

Legal history of slavery ban - An analysis of contexts and outcomes

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to review the history of the various pathways to slavery abolition in the context of different countries.

Secondary research yielded 23 usable papers dealing with the topics of this paper. Slavery and its abolition have a very old history dating back to 6th century BC. Slavery was revived in the early 15th century, when European countries found it convenient to engage captured people in farm and home jobs. These slaves were treated very cruelly and violently and were not provided reasonable life quality. Antislavery movement and slavery supporting movements grew almost in parallel resulting in instant or slow abolition of slavery in the entire country or in parts or only benefitting certain sections of slaves. Often slave owners were financially compensated for the loss of their assets. But nothing was done to compensate the freed slaves or to ensure that they lead independent life with a reasonable standard of living. This forced many of them to return to slavery. In many countries, spread of antislavery movements forced the governments to abolish slavery. In many other countries, socio-economic contexts were against the practice of slavery; so it was legally abolished. Yet, slavery continued in many parts of the world for distorted reasons and their legal response to abolish slavery was due to strong international pressures and reluctantly. In such countries, there are many supporters of slavery even today.

Modern slavery has many forms. The effect of forced labour on supply chains has been studied well. The criminality of forced labour makes both suppliers and buyers responsible. Laws for more transparent actions have been enacted recently in a few countries; but their effectiveness is suspect and will need to be evaluated. Female sex trafficking, as a part of human trafficking, has failed to find solutions due to melodramatic presentation of victim's experiences rather than finding solutions. Feminists have been largely active in expressing concern over this issue. Although there are enough legislations in various countries against female sex trafficking, implementation is poor due to many reasons.

Keywords: Slavery, Abolish, History, Slaves

Introduction

Slavery is an economic system in which a person is the legal property of another person in which the owner can demand labour from the slave without financial compensation (Clark, 2018). Slavery is defined by the UN (UNESCO, 2017) as “an element of ownership or control over another's life, coercion and the restriction of movement and by the fact that someone is not free to leave or to change an employer.” It is also noted that many modern forms of slavery still exist. They include: “traditional chattel slavery, bonded labour, serfdom, child labour, migrant labour, domestic labour, forced labour and slavery for ritual or religious purposes”. International Labour Organisation (ILO) also notes, ““traditional practices of forced labour, such as vestiges of slavery or slave-like practices, and various forms of debt bondage, as well as new forms of forced labour that have emerged in recent decades, such as human trafficking.” also called

“modern-slavery” (ILO, 2018). Anti-slavery Organisation (Antislaveryorg, 2018) gives the components of slavery as:

- 1) Forced to work – through coercion, or mental or physical threat;
- 2) Owned or controlled by an ‘employer’, through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse;
- 3) Dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as ‘property’;
- 4) Physically constrained or have restrictions placed on their freedom of movement.

The organisation notes that globally about 40 million people (10 million children, 25 million in forced labour, 15 million forced marriage and 5 million sexual exploitation) suffer due to modern forms of slavery consisting of forced labour, debt bondage, human trafficking, descent-based slavery, child slavery worse than child labour and forced and early marriage, especially child marriages.

In this paper, a historical treatment of pathways to slavery abolition in different country contexts, their outcomes and aftermaths are discussed. A final section on modern slavery abolition has also been included.

Method

Secondary research was used in this paper. Google Scholar was used for searching literature dealing with the topics of interest. Careful selection was done to include only very significant works in an attempt to limit the paper to a reasonable length. The search yielded 23 usable papers as cited and discussed in the following sections.

Results

An example of early slavery abolition and its aftermath

Politicians in Vermont defied New York’s claim of Vermont and created the independent state of Vermont in 1777. They also created a popular government that represented their interests including abolition of slavery. In its Chapter 1 of the constitution, A Declaration of the Rights of the Inhabitants of the State of Vermont, it was stated, “no male person, born in this country, or brought from over sea, ought to be holden by law, to serve any person, as a servant, slave or apprentice, after he arrives to the age of twenty-one Years, nor female, in like manner, after she arrives to the age of eighteen years, unless they are bound by their own consent, after they arrive to such age, or bound by law, for the payment of debts, damages, fines, costs, or the like”. After repeated attempts and denials, finally it was admitted into the Union as the 14th state in 1791. Joining the Union made it subject to the Fugitive Slave Clause of the Constitution of the USA, requiring it to return fleeing slaves returned to the source. Although Vermont acted for slavery ban earliest in US history, slave holding, kidnapping free blacks and child slavery continued till the 1800’s. Many of the most respectable personalities were involved in slavery practices.

An article in USA Today (Johnson, 2014) gives some details about what happened after the Vermont legal ban of slavery. The Vermont law applied only to adults, so children were free to be enslaved. The operative word “ought” in the constitution was like a wish rather than a legal term compare to the use of “shall” in the 1780 Pennsylvania’s Gradual Abolition Act. Although a committee was appointed in Vermont in 1778 to look into the anomalies in the law, nothing is known about the outcome of this. Free blacks were sold and transported outside state, which necessitated the enactment of Sale and Transportation Act 1786, in which financial penalties

were stipulated for such attempts. Till then, there was no attempt to enforce and monitor the implementation of the law. Rewards for capture and return of slaves to owners in other states defeated the law at least till 1795. Another act in 1806 followed to prevent kidnapping and selling slaves outside.

Time line of slavery and its abolition

A timeline of slavery export from Africa and its subsequent abolition was given by Reuters (2007)-

First sale of African slaves occurred in Lagos, Portugal in 1444. The first permanent slave trading post was established at Elmina, Ghana in 1482. First batch of slaves travelled through Spain to reach the Spanish colonies in 1510. Direct shipment of slaves from Africa to Americas started in 1518. Vermont State, an independent state after the American Revolution, abolished slavery in 1777. However, trans-Atlantic slave trade reached its peak in the 1780's. Granville Sharp and Thomas Clarkson established the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in UK in 1787. Denmark banned import of slaves to its colonies in West Indies in 1792, but the law became effective only in 1803. A series of legislations to abolish slavery was passed by Britain (1807), USA (effective from early 1808), Spain (1811- also in its colonies; but Cuba rejected the ban and continued slave trade), Sweden (1813), Netherlands (1814) and France (1817, but effective only from 1826).

In 1833, Britain passed the Abolition of Slavery Act against a compensation of lost slaves to the plantation owners in West Indies totalling about £20 million of taxpayers' money. This was widely criticised. Slavery was gradually abolished in all British colonies. A treaty was signed between Britain and Spain banning slave trade. Portugal banned slavery north of equator in 1819. A naval squadron was deployed by Britain off West Indies coast for enforcing the ban. An Anti-Slavery Society was formed in 1823 and William Wilberforce was a member. In 1846, the Danish governor of Danish West Indies proclaimed emancipation of slaves. France abolished slavery in 1848. Brazil abolished slave trading in 1851. Slavery in Dutch Caribbean colonies was abolished by Netherlands in 1861. US President Abraham Lincoln abolished slavery effective from 1 January, 1863 and the 13th Amendment to the US constitution was made in 1865, which banned slavery in any form. Cuba abolished slavery in 1886. Brazil abolished slavery in 1888. In 1926, League of Nations adopted Slavery Convention banning slavery. In 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which included an article that stated. "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all forms."

Thus different nations abolished slavery in different times, sometimes repeatedly probably due to some ineffectiveness of the earlier legislation. In this paper, the contexts and outcomes of such legal banning of slavery are reviewed and discussed. From the definition and numbers of modern slavery, it is clear that these laws have not been adequate to abolish all forms of slavery permanently from this globe.

However, a more detailed timeline of abolition of slavery and serfdom and associated activities classified into different periods are available only in a Wiki compilation dated 13 January 2018.

Even in early history, slavery and its ban existed. Records show that in the early 6th century BC, Solon abolished debt slavery in Athens. In 326 BC, Lex Poetelia Papiria abolished debt slavery in Rome. During Maurya empire time in 3rd century BC, emperor Ashoka abolished the slave

trade and asked people to treat the slaves well in the entire empire, which covered a large part of India. During 221-206 BC, Qin Dynasty in China initiated steps to abolition of slavery in an attempt to eliminate landowning aristocracy. They also introduced free peasantry who paid taxes to and worked for the state. But the status quo returned as the dynasty was overthrown in 206 BC. During 9-12 AD, the Wang Mang of Xin dynasty introduced several reforms including abolition of slavery in China again.

Some significant points from these timelines are-

- 1) Slavery was abolished for some time, but re-introduced in some form later.
- 2) Slavery continued de facto even if there was a law against it.
- 3) Christianity expressed against slavery, especially practised against other Christians.
- 4) Legislation for gradual or spontaneous abolition of slavery, followed/or not followed by effective implementation, emancipation and resettlement and compensations of freed slaves and legal provisions to criminalise any activity relate to slavery.
- 5) Slavery not practised, but was allowed and even promoted as an economic activity in their colonies.
- 6) Unable to completely ban slavery, the upper limit for slaves per household is prescribed.
- 7) Codes of morality, ethics and law decry slavery and ask for its total abolition.
- 8) Slavery legally replaced by other forms of servitude equivalents.
- 9) Anti-slavery laws are not applied properly so that those practicing slavery and slave trade escape punishment.
- 10) Infructuous legal attempts in certain countries.
- 11) Restricted abolition of slavery in certain regions or certain categories of people.
- 12) Conditional slavery and conditional freedom of slaves in some countries.
- 13) In some countries, slavery is abolished but serfdom is continued and in some others the reverse happens.
- 14) Partial implementation of slavery ban in some countries, sometimes favouring influential persons even in courts of law.
- 15) Purchase of slaves to set them free by some monarchs.
- 16) Anti-slavery or slavery abolition societies and organisations in many countries.
- 17) Inter-country and multi-country agreements between Britain and many other European countries to stop slave trade. Some countries implement the treaties only partially.
- 18) In 1787, Britain founded Sierra Leone as a colony for emancipated slaves. Also the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade established in Britain.
- 19) Citizenship rights not given to freed slaves in some countries.
- 20) Vienna Convention and other regional and global conventions.
- 21) Separate resettlement colonies for freed slaves, but still slavery continued in the regions where these colonies existed.
- 22) Stopping export of slaves from African countries using naval force by Britain.
- 23) World Antislavery Convention in London in 1840.
- 24) League of Nations Slavery Convention 1926, ratified by many countries only recently. League of Nations Force Labour Convention 1930.
- 25) United Nations Art 4 of Human Rights Declaration declares slavery as a violation of human rights 1948, Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery 1956, The Abolition of Forced Labour Convention eliminates some exceptions admitted in the 1930 Forced Labour Convention 1957,

- 26) The Civil Rights Act equalizes the rights of all citizens nationwide in US in 1964.
- 27) Lyndon B. Johnson abolishes involuntary servitude in 1966.
- 28) Section 71 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 in UK
- 29) Modern Slavery Act 2015 in UK
- 30) Based on the Gradual Abolition of Slavery Act in 1780, Pennsylvania frees the last slave in 1847. Till 1847, those born before the Act were lifelong slaves.
- 31) Gradual abolition of slavery becomes the strategy of most US states and in some countries like Australia.
- 32) In 1788, the Society of the Friends of the Blacks was established in France.
- 33) Napoleon banned slavery in the occupied Malta in 1798, but reintroduces in sugarcane growing colonies in 1802.
- 34) By 1804, when New Jersey banned it, all northern states of USA had banned slavery. The southern states banned it only after the American Civil War.
- 35) In 1805, a bill to abolish slavery passed by the House of Commons was rejected by House of Lords in Great Britain. However, the Act is passed in 1807 covering the entire British Empire. Transporting slaves is also a punishable offence. Anti-slavery naval operations to prevent slavery along the African coasts.
- 36) Citizenship rights to slaves are ruled out in Spain in 1812, although slavery was banned.
- 37) Portugal gets £750000 from Britain to ban slave trade north of equator in 1815.
- 38) Vienna convention of nine European countries declares opposition to slavery. Interestingly, Portugal is a member in this convention, which asked for a hefty compensation from Britain to ban slave trade north of equator.
- 39) In 1817, in La Plata, although the constitution supports slavery ban, it is not banned.
- 40) In 1818, UK has bilateral treaties with Spain, Portugal and Netherlands to enforce slavery ban. In 1827, UK has bilateral treaty with Sweden and Norway, 1835 with Denmark and France.
- 41) 1821- Freed slaves given compensation in Grad Columbia.
- 42) In 1822, American Colonisation Society is formed in Liberia as a colony to settle emancipated slaves.
- 43) In 1823, Anti-Slavery Society is formed in Britain.
- 44) In 1828, Illinois court does not allow bequeathing will to indentured servants. In 1830, Anglo-Texans circumvent anti-slavery law by declaring them as indentured servants for life.
- 45) The 1833 Slavery Abolition Act of Britain is applied all over its colonies, except India and Sri Lanka. The implementation is gradual spread over the next six years.
- 46) In 1834, the French Society for the Abolition of Slavery established in Paris.
- 47) In 1835, Peru re-legalises import of slaves from other Latin American countries.
- 48) In 1836, slavery legalised again in Texas with independence.
- 49) In 1836, Portugal bans slave trade south of equator also.
- 50) In 1926, the League of Nations Convention to suppress slavery and slave trade and in 1930, Forced Labour Convention.
- 51) In 1948, the United Nations Art 4 declaring slavery as violation of human rights.
- 52) In 1956, UN supplementary Convention on Abolition of slavery.
- 53) In 1957, UN improved Abolition of Forced Labour over 1930 declaration.

Contexts of slavery expansion versus abolition

The article by Clark (2018) shows that legislations for slavery ban in the different countries would not have been possible without antislavery pressures by different organisations including the UN in modern times. Slavery abolition movement first started in Britain in 1787 (see the timeline above). But before that, Vermont State in USA had passed antislavery legislation in 1777, after the American Revolution. First Slavery Abolition Society formed in Pennsylvania in 1775, two years before the first slavery ban was introduced in Vermont. Although slavery was banned almost globally, existence of modern forms of slavery demonstrates some hard facts as follows: Basic need of economic security is not addressed by merely freeing the slaves. They need to be provided with some methods to work and earn for a reasonable quality of life. If that is not available, freed slaves may return to slavery for livelihood. Even slave settlement colonies missed this point. Even the recently updated legislations in some countries like UK have not addressed the problems. It gives immense pleasure to people of higher socio-economic status to be seen surrounded by a lot of ready to sacrifice followers (slaves) around as a display of power. People of higher socio-economic status compete to demonstrate their superiority in this manner. This factor encourages some of the modern forms of slavery.

To some extent, human nature is to submit oneself to the more powerful individuals. Thus, politically and socio-economically powerful people get the people of lower status to serve them for small favours. This factor can encourage slavery in some form. When newly rich and powerful people arise from lower socio-economic strata of the society, they are no longer slaves. On the other hand, they also enjoy all the privileges of the money and power enjoyed by the traditionally higher status people. The few people who dare to question or resist being a slave undergo many sufferings. This makes the other large majority of slaves to think that resisting leads to only suffering and lack of safety and therefore, it is safer to support the master and live in safety. Thus, safety is another factor driving people to continue in slavery. These reasons are well discussed in a book by Willemsen et al (2011). The authors noted that slave trade and slavery were influenced by economic, social and cultural elements. Nation-state formation in the Netherlands and across Europe and mobilisation of European population were also responsible for growth of slavery.

In a review of the book of Montana (2013), Walz (2014) pointed out to the role of trans-Saharan trade causing the economic upheavals of the country from time to time and in establishing a market for slave trade in Tunisia as major causes of flourishing slave trade in that country. The same trans-Saharan trade acted as a deterrent and final abolition of slavery in 1841 due to pressure from western countries.

In an Introductory section of a book, Dumas (2016) remarked about the economic necessity of the then slave trade for British Empire given by the British Prime Minister Lord North in 1783 as the justification for continuance of slavery in its colonies. The existence of a proslavery culture among the elites was manifest in the British society of those times as they linked their colonial prosperity to the existence of slavery. Thus, early attempts on legislations either failed or partially succeeded and a possibly deliberate effort not to enforce the law even encourage slavery.

In USA, ascription of proslavery ideas and writings to Southerners and giving it a racist colour obscured the true picture of slavery and opposition to it. Southerners defended slavery as a positive good and wanted its continuance to protect the rights of keeping social control with the master race. Self-interests of slave masters dominated their proslavery movements. Slave status was an institutionalised racial caste related to the African ancestry. Areas of slavery rapidly

spread in the southern parts of USA during 1789 to 1861. After the Revolutionary War, most northern states abolished slavery, while it continued in southern states. Even attempts for gradual abolition failed as development of cotton industry saw the revival of slavery as it was perceived to be essential to meet high labour requirements of cotton farming and processing. Southern states continued their strong proslavery stand to retain their share of political power in the Union, thus dividing the entire USA into antislavery north and proslavery south. Slave smuggling and transfer from upper south to Deep South continued during post-Jefferson legislation. As the southern states wanted to keep the balance of power in the Congress, new territories acquired from Britain, France and Mexico became contentious compromises. White Christians of the south and their clergy supported slavery in the name of Christian paternalism. Divided on the issue of slavery, a civil war was fought between the union and the southern confederates during 1861-1865. The war and slavery ended only due to strong military actions and presidential proclamations. Jenkin (1935) in his book termed the strong proslavery stand of the southern states as “aggressive slavocracy”. Proposed that the south proslavery stand represented their desire to return to their once golden era of intellectuals and prosperity of the ruling race, which they had been losing gradually. Southerners supported slavery to combat rising capitalism. But they did not realise the market economics that it is cheaper to get labour on wages than own them. This wrong perception resulted in continued economic stagnation of the region in spite of rich resources and inputs (Tise, 1990). Tise contended that Americans had a rich proslavery history beginning from their colonial years and therefore, proslavery stand was a novel factor of South alone. There were proslavery expressions were part of the national concerns and future shape of American society expressed by many people for several years before the South. Supporters of slavery were a few social critics far removed from scene of active slavery. Proslavery arguments of South were different, most heinous and distinct from the proslavery topics of other countries; but these were similar to the British and West Indian proslavery topics. Thus, topics used for the defence of slavery is same everywhere. Slavery as a positive good was not an exclusive defence by South, rather other slavery defenders in other countries also had advanced this view. Such a proslavery stand and its defence topics were neither unique to South nor to USA alone. Yet, the human rights angle never figured in the discourses of slavery supporters, which was the major reason for the ultimate slavery abolition in the entire USA.

On the other hand, the tactics of pro-slavery West Indian planters was different. By the end of the eighteenth century, slavery was attacked by the forces which supported political, social and economic change. The abolitionists could obtain the support of the Evangelical movement. To counter it, the West Indians planters implemented a series of reforms in their slavery practices. They eliminated extreme abuses like cruel punishment and inferior living conditions. These measures served as powerful propaganda weapon to the abolitionists. Also a policy of educating and Christianizing the slaves was implemented to reduce clerical support for Emancipation and win many of the reformers over to the West Indian slavery cause. This was known as the Amelioration Policy. The planters succeeded in delaying the legal abolition of slavery in West Indian Islands. These analyses were given by Luster (1989). However, according to Williams (2014) and many other authors have opined that racism was not the cause but the consequence of slavery and economic problems were the reasons for abolition of slavery in West Indies. Slavery had continued as long as sugarcane agriculture was profitable. African Negroes were much cheaper than the American Indians due to their ability to work hard, strong and high productivity. Import of a large number Indians was making sugarcane farming unprofitable. On

the other hand, Drescher (2010) declared that pressurisation by abolitionists forced the British parliament to enact antislavery legislations.

In Britain, anti-slavery movement was supported by Evangelists and Quakers. In his book, Clarkson (1839) talked about the formation of African Institution in May 1807 for close monitoring of the recently passed antislavery legislation, efforts for abolition of slave trade in other countries, compensation to Africa as a cost of their poor growth and freeing slaves transported by the nation to other countries.

How definitions affect fixing the history and the slave numbers was also discussed by Tise (1990). In her book, Swaminathan (2016) also discussed the definitional issues. She categorised the different rhetoric on slavery as: converging of arguments for resistance to slavery in British colonies and Britain during 1759-1776; proliferation of antislavery arguments and creation of an antislavery community during 1772-1789; proslavery rebuttals using new defence strategies 1770-1789; slavery abolition and construction of British Identity.

In his book review, Whyte (2016) pointed out that Sierra Leone was both a prominent transatlantic slave trading centre and also the key British site for ambitious abolitionist schemes being one of the earliest settlement of freed slaves by Britain. However, backdoor slavery continued in subtle form even after the colonies were established.

In his doctoral thesis, Basile (2016) claimed that international policing of Atlantic region changed US thoughts on international laws which were enacted during the time between US ban on slave trade in 1808 and 1870. USA consistently resisted the international legal strategies changing from its earlier stand to support to resistance because of the characteristics of American slavery and perceptions about losing its in sovereignty at sea. International strategies treated slavery and slave trade issues separately. While slavery still persisted, slave trade was banned. This approach can be viewed as a part of gradual elimination of slavery to which many northern states of US had subscribed. US could not resist this approach due to its own legislations criminalising and isolating slavery and its trade. This mismatch between international and American approaches were highlighted. Thus, a new boundary between US and international legal aspects was created. This distinction resulted in reduced its customary openness to international laws and legal pluralism. Instead a narrower perception of treaty making power of the federal government and a fresh confidence on prescribing American solutions to Atlantic slave trade emerged.

Adam Smith made two statements about productivity of slavery and freed labour. First, slavery was highly inefficient. Secondly, a net production efficiency gain of 12 times that under slavery is possible with freed labour. If this is true, the question arises that why did the elites want to keep such inefficient system for such a long time. According to Smith, the desire for superiority over others is expressed through the number of slaves one owns. Thus, slaves become assets. If slaves are freed, they lose their assets which have value and they need compensation for doing so. In fact, Britain did compensate British planters of West Indies heavily when slavery was abolished in 1833. This was because slavery was not criminalised in the 1833 legislation. The alternative of long term contracts between the masters and freed labour is only another form of slavery and can be dishonoured by either party. Thus, by sticking to slavery, a major opportunity of efficient labour market was lost. These aspects were pointed out by Weingast (2015).

In the aftermath of 1807 and 1833 legislations to abolish slavery in Britain and in some of its colonies, the popular focus shifted to pride in British traditions of liberty and justice, forgetting

the exploitation and violence committed on millions of non-British people by the British. Recent strategies of writers and anti-slavery organisations to commemorate slavery-related issues through various types of publications and conferences have brought them back. Slave ownership was the recent focus of a group of British historians in University College, London. This was funded by Economic and Social Research Council. These trends were identified by Hall (2014).

Modern slavery abolition

Steps to abolish modern slavery in the form of human (sex) trafficking in Thailand was discussed by UN statistics show that human trafficking is still a growing and thriving business in Thailand due to the insufficiency of the current efforts (March, 2016).

Women trafficking equating it to female sexual slavery was discussed by Kempadoo (2015). Three prominent campaigns were identified by the author: modern antislavery themes, feminism related to female slavery abolition and celebrity humanitarianism. Politic at the convergence point of these three trends reflect a 21st century vision of seeing it as a “white man’s burden”. A hypocritical dual stand of western world maintaining and even widening the differences between haves and have nots for their neoliberal advantage and boosting an image of the benevolent west has been identified. Such dual stand is convenient to avoid negative image and promoting positive image at the same time suits the selfish interests of the West. An alternate approach involving commitment to social and economic justice, equity in all respects, decolonisation and redistribution of wealth is proposed.

Several issues relate to modern slavery and some legal responses of selected countries were discussed by New (2015). Forced labour in supply chain had been a global issue. It poses big challenges for the buying firms related to ethics and reputation. The image built by CSR is often undone by buying supplies from firms which practice modern forms of slavery. The range of methods used by reputed buying firms may be inadequate in dealing with forced labour and other forms of modern slavery. Such illegitimate practices persist over time with the support of the loopholes provided by the current regulations and regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive systems. The conditions under which modern is possible are: smaller businesses with limited ability to capture value, a disadvantaged population, geographic isolation. Forced labour cannot be equated with certain other forms of breach of supplier standards, but has a criminal angle. This decreased the chance of gradual upgrading. Forced labour is a deliberately executed crime which is difficult to detect, especially labour contractors supply labour to the supplier firm. Knowing that this is a crime, the concerned supplier firm would have taken all precautions for clever cover-ups and use high level political influence to avoid prosecution. Buyer firms may have to answer a lot of questions from the legal authorities, if they continue buying from such supplier firms. Legislations have been implemented in California for buyer firms to publicly declare their commitment and efforts to eradicate modern slavery forms related to their business. This formed the basis of the later national legislation, Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act 2014 and the US Dodd-Frank Financial Reform Act 2014. UK also has a similar provision in its 2015 Modern Slavery Act. Some criticisms on the limitations of these acts have been aired by many. Many NGOs also actively pursue eradication of forced labour and other forms of modern slavery. One of the most successful organisations is the Walk Free Foundation. They ensured extensive media coverage of slavery practices, provided a global slavery index for comparative rating of slavery and obtained support of many leading persons of global influence. A booklet containing guidelines for firms to effectively avoid or act against modern slavery using best practice evidence has been prepared by the organisation. However,

brutal exercise of commercial power use by global firms to compel supplier firms to cut their prices is also a reason for proliferation of modern slavery. Supply chains become asymmetrical channels of power in such cases. Feminist propagandas against female sex trafficking often do not go beyond presentation of the victim's experiences in a melodramatic fashion rather than find solutions. Concerns about modern slavery may also be a camouflage for more nefarious activities of the protestors. The hero and moral rhetoric of individuals and organisations may mean only self-glory of moral superiority. Walking away is, indeed, walking away from serious social consequences of own actions.

Summary

The history of slavery does not give a consistent picture about the reasons for the beginning, support and rejection of slavery in different countries. Very different reasons seemed to operate in different countries in all these aspects. Although legislations have been passed for instant or gradual abolition of slavery and slave trade, their implementations were not effective. This caused the spread of backdoor slavery. Involvement of leaders and even judicial officers made it difficult to get proper justice to the victims. Slaves were considered as assets and therefore, large compensations were given to slave owners to free them. No compensation and absence of any plan to ensure a reasonable livelihood made these liberated slaves to return to slavery even in abolished countries. Many ways of circumventing abolition laws were found by slavery supporters to continue slavery at least informally. In modern times, slavery is still practised in many different and subtle ways, which escape detection and prosecution. Supply chains have become asymmetrical chains of power between buyers and suppliers. Recent legislations to prevent modern slavery in UK and USA needs to be evaluated for outcome and effectiveness after a reasonable time gap.

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