

**Report for the  
Rapid Assessment on Trafficking in Children  
For  
Labour and Sexual Exploitation in Pakistan**

**By Shafqat Munir**

## **1. Background**

Seven years after the first World Congress on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in Stockholm (1996) and four years after the adoption (1999) and later the ratification (2001) of International Labour Organization (ILO)'s Convention 182, children around the world still continue to be subjected to inhuman treatment as they are sold/trafficked into bonded labour, prostitution and slavery rather new trends have added to their miseries despite sincere efforts on the parts of certain governments, NGOs, INGOs and International institutions.<sup>1</sup>

Child trafficking is a process that leads children to a wide range of worst forms of child labour including forced labour, prostitution and pornography and thus deserves immediate intervention to combat it. Due to its geographical location and being the gateway to Central Asia, South Asia and Middle East that further lead towards Europe, Pakistan has gained attention of the trans-borders criminal groups, particularly human traffickers. Pakistan is being used as a transit country and a destination for bulk of the trafficked women and children and immigrants from countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Burma, Afghanistan, Iran, and Afghanistan and Central Asian states. This growing market of human cargo encouraged traffickers to recruit women and children for this human trade from within the country for their onward trafficking to Middle East and Europe.

The governments and NGOs, INGOs and International institutions committed themselves to the cause of children under Stockholm Agenda and Plan of Action and now there is a time to assess the progress in implementing these commitments and promote a global exchange of experiences and new knowledge in the area of CSEC. Though during these five years, actions have been taken on many fronts and there have been changes in laws, new programmes have been initiated to protect and support the children; and training, awareness raising and advocacy campaigns have increased understanding of the issue and mobilized players in many sectors, the problem of CSEC has shifted and developed on the following realities:

As more people, including children and young adults, have moved to escape poverty and conflict, or just to look for a better life, trafficking of children for sexual purposes has been increased. Protection has worked in some areas, but demand has shifted to seek out new areas of supply such as camel racing in the Middle East.

The rapid increase in technology has allowed more abusers and potential perpetrators to join in the exploitation and has increased potential profits for exploiters, drawing in

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<sup>1</sup> Shafqat Munir; *Motivating Children against commercial sexual exploitation*; The News on Sunday, November 18, 2001

organized crime syndicates and criminal groups. The spread of HIV/AIDS has made children vulnerable to exploitation and has added a new dimension to the health risks faced by the exploited children, further challenging those who work to help them rebuild their lives when they escape abuse.

Keeping this situation in view, Pakistan has been taking concrete steps in collaborations with international organization such as UNICEF, ILO and others to improve national laws in conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), its two optional protocols and the ILO Convention 182. Juvenile Justices Ordinance 2000 and Ordinance for Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking 2002 are very important pieces of legislation. Fulfilling its commitment by ratifying the ILO Convention 182, Pakistan is undertaking a revision of The Employment of Children Act 1991 by introducing a new list of the worst forms of child labour including trafficking and prostitution.

After ratifying the ILO Convention 182, Pakistan sought International Labour Organization-International Programme for Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC)'s technical assistance in the form of Time Bound Programme (TBP) to enable the government to fulfill its international commitment under ILO Convention 182. Responding positively to this request, ILO-IPEC developed a TBP in Pakistan with a view to eliminate the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) in a 5-10 years timeframe. Under another programme "Combating Trafficking in Children for Labour and Sexual Exploitation (TICA phase-II) designed for South Asia, ILO is trying to combat child trafficking in Pakistan. This rapid assessment has been undertaken in Pakistan under TICA phase-II.

### **1.1 Camel jockeying- an inhuman sport**

Though child trafficking is not a recent issue, it has become a recurrent practice in many parts of the world. The total number of victims, estimated at 700,000 to two million every year- including women and children - are trafficked internationally. However, there is little data or statistics on trafficking taking place around the globe, which has become more lucrative than gun-running and drug-trafficking today. According to Peter Stalker, author of *Workers Without Frontiers - The Impact of Globalization on International Migration*, it generates 5 to 7 billion dollars a year.<sup>2</sup>

Camel racing in the UAE has been held for hundreds of years, but using innocent children as jockeys is a recent practice dating back to the early '70s. Children were initially brought from Oman and Sudan, and later from Pakistan as well. The sport was usually a source of entertainment at bedu weddings and festivals. Today, it is a multi-million dollar industry with regular race meets.

According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, sending children for camel racing began from Rahim Yar Khan in 1979. Arab dignitaries on hunting trips to Cholistan in the 1970s were encouraged to purchase children for jockeys. The parents or guardians of the children, in return, were offered gifts in cash or kind, which brought visible prosperity. People living in the neighbouring areas were tempted to send their children as well. In Pakistan, for first time in 1992, 22 children were rescued at the

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<sup>2</sup> Mohammad Anwar: *A cruel sport*, The Independent Dhaka, Bangladesh, Issue 1796, May 29 2003

Karachi Airport. This figure was also placed in the Parliament by the then government through the Interior Ministry.

Camel racing is pursued very seriously in the Middle East, and many races have been held in Dubai. Some Sheikhs own as many as 1,500 camels and spend around US\$70,000,000 per year on raising and training the camels. Costs include advanced medical facilities, artificial insemination, camel exercise swimming pools, pillow-lined transport trucks and treadmills. Dubai has an estimated 50,000 of the world's 14 million camels, but only a fraction is born there. Thousands are imported every year from Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Africa. The arrival of the camels is heralded by local headlines that refer to the VICs - Very Important Camels. The costs are astronomical, even without counting perks or adding expenses. Champion camels can sell for US\$50,000 or more. The top racers are bred, fed and trained according to modern scientific methods. A dairy farm of 300 cows set up exclusively to supply milk to these camels maintains their dietary regimen.

According to various estimates, approximately 1,000 child camel jockeys are in Qatar only. Saudi Arabia also reportedly holds such races. Children are mostly trafficked from Dera Ghazi Khan and Rahim Yar Khan for the camel races, suggested the background interviews and facts shown in case studies. Parents of child jockeys sometimes have been paid 500 dirhams monthly, and in case of injury, they were paid 50,000 dirhams. If a child dies during the race, the parents receive 100,000 dirhams.

For camel racing, children less than seven years of age and weighing between 15 and 17 kilograms - deliberately underfed to keep them suitably light for the races - are preferred as jockeys. The younger and lighter the child is, the louder screams he will make out of being terrified and the camel will run faster. Many children die during the race of fear or being tossed by the animal. Many lose balance off the camel and are dragged along with the rope that gets dislodged during the race, killing them ultimately. The races are long and are held on sand tracks. The racing season runs from October to April, from 4kms that gradually increases to reach the full 10kms. Fifteen to 20 camels usually run in each race, but the field grows to 6 dozens at the close of the season.

The camel jockeys work long and hard hours. They usually go to sleep between 10pm and 11pm, and get up at 4am for the start of their daily training. The children sleep five to a room on the floor of corrugated iron huts, where temperatures fluctuate between boiling in the day and freezing at night. They are frequently denied adequate food or are put on crash diets before they race so that they are as light as possible. Once the children finish one race, they are pulled from the camel, rushed in a van to another van and saddled on to the next camel in the race. Jockeys are made to wear blue, white, red and green jogging suits with tiny helmets or headgear. Many are equipped with small radios, so the trainers/owners can signal every swing of the riding crop.

## **2. Root Causes of Trafficking**

Though there are a number of reasons for the increase in trafficking, poverty stands to be the root cause of all other causes. The globalization of the world economy has increased the movement of people across borders, legally and illegally, especially from poorer to wealthier countries. International organized crime has taken advantage of the freer flow of people, money, goods and services to extend its own international reach. The

continuing subordination of women in many societies, as reflected in economic, educational and work opportunity and disparities between men and women are also create coercion like situation that force women and children to become victims of trafficking. Desperate families in some of the most impoverished countries sell their daughters to brothels or traffickers for the immediate payoff and to avoid having to pay the dowry to marry off daughters.

The lack of opportunity and the eagerness for a better life abroad make many women and girls especially vulnerable to entrapment by traffickers. Demand for trafficked women and children for sex tourism, sex workers, cheap sweatshop labour, domestic workers and camel jockeying is growing with expansion of trans border traffickers syndicates. Traffickers are encouraged by large tax-free profits and continuing income from the same victims at very low risk as they do this business in connivance with the law enforcement agencies and border security forces.

Inadequacy of laws and weak law enforcement mechanism in most of the origins, transit and destination countries hamper efforts to fight trafficking. Prostitution is legal or tolerated in many countries, and widespread in most. When authorities do crack down, it is against prostitutes and not against traffickers or pimps.

The priority placed on stemming illegal immigration in many countries, including the United States, has resulted in treatment of trafficking cases as a problem of illegal immigration, thus treating victims as criminals. When police raid brothels, women are often detained and punished, subjected to human rights abuses in jail, and swiftly deported. Few steps have been taken to provide support, health care, and access to justice. Few victims dare testify against the traffickers or those who hold them, fearing retribution for themselves and their families since most governments do not offer stays of deportation or adequate protection for witnesses.<sup>3</sup>

## **2.1 Vulnerability and Collapse of Value system**

Ethnic minorities, tribal groups, stateless people and people in refugee camps are particularly vulnerable. These factors contribute to the problem, but all ethical, moral, political, economic and health reasons need to be analyzed in order to gain a better understanding of how they affect the increase of sale and/or trafficking activities, particularly with regard to children. In Balochistan's context, three major factors have made people more vulnerable to trafficking. These factors are: Afghan War, Drought and Balochistan's geo political reality of being linked with Iran and Afghanistan as both the countries have land routes borders with Balochistan (Chaman with Afghanistan and Taftan with Iran). These are the two routes where free movement of people takes place. War has linked Balochistan closely with Afghanistan and Iran with emergence of a common culture in more homogenized form, though this commonality of cultures dates back to generations. The war has literally changed the social value system. Before the war children in Baloch and Pashtoon culture were given special care but now a large number of children, mostly from refugee communities, are seen in the streets without care and support due to rising poverty and shelterlessness, thus plunging these children in a highly vulnerable condition. Uzbek, Tajek and those tribes have been largely hit by the

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<sup>3</sup> Shafqat Munir; *Globalization and trafficking of human cargo*; The News on Sunday, October 14, 2001

Afghan war because they were out of the power structure so their children are more vulnerable for sexual abuse and trafficking. Women and children from these tribes are being trafficked across borders, said Naila Qadri in her interview for this rapid assessment.

Drought has largely displaced local community in Chagi and surrounding areas that border Iran and Afghanistan. This massive displacement most hit the women and children and thus made them vulnerable to all sorts of abuse and exploitation that also include trafficking. The third factor is the geographical situation of Balochistan that has made it easy for traffickers to cross over with the human cargo illegally due to porous borders and weak law enforcement system at the borders.

### **3. Magnitude of Child Trafficking**

The exact magnitude of child trafficking would be too hard to assess in this rapid assessment. However, the two incidents in which Federal Investigative Agency (FIA)'s cell at Taftan border in Balochistan indicate conditions of the worst forms of child labour including prostitution and camel jockeying. During July and August 2003, two gangs of child traffickers were busted at Taftan border.

#### **3.1 Magnitude**

The authorities arrested a couple for trying to traffic two children to the United Arab Emirates via Iran to be used as camel jockeys. A man and a woman were arrested on Friday at the remote Taftan border crossing, 540 kilometres south-west of Quetta, as they tried to enter Iran. "They were smuggling two children, aged seven and eight, to the UAE via Iran for camel racing," the official said, adding the two paid about \$2,100 to the children's parents.<sup>4</sup> This news item did not provide any further detail of the story.

However, according the FIA Passport Circle Quetta's record scanned for this rapid assessment, "Levies at Taftan border handed over FIA two deportees from Iran Mr Muhammad Mehmood and Ms Hameeda Bibi accompanied by two children on July 12, 2003. Their travel documents were forged. The visa and exit stamp of Pakistan's border authorities (July 03, 2003) on the passport of Hameeda Bibi were fake. The woman carrier crossed over to Iran via Taftan unfrequented routes actually with three children including Sajid (1986), Bilal (1987) and Chand (1988) and one accomplice Mr Muhammad Mehmood. Bilal's name was not even entered on the passport of the lady carrier/trafficker.

Hameeda was carrying these kids for UAE for camel jockeying. She was holding a fax copy of the Employment Entry Permit No: 047959/07/2003/101 dated May 05, 2003 issues by Abu Dhabi authorities. Names of Sajid and Chand and Bilal were also entered on the permit. Another child Sikandar, who was also with this woman, was not entered even on the passport and the permit.

According to details the accused in this case narrated to the FIA authorities, both alongwith kids were apprehended at Zahadan and were deported. Mehmood said he has no link with the woman carrier of these kids. He said he remained for long time in UAE

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3 The News, Sunday July 13, 2003; Two child smugglers held in Balochistan

and was given the task of taking the woman and the children to UAE by an agent Muhammad Sharif Chanchar son of Ramzan resident of Chak No: 93, Post office Chak No: 94 Tehsil and district Rahim Yar Khan. He said he was promised a sum of Rs 130,000 for the assignment. Though Mehmood has a valid visa for UAE but the agent forced him to take the woman carrier and the children through unfrequented route via Taftan border because the woman was carrying fake and forged documents. The woman admitted of knowing of the assignment that she was carrying the children for camel jockeying for which the agent paid her. It is worth mentioning that those two children whose entry was made in the passports appeared to be 6-7 years but their ages on the passport were shown as 16-17 years. Though they succeeded to cross over to Iran but were arrested by the Iranian authorities and sent back. On confession of the culprits, cases were registered under section 3 and 4 of Ordinance on Control and Prevention of Human Trafficking 2002.

According to another case of trafficking, sheer poverty and the dowry for her daughters forced a woman to traffic three children, apparently sold by their poor parents, to Dubai where the oil magnates torture kids for their pleasure.<sup>5</sup>

The Federal Investigation Agency officials arrested a woman, Kaneez Sakina, and her son, Nasim Fida, 22, at Taftan border post on Pakistan's border with Iran in August 2002 for allegedly trying to smuggle three children to Dubai via Iran. The FIA officials said the woman, who hails from Rahim Yar Khan, was arrested when she was trying to cross over Taftan border to enter Iran along with her son and three children, Tausif Fida, 13 (real name Riaz Ali), Babar Fida, 7 (Babar son of Rasool Bakhsh), and Khalid Fida, 4 (Khalid son of Dilshad).

Sakina, a widow and mother of three young daughters, said she makes her living by sewing clothes. She said she had agreed to traffic the children, as she wanted to solve the dowry problem of her daughters. She said a woman, living in her neighbourhood, had enticed her to do so. After then a man, Riazul Haq, handed her over the three children, Sakina said.

Children are mostly smuggled to Dubai to be used in camel races, and the crime is sometimes committed even with the consent of parents. The children who were being smuggled are brothers and it is believed that their parents had sold them to the smugglers when they felt that their growing poverty had made it impossible to feed these siblings. The corruption from top to bottom in the society has multiplied poverty in the recent years and during the last couple of years there were many incidents when the parents killed their children or sold them to others.

During checking at the Taftan border check post, Mst Kaneez Sakina could not satisfy the authorities regarding her departure to Iran with the children whose names were duly entered on her passport as her sons. She admitted that the children were handed over to her by one Mr Ramzan son of Abdul Wahid, resident of Habib Colony Gali No: 07, Rahim Yar Khan and Muhammad Sharif Chachar resident of Chak No: 93, Post Office Chak 94-95, Rahim Yar Khan. Sharif is the same who happened to be the agent in the earlier case narrated above. Mst Kaneez Sakina widow of Fida Hussain resident of House No: 187, Gali near Tameer-e-Millat High School colony Amanat Ali, Rahim Yar Khan said the names of these children were got entered by Ramazan. She in her statement to the FIA officials that was scanned for this rapid assessment said that on August 15, 2003

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<sup>5</sup> *Poverty, dowry forces parents to sell and smuggle children*; Balochistan Post, August 19, 2003

Ramzan brought her and her real son Tabbasum Fida at Rahim Yar Khan Railway station and handed over three children and introduced on Riazul Haq who accompanied them during the journey to Taftan. Riaz remained outside Taftan check post while the woman was being interrogated. On her report that Riaz is outside the check post waiting for their clearing, the authorities arrested him. Riaz was supposed to get them cross Taftan border and then arrange their travel to Dubai via Iran.

In his statement Riaz confirmed that the children were being trafficked for camel jockeying. He revealed that a few days ago, he had brought six children from Rahim Yar Khan and crossed over them to Iran via Taftan border, which is considered, to be an un frequented route. He said these six children were accompanied by Mst Naseem, Mst Seema and Mst Zafaran and were now in Dubai.

These two cases were of those who were deported from Iran or were apprehended at the Taftan border. However, another case narrated by Riaz is regarding six children who have been trafficked via the same route. This situation shows that child trafficking is continuing unabated despite several foiled bids by the authorities. These cases involve about a dozen of children in just two months of July and August in which these cases were reported. There could be dozens of other children who had been trafficked during the successive years.

### **3.2 Types and conditions of worst form of child labour at points of destination and their impact on children**

Once trafficked to the Gulf States, lives of trafficked children are routinely put at risk for the entertainment of thousands of spectators at camel races. For many years, boys from the age of six (and sometimes younger) have been trafficked from countries in South Asia to the Gulf to supply the demand for camel jockeys.

During the race the child jockey has very little control over the camel. The child's duties are to scream and to whip the camel to make it run faster. The boys are strapped to the camels' backs to keep them on but they can easily slip off sideways and either get trapped underneath the camel or trampled. It is not uncommon for the children to fall off or get dragged along; sometimes to their deaths.<sup>6</sup>

The boys are kept in harsh conditions. Several children can be crammed together in one room where they often have to sleep on the floor. They are frequently denied adequate food or are put on crash diets before they race so that they are as light as possible. The boys report that they are subjected to beatings and abuse (even sometime sexual abuse) at the whim of their employers, especially if judged to have performed badly.

Two boys who performed as camel jockeys in Dubai on their return at Karachi airport on 28th June 2001 narrated their ordeal when they were interrogated by FIA along with their carrier Mst Ayesha who brought them from Rahim Yar Khan and was taking them back home. The recovered children, Muzafar and Sadam, informed that they belonged to Rahimyar Khan and they were not real brothers. They agreed that their fathers willingly sent them to Dubai and knew that they would be used in the camel racing. They informed that in Dubai they were handed over to an Arab Sheikh, Mohammad Salim Mansuri. Sadam said he took part in many races and won many races. He admitted that every year Sheikh Mohammad Salim Mansuri sent Rs 0.2 to 0.3 million to their parents in Pakistan.

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<sup>6</sup> Shafqat Munir; Going after victims instead of criminals; The News on Sunday, October 21, 2001

Muzafar and Sadam further revealed that during their stay at Dubai, they were treated badly and for their meals they gave only low fat vegetables, as in camel racing jockey should be weighted in between 15-17 kilogram. They further said they used to work with camels and then learnt camel riding.

Muzafar divulged that once he was participating in a camel race, a child fell down from the back of the camel and got injured. He said, once he himself fell down from the camel but fortunately escaped unhurt. He further said a few days back he talked to his father on phone and his father told that he purchased some land and advised him to come back.

The use of children in camel racing is continuing in UAE despite that fact that the President of UAE, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nayhan, had introduced new laws regarding the ban on the use of children as camel jockeys. But that seems to have little effect on the business in which the use of children in the camel races is still going on.

### **3.3 Abuse of children**

Children who are trapped in the racket are not only physically abused, beaten, burned, tortured and deprived of food, light and movement, they are also vulnerable to kidney infections, and sexually-transmitted diseases. The medical reports of recently deported children revealed that they are not in sound health and also mentally disturbed and depressed. They are vulnerable to sexual abuse, hence are at the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. If we look at trafficking of children for either camel jockeying or sex trade, it turns to be the worst form of child labour and abuse of children.

### **4. Ratio between internal and external trafficking**

Though there is no set formula to ascertain ratio of internal and external trafficking taking place in Pakistan, yet background interviews with border control authorities and civil society activists engaged in anti trafficking activities suggest that 30 percent of the trafficked children are going from Pakistan that also include a few from Nepal and Bangladesh while 70 percent of the trafficked children hail from Afghanistan (55 percent) and Iran (15 percent).<sup>7</sup> Among the internally and externally trafficked children both male and female, 25 percent are considered to be sent abroad for camel jockeying while 75 percent both male and female children, majority of whom are the children of Afghan refugees are used for sexual abuse and exploitation.

Our key informant Ms. Naila Qadri in her interview for this rapid assessment said because of customary practices in Balochistan, young girls under the age of 18 are sold in the name of marriage by getting the bridal price in some tribes. Similarly on the count of internal trafficking, some young girls and women from Afghan refugees are sold to brothels in Quetta and other areas for sex purposes. Boys, particularly the street children hailing from Afghan refugee communities (Tajek, Hazaras, Pashtoons and others) are also considered vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation.

Key informants in Quetta indicated some of the prostitution dens where young girls mostly under 18 are used for sex purposes. These dens are called big Qilas, which means the protected areas for prostitution. Similarly guesthouses (musafir khana) on Alamdar

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<sup>7</sup> Ms. Naila Qadri, human rights activist and film maker based in Quetta, key informant, October 09, 2003

Road in Quetta are also used for child and women prostitution. A big prostitution den run by an influential Afghan national is working at Kili Qanbarani on Saryab Road from where a trafficked Bengali woman and her five children including three young girls were recovered in September 2003 by Rescue 15 lady police in a raid. These frightened victims of trafficking told the police their painful story. There are reports that similar dens are being run by influential people where boys and girls are being sexually exploited after being trafficked from various parts of the country as well as from Afghan and Iran.

## **5. Process of Trafficking**

The process of trafficking is complex but is linked to local, regional and international networking among the crime syndicates, the trafficking mafia across borders. Trafficking mostly is done for sex trade and camel jockeying because these two trades are highly profitable and involve low risk factors as compared to drugs and guns trafficking. The traffickers both in case of buying children and women exploit the vulnerability of poverty stricken families and approach them through their local agents who are known to the communities from where they hunt their prey. Background interviews suggest that the traffickers in Balochistan offer the victims jobs in Middle East or in any European country. Sometime they offer job inside the country. They use all sorts of methods to lure their potential victims to accept their offer. In case of women, they have to bargain sometimes with the parents or guardians or the women themselves while in case of children they do not need to contact children. They directly make a deal with the parents or through their agents any guardian. Normally, traffickers do not come on the scene rather they use relatives and acquaintances of the family from whom they hunt children to be trafficked to Middle East for camel jockeying. Generally, parents knew the real motives of the traffickers or their agents, in certain cases however, parents were ignorant of the situation and the agents saying that rich Arab Shaikhs would adopt their sons deceived them. Sometimes, parents did suspect but due to abject poverty they allow them to take their one child as they feel that they are scarifying one kid for survival of rest of their kids or to marry off their daughters. There are reports that relatives of victims have been either themselves involved in any way in trafficking or were associated with this activity.

Traffickers acquire their victims in a number of ways. Sometimes women and children are kidnapped outright in one country and taken forcibly to another. In other cases, victims are lured with job offers and their parents are paid handsome money as part of deal. Traffickers entice victims to migrate voluntarily with false promises of good paying jobs in foreign countries as models, dancers and domestic workers. Traffickers advertise these phony jobs, as well as marriage opportunities abroad in local newspapers. In case of trafficking of children, they lure their poor families for good future and traffic children through their agents and carriers who pretend to be the parents of the trafficked kids by providing them false passport entries.

Bangladeshi and Burmese women are being kidnapped, married off to agents by unsuspecting parents, trafficked under false pretenses, or enticed by prospects of a better life, into sex industry in Pakistan. Border police and other law enforcement agencies are well aware of the trafficking through entry points into Pakistan like Lahore, Kasur,

Bahawalpur, Chhor and Badin.<sup>8</sup> Nepalese and Bangladeshi woman and girls are trafficked under false pretenses, such as jobs, and then they are forced into prostitution in brothels in Pakistan. A rise in trafficking of girls, aged 8-15, in Pakistan has occurred during this last decade.<sup>9</sup>

The human traffickers target mostly young women and children because they are vulnerable and most wanted for sex industry, forced or false marriage and adoptions.

The traffickers snatch the victims' travel documents to deprive them of their identity or force them to remain in their dens and brothels. However, the trafficked women and girls are recycled and turned over from one brothel to another. Many of them return home only after contracting diseases such as HIV/AIDS. This is a heinous crime against humanity and an institutionalized exploitation of women that is growing with the trends of globalization.<sup>10</sup>

Arabs stationed for a short time in Pakistan take "temporary wives," abandoning the women and any children afterwards.<sup>11</sup> A farcical "nikah" (registered marriage) takes place and the buyer actually marries the purchased woman, thus legalizing her enslavement. The husband then either sells her to someone else and makes a tidy profit for himself or keeps her in a brothel so that she may become a permanent source of income. Alternatively, he may make her a labourer in the fields and the house. Trafficking of women to the Middle East from Pakistan is reportedly continuing in the garb of the so-called "temporary marriages" as the traffickers got a three-month 'wife visa'. During these three months, these trafficked women have to work day and night as sex workers and they have to artificially forego their menstrual cycle by taking drugs that damage them physically and emotionally. They have no option but to fight with the nature to pay off debts they owed for their families.

### **5.1 Process to reach destination**

There are different ways the traffickers adopt to deal with the trafficked cargo (both women and children) to ensure that they are reached destination. They buy them through their agents and get their travel documents prepared for forgery or in connivance with the passport authorities in certain remote areas. Traffickers use mainly three routes: land route from Quetta to Taftan (Iran) then to Dubai or UAE. They also use sea route via Iran and air route from any airport of Pakistan. Pakistan's border city of Mund in Balochistan has become a crucial link for all sorts of human trafficking, whether job related or smuggling of children who are kidnapped or bought and sent to work as camel jockeys in the Gulf States.

In case of children to be used for camel jockeys, names of the children to be trafficked are entered fraudulently on the passports of women carriers who show them as their kids. Most of these women cross through Taftan border, which is considered to be an unfrequented route to Iran. They initially try to get visa for Iran for pilgrimage of holy places there. Sometimes the agents got forged travel documents for them. Normally, on

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<sup>8</sup> (Sindh police report in 1993, "Rights-South Asia: Slavery Still A Thriving Trade," IPS, 29 December 1997)

<sup>9</sup> (CATW - Asia Pacific, Trafficking in Women and Prostitution in the Asia Pacific)

<sup>10</sup> Shafqat Munir; Institutionalizing Women's Exploitation, The News on Sunday, September 14, 2003

<sup>11</sup> CATW - Asia Pacific "Trafficking in Women and Prostitution in the Asia Pacific" (22)

payments of sufficient bribes, they are allowed to cross over Taftan border in the darkness of night. The one agent going along the women and children hands them over to agents in Zahadan and then they are sent via sea route to Dubai, Abu Dhabi or any destination in the Gulf. Some women with valid visas as spouses of the immigrants in the Gulf states or with valid work permit as indicated above in case of Hameeda Bibi, take flights direct to Gulf states via any airport in the country with names of children inscribed on their passport, though fraudulently.

As successful bid of trafficking, the trafficked children and young women are handed over to traffickers at the destination who then send them to their respective jobs, such as sex industry and camel jockeying.

Background interviews in Quetta with key informants suggest that truckers from Afghan entering into Pakistan from Chaman border bring along Afghan women and children whom they have purchased at a cost of Rs 5000 to Rs. 25000. They also grease the palm of border security forces at Chaman and take the human cargo to Quetta to sell them in the flesh market. These women and children are even raped by the law enforcement personnel at Chaman or the truckers themselves have sex with them before selling them. A large number of Afghan children and young women are forced into sex industry after being trafficked from the refugee camps and from inside Afghanistan. Young women are also trafficked to Balochistan from Taftan border on the promises of good job opportunities and are then forced into prostitution. The trafficked women from Iran and Afghanistan are also brought into Balochistan through mountains on camel caravans. On reaching Quetta, these women are categorized into various grades. Grade one women are further sent to European flesh market, grade two are sent to Middle East and grade three women by virtue of their beauty and appearance are sold into local brothels.

Another key informant Mr Zahoor Shehwani Advocate, vice chairperson Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) Balochistan confirmed in his interview for this rapid assessment that children from various parts of the country are brought into Quetta and are trafficked via Noshki and Taftan border to Iran for their onward destination to Dubai for camel jockeying. He was of the view that border security borders allow trafficking business and take its share from the traffickers.

## **6. Routes and means of trafficking**

Balochistan is considered to be the easiest possible unfrequented route leading to Iran, Turkey and Europe at one hand and via Afghanistan to Central Asia on the other hand in addition to its linkage via Gwadar to the Gulf States. Due to long unmanned borders with both Iran and Afghanistan and a long Mekran Coastal belt linking to the Gulf, traffickers find these routes favourable for human trafficking. The crime syndicates in connivance with the border security forces allow crossing mostly at Taftan via road links. The Mekran coastal belt including Jewani and Gwadar is also important for trafficking. The traffickers from across the country and South Asia bring the trafficked human cargo to these places and get them cross over to Iran on their onward journey to Dubai and Europe. These border crossing are also famous for those job seekers to wish to enter European markets without having valid travel documents and most of them are caught in Turkey and are deported or sometimes killed in mysterious circumstances. All the

traffickers have their agents in Quetta who shift the human cargo to Taftan via buses from Quetta and then arrange their crossing over to Taftan border into Iran.

### **6.1 Balochistan Coast Line**

The Balochistan coast-line extends over 750 kms from Hub near Karachi to the Gwadar on Pakistan-Iran border. The whole area is rich with long un-spoilt golden sunny beaches and a variety of sea fish. Because of the importance of this coast Pasni, Jiwani and Gwadar, the three important coastal towns, have been linked by air with Karachi and Quetta. Gaddani beach near Karachi is an industrial zone based on fisheries.

### **6.2 Taftan**

Taftan is a busy border post between Iran and Pakistan with a heavy flow of legal and illegal immigrants including trafficked women and children. At least 10 buses daily leave Quetta for Taftan, 608 Kms away on the Iranian border - a journey of between 15 to 24 hours. The road is surfaced for the first 500 kms, or as Nokundi, where one can spend the night at a local 'hotel'. It is a long haul to Iran, mostly across undulating desert. The first stop is "Nushki", 115 kms away, the next Dalbandin, about 180 kms further on. It is another 166 kms to Nok Kundi with a stop for food in Yamaha. The is being surfaced to the border, so while works are in progress it is slower going for the last 110 kms to Taftan, where there is another customs and immigration to negotiate before one crosses the border to Mirjawa. It is still about 100 kms to Zahadan.

The train to the border runs only twice a week and is extremely slow. There was a weekly PIA flight on Sundays from Quetta to Mashad, Iran, but this has been temporarily discontinued.

### **6.3 The Makran Coast**

The Makran coast is Balochistan's southern strip and stretches for 754 kms. Long sandy beaches, rugged promontories and tidal creeks characterize the coastline. There ranges of hills, rising to over 1500 meters (5000feet), run parallel to the coast: the Coastal Makran Range, 30 kms inland; the Central Makran Range, 130 kms inland; and the Siah Range, 200 kms away from the sea. There is very little rain in the Makran region; the few villages and towns along the coast and between the hills are sustained by spring water.

Many of the Makran people are dark-skinned and have African features. They are probably descended from slaves brought by Arab merchants to the subcontinent. They subsist on fishing, date farming and camel breeding. Most of the men work part-time in the gulf state and Oman, and send money home to their families.

Alexander the great marched half his army home along the inhospitable Makran coast in 325 BC, and Muhammad bin Qasim came from Baghdad to Sindh through Makran in 711 AD. The Makranis stood firm against the Mughals, but bowed nominally to the British Raj. It is only since 1971 that some effort has been made to develop the region.

There is no road along the coast, but daily flights connect the four main coastal towns of Ormara, Pasni, Gwadar and Jiwani with Karachi, and there are flights to Quetta three times a week, Gwadar and Jiwani, both picturesque towns flanked by cliffs and beaches,

belonged to Oman for about 200 years. The Khan of Kallat gave them as a present to the sultan in the 18th century, and in 1958 they were sold back to Pakistan. Ormara is currently being developed as a major port.

The Makran coast and its people due to their historical linkages with the Arabian Gulf have roots in Gulf States and they know how to sail through these waters. It is considered that the fishermen do sail sometimes for human cargo along coastal line to reach destinations into the Gulf States. Traffickers also use these coastal routes. However, Taftan is considered to be more porous, though Gwader is also used for trafficking.

#### **6.4 Networking of traffickers/agents through the routes**

The traffickers and carriers of the trafficked children and women have a close networking with local agents in Balochistan who station in Quetta, Mand, Noshki and Taftan and some in Gwader area. The traffickers from across the country brought the human cargo and arrange their onward journey through their Balochistan connections. The local agents book hotels in Quetta and Mand and enroute to Taftan and along the way deal with local police and law enforcement agencies. These local agents and operators have the full backing from some tribal elites and influential people who protect them from any legal action. A former minister in Balochistan cabinet is reported to have been involved in child trafficking. Money transactions are considered not too difficult now a days due to electronic banking. Money is shared among network partners right from local agents to the traffickers inside the country and at the destination countries.

#### **7. Legal**

The Head of Camel Racing Federation, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Hamadan bin Zaid al-Nahayan, is reported to have said that it was decided to ban jockeys below 15 years of age, with weight less than 45 kgs ahead of the racing season in October. Reports, however, have been received of trafficking of children from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh to become camel jockeys. In 1993, the Camel Jockey Association of the United Arab Emirates finally prohibited the use of children as jockeys, but evidence shows that rules are being blatantly ignored. Recently more than 28 children were deported from UAE, after working for more than two years as camel jockeys.

The trafficking of children for use as camel jockeys is prohibited by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and by the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Conventions No 29 on Forced Labour, No 138 on Minimum Age and No 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour - all of which have been ratified by the UAE. In Pakistan, Article II of the 1973 Constitution prohibits "traffic in human beings and recruitment of children under 14 in hazardous employment." The Criminal Code restricts under its paragraph 364-A, the recruitment of children into employment. The Pakistani government also ratified the Children's Rights Convention.

Apparently the government of Pakistan is considering human trafficking as a major problem and signed regional and international protocols/ conventions and promulgated 'Prevention and Control of the Human Trafficking Ordinance 2002' in August 2002, however, the strict implementation of these laws is the need of the hour. When an organized criminal group is guilty of any offence under clauses (i), (ii), (iii) or (iv) of

Section 3 of the Ordinance 2002, the term of imprisonment on each member of group involved in the commission of such offence shall be less than 10 years imprisonment and may extend to 14 years where the purpose of trafficking of a victim is exploitative entertainment and shall also be liable to fine.

The FIA should conduct thorough inquiries once they hand over the children, as many have been handed over to fake parents. These people were involved in the trafficking of their children and are liable under the Trafficking Ordinance 2002. To curb the menace, the methods of kidnapping/taking away children need to be deciphered. Also, the structural causes of the traffic and the improvement of immigration and hosting policies as well as the document issuance policies to refugees need to be reviewed. Backed by a strong political will, such an initiative with adequate means and specialized appropriate skills will help to curb this cruel and inhuman sport.