

Abstract

Many aspects of human trafficking remain poorly understood even though it is now a priority issue for many governments. Information available about the magnitude of the problem is limited. While the existing body of knowledge about human trafficking serves for raising public consciousness about the issue it is still not rigorous enough to lend support to comprehensive programmes for action which addresses the different dimensions of the problem. Knowledge about the intersection between migration and trafficking has not yet brought about any consensus on the underlying forces and their implications for the wellbeing of children and women. The diversity of forms of human mobility in the contemporary context of global linkages requires an analytical approach which can explain why the needs of the constituents of social structures (gender, class, generation and ethnicity) and human agency have converged to produce what is known as human trafficking. Without adequate explanation policy tends to shift stance and direction. A gender critique of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) is given to show how the absence of consensus on the relation between economic growth and poverty renders choices in collective action more vulnerable to error. The obliteration of the care domain is one main error that has exacerbated pressure on livelihood systems – including the pressure to migrate – and the transmission of its negative effects on the weak members of households.

The Report points out how practices of migration management can benefit from a more holistic approach – one which addresses a broad set of overlapping livelihood systems. A selected number of practices by organisations participating in this research is presented – giving their profiles, strengths and weaknesses, the way they understand trafficking, and the replicability of their practices. Practitioners share awareness about the significance of bridging and synchronizing the three levels of intervention: prevention, prosecution and protection. Preventive measures can benefit from research on migration management that connects issues of human mobility with capital mobility in a sector-specific analytical approach. A re-orientation of capital mobility towards social ends may possibly contribute to stability and well-considered migration policy frameworks.

Collective action for the protection of human rights must rely on a consortium of experts who cooperate with each other to maintain a working level of effectiveness. A plurality of foci of authoritative knowledge offers diverse and potentially richer interpretation as well as fuller representation; and cross-cultural learning can improve the chance of finding innovative practices which reflect the acceptance of pluralism and diversity.