

Slavery and Human Trafficking

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial will cover the topics of slavery and human trafficking, through the definition and discussion of:

1. Slavery
2. Forms of Slavery
3. Human Trafficking

1. SLAVERY

Many different societies--though not all--dating back to the dawn of humanity itself, have had slavery of some kind. Slavery reached a peak during the Roman Empire.



DID YOU KNOW

Some estimates state that at the height of the Roman Empire, a quarter of the population of Rome was composed of slaves, during the initial burst of slavery.

The Egyptians had slavery, and many have argued that the Egyptians used slave labor to erect the pyramids. More recently, an example of slavery you're likely familiar with, is the European slavery of Africans. This was a triangular slave trade whereby Europeans would go to Africa, get slaves, and take them to their colonies across the Atlantic, where they would procure raw materials which were then exported back to Europe for production.

Today, many contemporary societies have clearly recognized the atrocities of slavery, and have outlawed it. However, more covert forms of slavery persist in society today, such as human trafficking, or the sex trade, for instance.

2. FORMS OF SLAVERY

There are several different kinds of slavery.

- **Chattel slavery** is the kind of slavery in which slaves are considered property of their owners. This is the kind of slavery you are likely most familiar with if you came of age in America, or went to the American school system and learned about the triangular slave trade, as previously mentioned.

The European slave trade took the form of chattel slavery, whereby the slaves were taken from Africa, destroying their families, and sent across the Atlantic, where they became the property of their owners in America and worked to gather things like cotton and sugar, products that were in turn sent back to Europe.

- **Child slavery**, which, as the name suggests, is children becoming enslaved. It's not as common in the United States, but in many poor countries where poor families cannot feed their children, the children are forced into labor at a very young age. Although uncommon in the U.S., child slavery does occur in countries where there are fewer laws preventing children having to work long hours.
- **Debt bondage**, or economic slavery, occurs when employers control workers by paying them a small wage, but not a big enough wage to pay off their debts to the employer. Although not common in the United States, debt bondage, in effect, enslaves workers in the situation because they must keep working to pay off the debt, yet they are not earning enough money to actually pay off the debt. Hence, they're forever trapped in debt bondage, or economic slavery.

In other countries, where manufacturing plants are located, it is common for workers to live in company housing and are eat company food. Then, the company can entrap them by not paying them enough to pay off the debts they've incurred for their room and board, food, etc., leaving the workers in debt bondage.

- **Servile forms of marriage** is when women are forced into marriage that they don't necessarily consent to, and then have to serve the husband in the marriage.

➦ **EXAMPLE** In Pakistan it is still acceptable for the patriarch of family, the man, to decide who his daughter is going to marry. If she wants to resist, she could be put to death with impunity. This is an atrocity, but it still happens, confirmed as recently as 2012.



TERM TO KNOW

Chattel Slavery

A form of slavery which treats slaves as property.

Child Slavery

The slavery of young people.

Debt Bondage (Economic Slavery)

A form of economic slavery where a company charges an employee for services and then pays that worker too little to ever be able to pay off the debt.

Servile Forms of Marriage

The slavery of a marriage partner, typically a female.

3. HUMAN TRAFFICKING

While these other forms of slavery have largely been outlawed in America and exist in other parts of the

globe, human trafficking, a final form of slavery, still has covert roots in America. **Human trafficking** is a term that describes the movement of people across the globe for the purposes of forced labor, either physical or sexual. This is often under the radar and covert--at first, people might not even realize that they're being forced into slavery.

IN CONTEXT

Consider the plight of people attempting to cross the border from Mexico into the United States. Unfortunately, they can be targets of human traffickers.

There are people in Mexico who will offer to help get the border-crossers over the border. The border-crossers will pay this person to help them cross the border--which seems like a beneficial arrangement--but once they're across the border, they don't know anybody or the language, and the traffickers capitalize on this.

The traffickers claim that they are owed a large debt, and they force the new immigrants into slavery by human trafficking, meaning that they might be forced into prostitution to pay off their 'debts.'

Therefore, human trafficking is a huge industry, behind gun trafficking and drug trafficking, and occurs worldwide.



TERM TO KNOW

Human Trafficking

A form of global slavery where people are moved from one place to another for the purpose of forced labor.



SUMMARY

Today you learned about the forms of **slavery** in society, including the **human trafficking** industry, which still occurs in America today.

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia author Zach Lamb.



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