INTERNAL DISPLACEMNET AND TRAFFICKING OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN MEXICO

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Abstract:
Some 40,000 indigenous people have been displaced due to agrarian conflict in Chiapas state of Mexico during 1994 to 2002. People who leave their lands and homes because of conflict, are currently living in appalling conditions and many displaced families are living together in subhuman conditions. In the majority of cases displaced people cannot cultivate their land, because, the paramilitaries make it impossible. This has led to greater poverty in the region and subjected such groups to greater exploitation. To escape from poverty and conflict, some parents have sold their daughters in hope of a better life. Every year about 3,000 women from Chiapas are trafficked to Mexico City and Cancun, with the majority of them being well below the age of consent.

This paper attempts to show the effect the displacement of people has had on the trafficking of indigenous women in Mexico, base on primary and secondary information.

Introduction:

In recent years, a problem that has been engaging the attention of social scientists and policy analysts is that of internal displacement. Besides development projects and environmental factors like earthquakes, perennial floods and cyclones (Monirul, 2000), it has, in recent times, been communal conflicts, political unrest and instability that have evolved as a major catalyst for the displacement of people. To create a more just and equitable world, we need to first understand the conditions that we seek to transform. When we try to make sense of what we see, however, we are faced with a bewildering blur of upheaval, flight, and displacement. We live in a time when national borders are shifting rapidly, swallowing whole countries and consolidating new states. More than 23 million people in the world today are refugees - 80 percent of them women and children. Another 24 million (again mostly women and children) are 'internally displaced', homeless and usually hungry, inside their national borders (IOM, 2000). These figures exclude the millions of often undocumented women and men, who are forced to leave their countries each year to work as domestic servants, child care providers, prostitutes and agricultural laborers in the global market. Neither do they include those, who

compelled by landlessness and hunger, migrate from their homes in the countryside in search of subsistence work in overcrowded cities. There are the women and families who have been relegated to the slums, transit centers, and refugee camps of the 'new world order'. For many, their dislocation is not the result of a single event, but of their way of life. Today, as exile, migration, homelessness and displacement become central experiences for an increasing number of people, we need to understand the political and economic forces that converge to produce these experiences. We also need to try to understand the experiences themselves. *What does it mean to be without physical shelter, or vanished from our community or country?* How do women ensure survival for themselves and their children in these dangerous territories of not belonging? And what do these different kinds of homelessness teach us about our own placement in the world?

To lose one's home through war, forced migration, eviction, or military occupation is to lose more than just the physical shelter that enables biological survival. For while our homes might provide warmth, light and a degree of physical safety, the meaning of home reaches far beyond the material. Home is memories and history. Home is a sense of life. Home is having a place in the world. As a woman, she knows better than to romanticize the ideal of home as an unwavering refuge: nearly one fourth of women world wide are physically battered by men in their homes, and in the US 50% of homeless women and children are fleeing domestic violence. And yet home as both material reality and a place of belonging remains a basic necessity; a woman's right to fight for and defend (Yifat, 1998).

The loss of home, dislocates people from the continuity of community life, pitching them into a zone of isolated privatized experience. People who have been driven off their land to another part of the country often describe life in the shanty towns as lonely and isolated. In fact, the many social mechanisms and cultural expressions that once enabled people to pool resources, to care for each other and to develop shared understanding, wither outside of the traditional environment in which they were developed. As these mechanisms deteriorate, so do people's sense of accountability and connection to each other. This distortion of culture and community is often the goal of

(deliberate) mass displacement (Yifat, 1998). For example, the January massacre that drove more than 40,000 people from their homes in Chiapas state of Mexico was intended, in part, to tear people from the vibrant forms of social organization that support their political resistance. This objective has already been achieved in many other communities, where displacement has engendered a loss of identity and culture, leaving people atomized, disoriented and less able to resist exploitation.

Regular eruptions of brutality, including family battering, drug abuse, rape, suicide and violent economic crime, are expressions of frustration and alienation in places where the social fabric is shredded by displacement. This violence is often depicted as evidence of the 'savagery' of extremely poor and marginalized people. But the brutality that emerges from broken communities is a product of the same forces that uproot people from their homes; low intensity wars in which peasants are driven off their land; World Bank austerity programs that turn small farmers into city slum dwellers and *maquila* workers; and campaigns of ethnic cleansing in which whole populations are made refugees. In the US, some politicians and media have popularized the term black on black crime, with no most brutal and far reaching forms of displacement slavery.

Though displacement occurs in every continent, Latin America is an unusual case because the majority of displacement occurs due to indigenous conflict of some form or another. According to some estimates, in Latin America about 3 million people are internally displaced, which makes up 10 per cent of the world's total internally displaced persons. From Latin America, the majority of displaced people are found in Colombia and Mexico. It has been calculated that during 1994 to 2002, the total number of displaced persons in Mexico was 60,000, with 40,000 from the state of Chiapas (CEDH, 2003).

Internal displacement is not a new phenomenon in Mexico, with such phenomena taking place in other Mexican states such as Oaxaca and Guerrero largely due to violent land disputes between different groups. It was not until 1994, however, with the

insurgency of the *Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional* (EZLN)[1] in Chiapas that large-scale displacement took place. In 1994, the EZLN, known as 'Zapatistas', led an uprising calling for better land and civil rights for the marginalized indigenous people of Mexico. To control the movement, government sent both military and paramilitary groups into Chiapas, where violent conflict was concentrated. This conflict forced up to 40,000 people, mostly indigenous peasants from Chiapas, to flee their homes. The people, who left their lands and homes in order to flee from the violence of the conflict, are currently living in appalling conditions. Many displaced families have to live cramped together in makeshift dwellings, often in sub-human, unhygienic conditions. In the majority of cases, displaced people cannot cultivate land, either because the paramilitaries make it impossible for them to do so, or because there is insufficient space. The inability to cultivate land, pushes these people into extreme poverty and thereby makes them particularly vulnerable to various forms of exploitation. In addition, displacement or flight in itself may have an important psychological impact amongst indigenous displaced people or refugees (especially women and children), leading to a great deal of tension, anguish and desperation. It has also been observed that the behavior of the Mexican army has been in violation of the human rights of the local indigenous population. This includes the illegal repossession of homes, the stripping and damaging of personal property, theft, threats, false or arbitrary accusations, the obstruction of freedom of movement, and the partial detaining of the community, forced labor, and interference in community structures. In all cases, women are more vulnerable to rights' violation than men. The disadvantages of language, education, healthcare, poverty and conflicts continue to be a special target of repression and sexual violence, such as rape, assault, harassment and trafficking for prostitution and forced labor (CDHFBC, 2003). In order to escape from all these problems, indigenous people are migrating to other part of the country in search of a more peaceful life. Due to a lack of awareness, however, of the urban environment and culture and, more over, language difficulties makes them increasingly vulnerable to trafficking – especially women and young girls. According to a SIPAZ report (1998), Chiapas is the major supplier of women and girls to Mexico's sex market, with each year more than 3000 women and girls being trafficked to Mexico City,

[1] Zapatista Army of National Liberation

Cancun, Acapulco, and Tapachula. The report highlights how the trafficking of women and girls has increased since the 1994 agrarian conflict began in Chiapas. Now, displacement through trafficking is of major concern particularly due to its close relationship to gender-based violence and human rights abuses.

This present study is an attempt to see the how the internal displacement due to agrarian conflict in Chiapas state of Mexico contributing in the trafficking of indigenous women and young girls. For this study, information has been obtained from both primary[2] and secondary sources such as books, published articles, newspaper accounts and NGO manuscripts. Primary data has been collected through structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews, with a total of 40 women who are currently working as prostitutes in city of Tapachula. Initially, a brothel owner was identified with the help of local NGOs and then approached for interview. With her help (brothel owner), a number of trafficked women were identified and interviewed. All information was collected during the months of February, March and April, 2003.

Overview of Mexico with reference to Chiapas state

Geography

The southern most state of Mexico is Chiapas, which shares an international border with Guatemala and internal borders with the states of Tabasco, Veracruz, and Oaxaca. Chiapas has an area of 7.6 million hectares administered by 112 municipalities, which are administrative areas centered on principal towns. Chiapas can be roughly divided into three regional bands running from northwest to southeast across the state: the Soconusco Coast along the Pacific Ocean; the Central Highlands; and the Eastern Lowlands. The Soconusco Coast is dominated by great plantations of cash crops for export and some light industry served by modernizing port facilities. The Central Highlands rise 900 meters from the coast to the fertile lands of the Grijalva River and its tributaries. The Highlands encompass two major urban centers, Tuxtla Gutierrez, the state capital, and San Cristobal, a former seat of colonial power and now a popular tourist destination. Also

[2] Author currently pursuing his doctoral study in the topic of '*Trafficking of women in South Asia and Central America: A case of India and Mexico*', where in the Mexico, the field area has been chosen Mexico city and Tapachula city of Chiapas state.

in the Central Highlands is the municipio of Reforma, with abundant oil and natural gas reserves. The Eastern Lowlands include the Lacandon Rain forest, which is bounded by the Usumacinta River and Guatemala to the east, the vast deforested area of the Marques de Comillas in the south, and the increasingly populous area of the Canadas at the foot of the highlands.. It is in this frontier region between the Highlands and the Eastern Lowlands that people have been most severely affected by environmental scarcities and it is in this region that the EZLN was born. Most of Mexico's southern states are very rich in oil and natural gas, forest and farmland, particularly Chiapas where such resources are extracted by the federal government for use in Mexico's central and northern states. Chiapas produces 5 percent of the nation's oil, 12 percent of its natural gas, 46 percent of its coffee, and 48 percent of its hydroelectric power, yet only a tiny portion of the wealth generated from these resources is returned to the state for the development programs leaving it one of the poorest in Mexico (Howard and Dixon, 1996).

Demography

According to the national census of 2000 (INEGI), the total population of Chiapas is 3,288,963 with around 25 percent (809592) of the population classified as indigenous. Demographic statistics also show that 76.9 percent of the population is literate, the state's fertility rate is 2.3 against 1.99 for the country as a whole, and that the infant mortality rate in 2001 was 30.7 against 24 for the rest of the country. The state's sex ratio data indicates that there are 98 males to every 100 females, which differs slightly from the gender balance evident in the rest of the country (95 per 100 female). Statistics also show that approximately 58.7 per cent of the population in Chiapas are economically engaged, with an 80.6 percent rate for males and just 38.5 percent in the case of females. Table 1 provides further details on the demographics in Chiapas with reference to the rest of the country (see appendix 1).

Class relations

One third of indigenous are *unilingual* speakers of an indigenous language. Spanish is at best a second language, and indigenous cultures and languages cut across state and *municipio* boundaries. The state and *muncipio* (municipal) governments try, but often

fail, to contain and manage these groups. The largest groups are the Tzeltal, Tzotzil, and Chol. The vast majority of EZLN members are indigenous coffee growers. The insurgents do not represent all of the people of the Eastern Lowlands - rather they represent most of those who have colonized the Lacandon in the past forty years (Howard and Dixon, 1996).

Indigenous groups usually speak their first language rather than Spanish. As with most other indigenous peoples, they are generally subsistence farmers who produce their own food on their own small plots of land, on commonly owned plots, or on illegally occupied land. Their monetary income is derived from several sources, including raising cattle for large ranches in the region, producing small tradable items, working in the tourist industries, engaging in seasonal labor in developing areas of the state, and growing cash crops that are sold to local marketing boards or directly exported.

The *latifundistas* are a relatively small class of landowners that has long controlled vast territories in the state. In the Eastern Lowlands, most of this land is devoted to capital intensive cash crops for export; mainly coffee, cocoa, and citrus fruits. Distinct from but similar to the latifundistas are the *rancheros*, a relatively new group that has taken control of huge tracts of land with the encouragement of state subsidies. They are largely responsible for converting forestland into pastures for grazing, particularly around Palenque at the northern edge of the Lacandon. In Chiapas, both groups have withstood federal attempts at political reform and land redistribution and have retained control of state politics.

Chronology of Agrarian conflict and Internal Displacement in Mexico with reference to Chiapas state

The Agrarian struggle in Mexico has deep roots. The struggle for land has been one of the principal objectives of social movements throughout Mexican history. The struggle for agrarian reform has never been limited to land. Rather, it has always had its base in

democracy and liberty. The *Plan de San Luis*[3] with which Francisco.I. Madero began the Mexican revolution in 1910, had among its key principles the restitution of indigenous lands and indemnization for the losses suffered. In 1911, General Emilio Zapata's *plan de Ayala* established that; land, forest and water resources would be expropriated from the monopolies paying as indemnity one third of their value, in order that indigenous groups and Mexican citizens would obtain ejidos, agrarian colonies, and funds in order to improve upon the well being of Mexicans (Garcia, 1998, in Land Research Network, 2003). Many authors argue that such land policies have been used by revolutionary governments as a form of social control. Moreover, it has counteracted its objective of social justice when it only considers land distribution without fostering productivity. After this revolution, the new constitution mandate to distribute the land under article 27[4] saw the government, between 1917 and 1934, distribute 10 million hectares of land, while during 1934 to 1940, Lazaro Cardenas's administration distributed 18 million hectares of land. After Cardenas's presidency (1940 to 1958), however, the agrarian policies were modified and the best land was given over to medium and large-scale farmers. This new policy enhanced the development of productive units regardless of its impact from presidential expropriation (Mackinlay in Land Research Network, 2003). These modifications, along with massive investment in irrigation and the opening of new lands, made it possible, in the 1950s, for Mexico to achieve one of the world's highest rates of growth in agricultural production (De Javry, 1996 in Land Research Network, 2003). After the 1960s, the government of Mexico gave greater importance to industrial development and reduced public sector investment in rural development programs. This impacted heavily upon the Mexican agricultural sector. Since 1970, this process has continued and agriculture is now predominantly limited to traditional peasant communities. In 1971, the *Ley Federal de la Reforma Agraria* (Federal Agrarian Reforma Law) was passed and it mandated that all ejido must have three internal bodies

[3] The Mexican presidential election of 1910 was stolen when Porfirio Diaz - the longtime dictator, had his opponent Madero arrested and imprisoned. Madero took refuge infled to San Antonio, and issued the Plan of San Luis Potosi calling for the nullification of the elections and upon Mexicans to take up arms against the government. The date of its issue marks the beginning of the Mexican Revolution. Peoples, in their constant efforts for the triumph of the ideal of liberty and justice, are forced, at precise historical moments, to make their greatest sacrifices.

[4] Article 27 proclaim, that the Mexican people as owners of the lands and water of the nation. It established an agrarian reform to redistribute land to campesinos, and provide for communal ownership of that land.

i.e. a general assembly made up of all ejidatarios, a board of representatives or executive body, and an oversight council legally empowered to provide check and balances. It was decided that people should show their political preferences through majority voting (Baitenmann, 1998, in Land Research Network, 2003).

In 1976, *the Ley General de Credito Rural* (Rural Credit Law) was enacted, under this *Ley Federal de la Reforma Agraria* and the *Ley General de Cerdito Rural* the *campesino* sector again became the subject of legal and governmental support to foster production. Later, under President Lopez Portillo (1976-1982) and Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) respectively, the government sought to replace agrarian reform with policies designed to increase productivity. Small-scale farmers were ignored, while large-scale agricultural and livestock operators received the majority of government subsidies, investment and financial aid. Examples of this include medium and large-scale grain producers, and the fact that between 1982 and 1988, government allocation for rural development declined from 13.4 percent to 8.7 percent of the total domestic budget (Land Research Network, 2003). After the 80s, there was no longer money for subsidies for the rural sector and Mexico began to invest in other sectors in an attempt to become globally competitive. Structural adjustment programs accompanied continued ideas to promote foreign investment in the rural sector. The Mexican government did not pursue a policy of food sovereignty - they saw small-scale grain production as unprofitable and something that would not attract investment. From 1988, the source of credit to agriculture shifted from development banks to commercial banks (De Janvry, 1997, in Land Research Network, 2003).

After 1988, when Carlos Salinas de Gortari came in to power as president, the government and social agents in the rural sector interacted primarily to arrive at a political agreement that would allow the government to introduce far reaching economic reforms and to create political support for future legal reforms. The introduction of free market policies and the withdrawal of lending from the rural sector provoked general discontent among farmers. In July of 1990, the *Movimiento de los 400 Pueblos* (Movement of 400 villages) marched in Poza Rica, Veracruz, demanding the allocation

of 80,000 hectares of land, credit and technical assistance, and in September 1990, around 10,000 farmers from the Northeast, the Bajio and the South marched to Mexico City demanding a change to agrarian policy (Hernandez, 1992 in Land Research Network, 2003). Their demands, however, went unanswered. According to the Land Research Network (2003), even though almost half of Mexico's land was allocated, of this only 21% was appropriated for agriculture. So, agrarian policy of this time not only affected states like Oaxaca, Guerrero and Veracruz, but also impacted greatly upon Chiapas, where the majority of the indigenous population were the most affected.

Chiapas is one of the Mexican states which has been most affected by agrarian reform over time. The state has the highest indigenous population in Mexico, which a 14 percent share of the country's total. Indigenous groups in Mexico have a long history of struggling to gain respect for their culture and rights over the land that they have inhabited and cultivated for centuries. In Chiapas, the first land reform began in 1946, based on the *Ley Federal de Colonizacion* (Colonization Federal Law) of 1926, where *campesinos* marched on the capital of Chiapas. Their call for agrarian reform, however, went unheard. During 1988 to 1992, the *Programa de Acuerdos Agrarios* (Agrarian Agreement Program) invited peasant organizations, ejido authorities, and community leaders together in order to diagnose the agrarian problem, but the problem remained unresolved. The people of Chiapas remarked 'we are a product of 500 years of struggle, up to now we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food nor education. Neither are we able to freely and democratically elect out political representatives, nor for our children. But today we say, *Basta es Basta* (Enough is Enough)'. The year before the Zapatista uprising, roughly 30,000 people died due to hunger and diseases related to malnutrition. On the 1st January of 1994, the Zapatista army emerged from the mountain and jungle and declared the revolution against the government of Mexico. On the same day the Presidents of Canada, Mexico and United States called a press conference to announce the creation of the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA). This was to be the first step in the march towards a single, global capitalist economy, effectively merging the three economies into one. The following day, however, instead of their picture the world's newspaper carried

photographs of armed indigenous Mexicans. The indigenous struggle in Chiapas took the name of their revolutionary hero Emiliano Zapata, who took up arms in 1911 in the state of Morelos. His fight for land and liberty for common ownership of land and the right of small farmers to control their own villages-has been reincarnated in these times of modern globalization.

The EZLN was formed during 1983, organizing itself among some of the most dispossessed and diverse communities in Mexico. Its roots are in the culturally and linguistically distinct Mayan populations of the highlands of Chiapas, and in the colonists of the lowland Lacandon and ranches, as subsistence cultivators on poor quality land, as landless wage laborers, in town and cities and in small villages. The EZLN first began and grew as a self defense force. The aim of armed training was to protect villagers against the violence of the cattle ranchers' armed security forces in disputes over land and resources. Its growth exploded during the 1980s and early 1990s, triggered by a number of critical events and changes that led to decision in 1993 to organize offensively. Second, in the early 1990s their position was further eroded by land privatization and free trade agreements. In 1992, the Mexican Constitution was changed to allow for the privatization of communal lands, undermining indigenous property rights. In 1994, the effects of economic cutbacks under agricultural liberalization, such as cuts in subsidies and provisions under NAFTA for reducing the prices paid for maize they produce, where they faced difficulty competing with subsidized US products. So in the hope of forcing changes to the agricultural sector, EZLN declared war against the government of Mexico.

Conflict between EZLN and Government and Internal Displacement in Chiapas

In the 1st of January, 1994, when EZLN declared war, the Mexican government initially blamed this movement on the work of outsiders, who were manipulating (admittedly) a poverty-stricken indigenous population and using them to destabilize the country and its economy. Later on, however, when the war began to get out of control, government sent more than 15,000 soldiers to crush the uprising, with bombings carried out against presumed Zapatista positions. The war between EZLN and government troops continued for months with the result that some 40,000 people were displaced from their villages,

many claiming to have been both physically and sexually abused by military personnel (SIPAZ, 2003).

Causes of displacement of indigenous people

NGOs and the displaced people themselves often argue that the government is waging 'low intensity' warfare to remove indigenous communities from their ancestral lands. They say that the government is protecting the political and economic interests of the ruling elite and wealthy landowners, specifically through the opening of the resource rich mountains of Chiapas to foreign and private investment. In contrast, Mexican authorities identify inter-community, inter-ethnic and religious conflicts as the root causes of displacement in Chiapas. The Mexican government has been criticized for the polarization of civil society in Chiapas into pro-government and Zapatista groups by giving access to land and preferential treatment to the former. Divide and rule tactics such as these have fuelled intra-communal and religious violence in Chiapas for decades. Since 2001, political and land disputes have even emerged between formerly allied indigenous groups (IDP Project).

The military has repeatedly been accused of human rights abuses and excessive use of force against likely sympathizers of rebel groups in Chiapas (USDOC, 2003). Despite reports of extra judicial killing, torture and disappearances, the military continue to enjoy impunity, while civilians and human right advocates who have denounced abuses have suffered reprisals, threats and death (USDOC, 2003).

The 1994 agrarian disputes caused displacement of people of Chiapas in three phases. The first phase of displacement occurred during 1994, due to the conflict between Zapatista army and the military and paramilitary group. The second phase of displacement occurred during the month of February 1995, when military and paramilitary groups entered the Chiapas highlands and tried to capture the region, and the third phase of displacement occurred in the month of March 1995, when 12 paramilitary groups tried to control the 20 municipalities in Chiapas. During these three phases more than 40,000 people were displaced from their villages and community lands. After 1995,

some displaced people were rehoused with help from military and paramilitary groups, but still large numbers of people remained displaced and without proper housing. There is no actual data available about the current total number of displaced people in Chiapas, but according to CDHFBC, in 2003 about 12,000 people were still without permanent homes, while the USCR put this figure at 15,000.

Internal displacement and trafficking of indigenous women in Chiapas

Internal displacement has mainly affected indigenous communities in Chiapas. Most of the displaced persons have been treated as second class citizens, and have been largely marginalized from national, political and economic spheres. They have been abused; discriminated; military and paramilitary groups have looted their property; and many have been physically or sexually abused. To escape from such discrimination and violence, the majority of affected indigenous peoples have migrated to various cities across Chiapas and other parts of Mexico. Their 'innocence' - not speaking Spanish and naïve of a new (urban) environment and culture – however, has made them especially vulnerable to sex traffickers. This is particularly true for young women and girls. In some cases, they are lured on false promises of employment and shelter, and in others they are simply snatched from their parents or, in an effort to escape from poverty and hunger, they are sold voluntarily by their parents (CEDH, 2003). This section has tried to analyze that how the internal displacement of people provoked the trafficking of women in Chiapas state. As stated earlier, information has been collected by both secondary and primary sources. Secondary information shows that the trafficking of women increased by 50 percent from the state of Chiapas during the period 1992 to 2002 - following on from the agrarian conflict in the region. It has been seen that every year more than 3000 women are trafficked from the state of Chiapas to the cities of Mexico City, Cancun, Acapulco, Merida and Tapachula for the purpose of prostitution and later some are trafficked onto the United states and Canada. According to one report, from January 2003 to April 2003, about 241 cases of trafficking of both men and women was identified from just two southern districts in Chiapas. It is important to mention that the agrarian conflict not only resulted in an increase in the trafficking of women, but also saw increased

trafficking of men and children. Men are mainly trafficked to the United States for agricultural work (Norma Negrete, 2003).

Primary information has been collected from the '*Las Huacas*' red-light area of Tapachula, where 40 trafficked women were interviewed. Table 2 shows the family socio-eco-demographic background of these women. It has been observed that the majority (70%) of women were trafficked from a nuclear family followed by joint family and extended family, and 50 percent of women belong to a large family. The family educational background shows that in nearly 78 percent of the cases, the interviewed woman's parents are illiterate, with the parents of only 15 percent of the women having been educated up to primary level. For about approximately 73 percent of the women, the main source of family income came from agriculture, followed by domestic labor (15%) and labor work (13%) (see appendix 1).

Table 3 represents the demographical characteristics of the trafficked women. It has been seen that majority the (67.5%) of women who are working as prostitutes are less than 20 years old, while their educational background shows that just over fifty percent are educated up to primary level, with some 30 percent classed as illiterate. Current marital status shows that about 78 percent of women are unmarried, followed by 15 percent married and nearly 8 percent divorced (see appendix 1). Table 4 describes the causes behind trafficking. It has been seen during data collection that for the majority of the 40 women interviewed there were three main reasons behind the trafficking. Each woman was asked to rank the causes according to their importance. The table shows that for about 52.5 percent of the women, poverty is the most important driving force behind trafficking, followed by displacement due to the agrarian conflict in Chiapas (32.5%). Some 45 percent of women responded with unemployment as the second cause for trafficking, followed by displacement (nearly 28%) and poverty (25%). About 55 percent of women put down displacement as the third cause for trafficking, followed by unemployment, poverty and others causes like gender discrimination, domestic violence etc (see appendix 1).

Table 5 shows the percentage of women that were forced to enter into their profession. Approximately 28 percent of women were sold by their parents or by other family members, while a majority (approximately 53%) of women were lured by (false) offers of employment. Another 10 percent of women were sold by their boyfriends and another 10 percent responded with other causes such as false marriage, sold by husband etc (see appendix 1). During my field work, when I interviewed some traffickers to fulfill another objective of my doctoral thesis, one of them told '*it is very easy to trap an indigenous woman compared to a mestizo, first of all they do not speak Spanish and secondly as they lost their land and house in the conflict, they need some employment urgently. So looking at their situation, we promise the husband or parents good employment with shelter for their daughter and wife and provide them with a little money telling them that after their daughter or wife starts work they will send them some money*'.

The information obtained during my field work shows that the women are not only trafficked to local cities in Chiapas, but are also trafficked to other big, urban centers in Mexico such as Mexico City, Cancun, Acapulco and Ciudad Juarez to work as prostitutes, table-dancers and barmaids etc. According to one trafficker, the price a woman can fetch varies from place to place and it also varies according to the appearance of a woman. He mentioned that in cities like Mexico City and Cancun, prices begin at $2000, whilst for a young woman (less than 18 years old) who speaks Spanish and has a slim figure, the asking price can be upwards of $4000. Prices are lowest for married women over 25 years old. Women are trafficked by using various routes. They are never trafficked directly from the place of origin to their final destination. After the deal is made, the trafficker will keep the woman at an intermediary location, providing her with training and explaining how she will have to work or how she must please her costumer. Once the training period is over, the trafficker will take her to the different city. If the woman does not agree to work it is typical for her to be subjected to both physical and sexual abuse and sometimes the trafficker will threaten to kill her. In the case of Ciudad Juarez, a city in the northern state of Chihuahua, where more than 500 women have been

killed, the evidence suggests that in many cases the women had been trafficked to work in the sex industry before being violated and then murdered.

Summary and Recommendations:

The agrarian conflict raging in Chiapas over the past 10 years has very much affected the state's indigenous population. Many people lost their homes, many were displaced from their village and many of them suffered from the violence flaring up in the region and from physical harassment. To help and protect displaced people from the violent conflict, the government opened up 44 rehabilitation camps in different parts of the state, but even inside these camps they were not free from danger. The UNCHR team, during their visit to these camps, found that thousands of people were suffering from food shortages and malnutrition – in particular, women and children. The new living conditions of internally displaced people were extremely poor, with a lack of access to drinking water and other basic needs (UNCHR, 2003). When the government changed in Mexico in 2000, the newly elected President Vicente Fox said that he planned to resume peace talks with Zapatista rebels in Chiapas. On his first day in office, President Fox withdrew 10,000 army troops from roadside checkpoints in Chiapas and promised to send legislation to Congress calling for reenactment of the never ratified 1996 San Andres[5] peace accord between the EZLN and the government, in which the government recognized the need to expand the right of indigenous people.

[5] The San Andres Agreements are accords outlining the fundamental demands of indigenous peoples. These minimum standards were agreed upon at the National Indigenous Forum in January, 1996. Representatives of the 56 indigenous peoples met with the Zapatistas to express their needs and demands. The Fundamental pints are; 1. Recognition of indigenous people's right to self-determination, 2. Autonomy as a means sought to achieve self-determination; including control over native territories and resources within them, 3. Recognition of the community as a public entity with a legal character, not only municipal agencies have official recognition, urban neighborhoods, unincorporated villages and rural centers do not have any type of representation, 4. The indigenous peoples propose to reinforce the municipality as an institution that must be adapted in a realistic manner to the particular situation of indigenous peoples. They should have the right to designate freely their representatives as well as their organizations of municipal government. 5. The indigenous peoples propose the right for municipalities to become associated among themselves as indigenous communities in order to coordinate their actions, 6. In order to solve the national agrarian problem it is necessary to reform Article 27 of the Constitution. This article should recover the sprit of Emilano Zapata summarized; the lands should be owned by those who work on it.

Whilst the last four years has seen the government of Mexico 'trying' to solve the Chiapas conflict, the military has repeatedly been accused of human rights abuses and the excessive use of force against likely sympathizers of rebel groups in Chiapas (USDOS, 2003). Despite reports of extra judicial killings, torture and disappearances, the military continue to enjoy impunity, while civilians and human right advocates who have denounced abuses have suffered reprisals and death threats (USDOS, 2003). To escape from these terrible condition, displaced indigenous people are migrating to the cities in search of peace and employment, but many, after arriving, are ensnared by traffickers.

The trafficking of displaced women cuts across social and economic situations and is deeply embedded in cultures around the world, where millions of women consider this illicit trade a way of life. Although the government of Mexico is trying to rehabilitate and rehouse displaced persons and is trying to provide a new home for affected communities, displaced women are still as vulnerable from trafficking. This whole issue is now of global importance, one which requires an urgent and concerted response. A comprehensive approach is essential to address the economic, social, political aspects of women trafficking. It is necessary to deal with the perpetrators, as well as assist the victims of trafficking in Mexico. To control the violence and to combat the trafficking of displaced persons, the following are essential;

- A comprehensive legislative reform is needed at the federal level regarding indigenous affairs.
- Government needs to resume dialogue, so that the San Andres accords are implemented for the benefit of indigenous peoples in Mexico.
- Government should take legislative and administrative measures to recognize indigenous lands and their unhindered use by communities.
- Government needs to improve the situation with regard to bilingual education, especially in terms of teacher training and bilingual education materials.
- Government authorities need to respect indigenous culture and tradition.

- Contact Centers need to be established in cities at ports of entry (e.g. bus stations), to give guidance and information to those indigenous people migrating to urban centers.
- A mechanism must be established for indigenous people to fully participate in the administration of cultural sites of their own cultural heritage.
- An appropriate policy response be devised in response to the displacement of the indigenous population, bearing in mind that it appears to have multiple causes like religious conflicts, land conflicts, military presence and poverty.

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Appendix 1

Table 1: Demographic features of Chiapas state with reference to Mexico

State/Country	**Indigenous population**		**Total population in Chiapas**		**Total population in Mexico**	
Population during the year 2000	809592		3288963		97483412	
State/Country	**Chiapas**			**Mexico**		
Sex	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Literacy rate in year 2000	81.2	71.9	76.9	91.2	88.3	87.7
State/Country	**Chiapas**			**Mexico**		
Total Fertility rate in the year 2002	2.3			1.99		
State/Country	**Chiapas**			**Mexico**		
Year	**2001**	**2002**		**2001**	**2002**	
Infant mortality rate	30.7	29.6		24.0	23.2	
State/Country	**Chiapas**			**Mexico**		
Sex ratio during the year 2000	98			95		
State/Country	**Chiapas**			**Mexico**		
Sex	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Economically active population	80.6	38.5	58.7	75.1	35.9	54.5

Table 2: Family socio-eco-demographic back ground of trafficked women in Chiapas

Socio-eco-demographic characteristics of the family	Percentage	Number
Type of Family		
Nuclear	70.0	28
Joint	25.0	10
Extended	5.0	2
Total	**100.00**	**40**
Family size[6]		
Small size family	30.0	12
Medium size family	20.0	8
Large size family	50.0	20
Total	**100.00**	**40**
Family educational status		
Illiterate	77.5	31
Literate up to primary	15.0	6
Literate more than primary	7.5	3
Total	**100.00**	**40**
Family's main source of Income		
Agriculture	72.5	29
Labor[7]	12.5	5
Domestic labor	15.0	6
Total	**100.00**	**40**
Family's monthly income[8]		
Less than $200	67.5	27
$200-$500	25.0	10
More than $500	7.5	3
Total	**100.00**	**40**

[6] Family size divided into three categories; Small family, where 4 person are living in the house, Medium size family, where 5 to 6 person are living in the family and large size family is where more than 6 persons are living in the house.

[7] Labor includes the agricultural labor and Construction labor

[8] In Mexico according to the Ministry of labor, the minimum salary of person is 2000 Mexican peso, where one dollar is equal to 10 Mexican pesos.

Table 3: Percent distribution of demographic characteristics of trafficked women in Chiapas

	Percentage	Number
Current Age		
Less than 18 years	32.5	13
18 to 20 years	35.0	14
21 to 24 years	25.0	10
25 to 28 years	5.0	2
More than 28 years	2.5	1
Total	**100.0**	**40**
Educational status		
Illiterate	30.0	12
Literate up to primary	57.5	23
More than primary	12.5	5
Total	**100.0**	**40**
Current marital status		
Unmarried	77.5	31
Married	15.0	6
Divorced	7.5	3
Total	**100.0**	**40**

Table 4: Percent distribution of trafficked women according to their causes of trafficking.

Causes	**First cause**		**Second cause**		**Third cause**	
	Percentage	**Number**	**Percentage**	**Number**	**Percentage**	**Number**
Poverty	52.5	21	25.0	10	12.5	5
Unemployment	10.0	4	45.0	18	20.0	8
Displacement	32.5	13	27.5	11	55.0	22
Love affairs	5.0	2		-	5.0	2
Others[@]	-	-	2.5	1	7.5	3
Total	**100.00**	**40**	**100.0**	**40**	**100.0**	**40**

[@] Others include the gender discrimination and domestic violence

Table 5: Percent distribution of trafficked women according to their mode of entering into the profession in Chiapas.

Mode of entering to profession	Percentage	Number
Sold by parent and other family member	27.5	11
Falls promised of employment	52.5	21
Sold by boy friend	10.0	4
Others@	10.0	4
Total	**100.0**	**40**

@ Include false marriage promises and sold by husband.