness, and a lack of emotional response. They also lose their passion and interest in life and all the essential activities. They cannot be happy or enjoy anything in their lives, and this leads to avoidance behaviors such as avoiding people or activities that remind them of the trauma, turning to drugs or alcohol, or withdrawing emotionally from friends.

2. Intrusive symptoms include symptoms like reliving the traumatic event by seeing images from the past and having thoughts of the event, nightmares, and daydreams. The victims also may be haunted by memories of the event.
3. Arousal symptoms are characterized by hypervigilance, bad temper, anger issues, memory issues, and sleep problems. Traumatized individuals experiencing hyperarousal are easily upset by unexpected triggers, leading them to relive traumatic memories continually and perceive similarities between past traumas and present experiences or events (pp. 9–13).

PTSD, according to van der Kolk, is the result of a complex interaction among psychological, biological, and social factors. The harshness and occurrence of symptoms vary, and a PTSD diagnosis requires multiple symptoms from each cluster to persist for more than a month. This emphasizes the importance of time in distinguishing between normal and pathological responses to traumatic stress (Schönfelder, 2013, pp. 63–64).

Traumatic events can be so horrifying and threatening that they can change how people react, how they perceive threats, and how they see themselves and the world. People who have experienced trauma often develop PTSD, where the memory of the traumatic event controls their thoughts, making them feel that life is empty and joyless. Trauma does not just affect mental health. A study of nearly 10,000 patients found that those who had experienced severe child abuse had a higher risk of developing issues like alcoholism, depression, drug abuse, and suicide attempts, as well as engaging in dangerous behaviors. They also had a higher risk of physical health problems like inactivity, obesity, heart disease, cancer, lung disease, fractures, hepatitis, stroke, diabetes, and liver disease (Van der Kolk, 2000, p. 7).

In their book *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society* (1996), van der Kolk and others mentioned that traumatized victims may feel that they are numbed and often withdrawn, and this can disturb their lives for a long time. The victims may also experience feelings like guilt and shame. Victims of sexual assault are more likely to feel ashamed and guilty than other victims of violence and other crimes. These symptoms can affect the victims' journey of treatment, and they can develop to be more dangerous. (p. 545).

The title of the novel *A Walk Across the Sun* gives the reader a glimpse into what will happen to the main characters, Ahalya and Sita. The girls will have a *hellish* journey across the world after being trafficked, and this journey will be as challenging as walking across the sun. Ahalya and Sita witness a very traumatic event before their trafficking, which is the death of their family after the Tsunami. This event hurt them a lot, especially the witnessing of the horrific scene of the floating bodies of their family members. In the beginning, the girls entertain hope because they do not see their father's body. They think that he is still alive, but hope vanishes when they witness the body of their father, Naresh:

Ahalya dragged her sister across the short distance to Naresh's body. For a long moment, she stared at her father uncomprehending. Then understanding dawned, and she began to weep as the crushing weight of sorrow settled upon her shoulders.. He could not be dead (Addison, 2012, p. 12).

Ahalya and Sita know that with the loss of their whole family, they lost their protective environment, the chance to live a respectful life, and the hope of a bright future.

Being left alone in the desperate circumstances of the Tsunami, without a family or a home to protect them, the two girls become an easy target for the traffickers who promise to help them in their ordeal. They are surprised to find themselves in a brothel. They are treated like objects. As an ex-trafficked girl, Sumeera, an older woman in the brothel, told the girls that when she was young, she went through the same experience. Traffickers have separated her from her family and took her to a brothel. Sumeera tries to mislead the girls by making them believe that this is their destiny and that they should accept it and not be rebellious (Addison, 2012, p. 70). Sumeera told the girls that this was their karma and that they should take the order of God. According to [Beber](#) and [Blattman](#) (2013), children are more likely to be misled, deceived, and brainwashed than adults because they are so innocent and still do not have live experiences. Criminal groups often abuse and recruit children because of their naivety and the fact that they do not have enough experience (p. 67).

Misled by Sumeera's talk, Ahalya thinks it is "her destiny to live in perpetual shame" (Addison, 2012, p. 105). Shame is one of the feelings which is associated with trauma and PTSD (Kolk, McFarlane, & Weisaeth, 1996, p. 543). This feeling of shame increases when Ahalya is raped for the first time by a customer in the brothel. Sumeera tries hard to normalize this shame by telling Ahalya: "What you have experienced is difficult. The shame is natural. All feel it the first time. But will survive. You will learn to accept it.". These words do not change anything. Ahalya was traumatized entirely; she was in pain physically and mentally. She feels as if she is "a bird with a shattered wing. "She is helpless, and the joy is gone (Addison, 2012, p. 103).

The series of violence against Ahalya continue, another customer rapes her, and one of the men working in the brothel rapes her too. After these

incidents, Ahalya starts to feel numb and very submissive to every bad thing that happens to her. She initially detaches herself from everything because "detachment was the only escape" (Addison, 2012, p. 137). According to van der Kolk and McFarlane (1996), survivors or victims of trauma may gradually show disengagement and detachment. This condition can be called "numb to the world" or described as a post-traumatic decline. As a consequence, those who are suffering from PTSD not only actively avoid emotional triggers but also undergo a continual decline and withdrawal, where any stimulation, whether positive or negative, leads to further disconnection. The absence of an emotional response is seen as more favorable than facing feelings of irritability and distress (Van der Kolk & McFarlane, 1996, p. 12).

The traumatic experience of Ahalya's rape also impacts Sita is hearing the sounds of her sisters' violation from the other room. Sita is only fifteen, but she knows what rape means. After this incident, Sita tries so hard to comfort her sister. Ahalya notices that Sita "matures years in the span of days." (Addison, 2012, p. 103). It is usual for traumatized children and teenagers to act like adults after trauma. Some of them may begin to take the role or responsibility of an adult (Hutchison, 2004, p. 40). Sita felt she must comfort and help Ahalya because her sister had always cared for her since they lost their family. When she sees her sister broken, she thinks that it is her duty to take care of her sister.

Not after a long time, the sisters are separated from each other. The brothel's owner has sold Sita to drug traffickers. She is recruited to France, and later on, she is sold again to another criminal group that uses young girls for sexual purposes. Sita experiences different types of exploitation. She is forced to work in a restaurant where the owners hurt her psychologically by using words like "dirty pig," "worthless creature," and other harsh words. Physically, they mistreat her by forcing her to

bathe in cold water, where her feet become frozen and her throat scratchy. As a result, she gets sick, but her bosses, Uncle and Aunti- ji do not care (Addison, 2012, pp. 234-235).

After a short time, criminals take Sita to use her sexually. Luckily, the criminals do not rape her, but she witnesses them raping other girls in front of her. Seeing and hearing other girls being raped makes Sita very traumatized. She begins to experience hallucinations and anxiety (Addison, 2012, p. 445) . Caruth (1995) argues that victims of trauma are often haunted or possessed by the event, and it may chase them as a dream or hallucination:

The dreams, hallucinations, and thoughts are completely literal and cannot be understood through traditional interpretations. This literal nature makes it difficult for others to interpret and treat these experiences using psychoanalytic methods. The fact that these scenes or thoughts are not mere knowledge possessed by the individual, but possess the individual, often leads to uncertainty about their truth" (pp. 5-6).

Sita is possessed by these traumatic scenes, which eventually lead her to think about committing Suicide: "Her thoughts raced, and her heart palpitated at imaginary sounds. She thought again of suicide, but the idea of death only made her more afraid " (Addison, 2012, p. 445).Caruth(1996) mentions that since the trauma lives free rent in the victim's mind, the thoughts of death and suicide may haunt the victims. The victims relive these traumatic experiences again and again. This can hurt the brain's chemical structure and lead to mental decay. This could be the reason for the high rate of suicide among trauma survivors (p. 63).

Victims of trafficking do not only suffer from psychological issues; trafficking also affects them socially. After being away from their community, victims may feel isolated and disconnected, especially when the trafficking happens abroad. Trafficked children also are deprived of education and social skills. It becomes hard for them to adapt to a toxic environment (Hartmann, 2021, p. 1). Girls trafficking increases rates of unplanned pregnancy and abortion, especially among the girls who are used for sex trafficking (Barnert, et al., 2020, p. 2).

In *A Walk Across the Sun*, the reader can see how Ghai's sister's life has changed socially. They are from an upper-middle-class family; their father is a software executive, and he has big plans for them:

Their parents dreamed of sending them to university in England and firmly believed that mastering English was the likeliest ticket to Cambridge or Oxford. The convent school where the girls boarded taught Hindi—the national language, and Tamil—the Indigenous tongue of Tamil Nadu—along with English, but the convent sisters preferred to speak English, and the girls never quibbled with the rule (Addison, 2012, p. 5).

The girls lose this advantage after being trafficked. Studies showcase that the lasting effects of trafficking on survivors can lead to decreased rates of completing high school and college, restricted job options, and challenges in pursuing specific careers because of criminal backgrounds resulting from past exploitation. These factors can contribute to the continuation of the cycle of re-victimization (NCTSN, 2021). Children who are victims of trafficking are denied the limited educational opportunities accessible to them, which hinders their ability to improve their future economic prospects (Rafferty, 2013, p. 14).

When Ahalya is rescued by Mr. Clarke and the CASE organization, they send her to a recovery center for treatment. In the recovery center, they focus on educating and rehabilitating the girls. After being saved from trafficking, it is essential to offer academic assistance to these young individuals as they attempt to readjust to conventional school surroundings.

Addison highlights the importance of the victim's recovery by Sumeera's character. She is an example of a trafficking victim without rehabilitation. The traffickers have poisoned her mind with their ideas, and she becomes just like them. She stays in a brothel till she becomes old, and the traffickers use her to recruit girls. So, a trafficking victim could turn into a criminal if not being recovered or rehabilitated.

After being rescued, Ahalya discovers she is pregnant (Addison, 2012, p. 403). The high rates of pregnancy in girls who have undergone sexual exploitation underscore the importance of addressing reproductive education, family planning, prenatal care, and parenting support through a reproductive justice lens. Improving the availability of specialized reproductive education and healthcare for girls affected by sexual exploitation provides healthcare and systems with an opportunity to interrupt the cycle of risk transmission and reduce disparities in reproductive health (Barnert, et al., 2020, p. 6).

After hearing the bad news of Ahlaya's pregnancy, Mr. Clarke feels sorry for Ahalya. As he sees her walk away, he contemplates :

She looked like every other adolescent Indian girl in her pale-green churidaar and sandals. She was lovely, bright, and educated and spoke excellent English. Before the Tsunami, she had been destined for great things: college, perhaps medicine or the law, at the minimum a

favorable marriage. Now, she was carrying the offspring of a man who had stolen her innocence. If before her future had been precarious, now it lay in tatters (Addison, 2012, p. 404).

Mr. Clarke believes Ahalya is a typical teen; she does not deserve such a destiny.

On the other side of the world, Sita is still with the criminal groups, but not for long. Mr. Clarke plans to rescue her and, with the help of CASE agents. They send an undercover agent into the house where Sita is in. The operation success, and Sita is rescued. Thomas Clarke reunites the girls again, and both are very happy.

Addison's novel is a real-life panorama depicting the dark side of the post-modern era. Through the eyes of Ahalya and Sita, the reader can see the horror of the trafficking world. Child trafficking can cause many problems to victims, such as psychological damage (trauma and PTSD), unplanned pregnancy, educational deprivation, and many other negative consequences. Child trafficking is an inhuman act that steals children from their safe world to a new, dark, and cruel world where the children are unprotected, violated, and exploited.

Child trafficking should be prevented officially by issuing more laws and decreasing poverty, especially in developing countries. Besides, there should be more focus on rehabilitating victims and creating a safe environment for survivors to forget the past and become effective individuals again. Also, there should be more focus on educating young girls to not fall into the trap of criminals and traffickers.

There is also a huge need for healthcare systems to help those victims recover and be effective individuals in their society. It is crucial to Provide trauma-informed care and promote various forms of creative expression, such as art, writing,

sports, community engagement, and faith-based activities are essential for individuals caring for children who have experienced human trafficking. The social environment can also play a role in a child's healing journey, with cultures emphasizing personal agency and future planning valuing individual activities. In contrast, communal cultures may find healing in group activities like music, dance, and art (Crisp & Bellatorre, 2024, p. 2).

Trauma recovery is not a one-size-fits-all approach but a combination of diverse strategies aimed at rebuilding a child's sense of self and providing them with healthy coping mechanisms. Despite the challenges faced by child survivors of trauma, it is essential to recognize their resilience and offer timely interventions to support their well-being and future success. By understanding how trauma comprehensively impacts a child, service providers and professionals can provide stability and security to help them navigate life and develop healthy relationships to prevent further harm. Addressing the complex trauma resulting from child trafficking not only helps protect children from further damage but also empowers them to thrive in the long term (Crisp & Bellatorre, 2024, p. 2).

References

- Addison, C. (2012). *A Walk Across the Sun*. London: Quercus Publishing.
- Ahmad, M. S., Bukhari, Z., Khan, S., Ashraf, I., & Kanwal, A. (2023, January 11). No safe place for war survivors: War memory, event exposure, and migrants' psychological trauma. *Front. Psychiatry*, pp. 1–8.
- Beber, B. & Blattman, C. (2013). The logic of child soldiering and coercion. *International Organization*, 67 (1), pp. 65–104.
- Barnert, S. E., Godoy, M. S., Hammond, I., Kelly, A. M., Thompson, R. L., Mondal, S., et al. (2020). Pregnancy outcomes among girls impacted by commercial sexual exploitation. *Academic Pediatrics*, 20 (4), pp. 455–459.
- Bernstein, M. F. (2023, November 15). *Writing for justice*. Retrieved May 2, 2024, from UVA Lawyer: <https://www.law.virginia.edu/uvalawyer/spring-2022/article/writing-justice>
- Cameron, S., & Newman, E. (2008). *Trafficking in humans: Social, cultural and political dimensions*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press.
- Caruth, C. (1995). *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Chow, J. Y. (2012, March). *Addison's 'Walk' a Trite but Effective Exploration of Exploitation*. Retrieved October 2, 2024, from The Harvard Crimson: https://www.thecrimson.com/writer/1207327/Yi%20Jean__Chow/.
- Crisp, J., & Bellatorre, C. (2024, July). *Child Trafficking: The Impact of Trauma on the Child Trafficking Survivors*. Retrieved November 2, 2024, from office to Monitor

and Combat Trafficking in Person.: <https://www.state.gov/the-impact-of-trauman-on-child-trafficking-survivors/>

Edo, C. (2023, August 2). Child Trafficking as a Menace to the Society. *SSRN Electronic Journal* , pp. 1-16.

Giovagnoni, B., & Schooneveld, A. V. (2022, Jun 6). *The History of Human Trafficking*. Retrieved October 4, 2025, from The Exodus Road: <https://theexodusroad.com/history-of-human-trafficking/>

Hartmann, M. (2021, July 6). *Causes and effects of human trafficking*. Retrieved July 26, 2024, from The Exodus Road: <https://theexodusroad.com/causes-effects-of-human-trafficking/>

Hutchison, S. (2004). *Effects of and Interventions for Childhood Trauma from Infancy Through Adolescence: Pain Unspeakable* . Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Kendall, V. M., & Funk, T. M. (2027). *Child exploitation and trafficking: Examining global enforcement and supply chain challenges, and U.S. responses*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

NCTSN. (2021, March 2). *Sex Trafficking*. Retrieved October 23, 2024, from NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network: <https://www.nctsn.org/what-child-trauma-trauma-types/sex-trafficking>

Rafferty, Y. (2013). Child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation: A review of promising prevention policies and programs. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* , 84 (3), pp. 559-575.

Ray, N. (2007, January). Whither Childhood? Child Trafficking in India. *Social development issues* , 3, pp. 72-83.

Schönfelder, C. (2013). *Wounds and Words: Childhood and Family Trauma in Romantic and Post-modern Fiction*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.

Tully, S. (2005). *UN: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000*. International Documents on Corporate Responsibility.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (n.d.). *Explainer: Understanding Child Trafficking*. Retrieved March 11, 2024, from United Nations Office : https://www.unodc.org/unodc/frontpage/2024/July/explainer_-understanding-child-trafficking.html

Van der Kolk, B. (2000). Post-traumatic stress disorder and the nature of trauma. *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience* , 2 (1), pp. 7-22.

Van der Kolk, B. , McFarlane, A. C., & Weisaeth, L. (. (1996). *Traumatic stress: The effects of overwhelming experience on mind, body, and society*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Van der Kolk, B., & McFarlane, A. C. (1996). The Black Hole of Trauma. In B. Van der Kolk, A. C. Mcfarlane, L. Weisaeth, & (Eds.), *Traumatic stress: The effects of overwhelming experience on mind, body, and society*. New York: The Guilford Press.