

# Maternal Health Indicators Predict Estimated Rates of Modern Slavery

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## Introduction

- Gender inequality is a global problem that profoundly impacts mortality and morbidity among mothers and infants, simultaneously increasing women's vulnerability to exploitation.
- Gender inequality continues to be influenced by governmental leadership, education, workforce, economics, culture, and health across the globe (Bandha et al., 2017; United Nations Development Programme, 2019).
- Structural inequality has been identified as a significant risk factor for women's vulnerability to exploitation (Singh, 2015).
- Human trafficking remains a significant global human rights issue, with an estimated 40.3 million victims (Walk Free Foundation, 2018).
- "Trafficking in persons," "human trafficking," and "modern slavery" are umbrella terms used to refer to all forms of coerced exploitation, including sex trafficking, forced organ donation, forced marriage, and all forms of compelled labor (Craig et al., 2019; Polaris Project, 2020; Walk Free Foundation [WFF], 2018).
- Women and girls constitute a disproportionate majority of all trafficking victims (71%) and an overwhelming majority (99%) of sex trafficking victims (ILO, 2017; UNODC, 2018a; WFF, 2018).

## Hypothesis

**We hypothesized that poorer maternal health outcomes would predict higher estimated rates of modern slavery.**

## Method

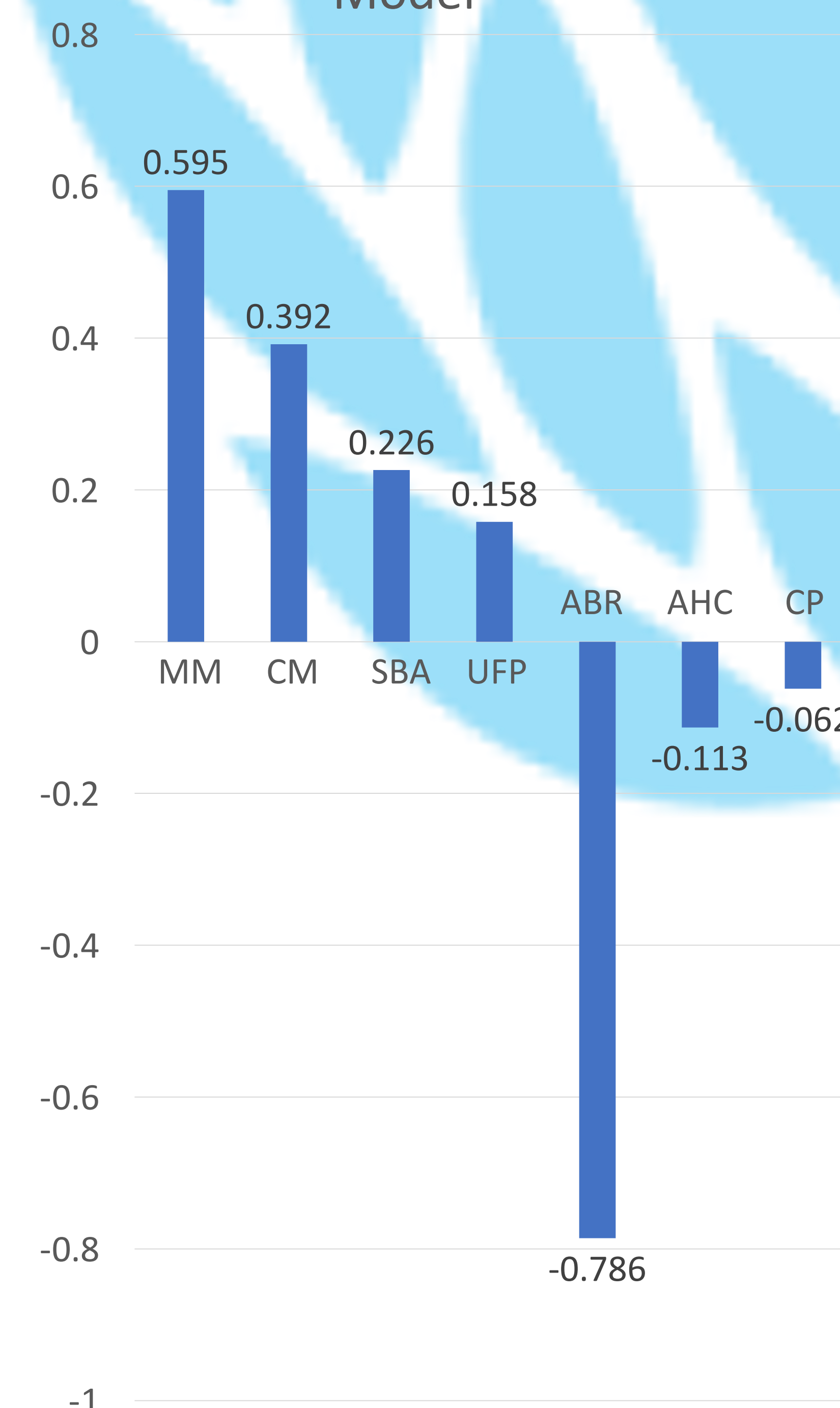
- Country level data of women's maternal health were used to predict modern slavery.
- Data sets were obtained from the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organization, and the Global Slavery Index,

Predictor Variables:	
MM	Maternal Mortality - ratio deaths per 100000 live births 2015
CM	Child Marriage - Women married by age 18 Percent of women ages 20 to 24 who are married or in union 2003 to 2017
SBA	Skilled Birth Attendant - Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel percentage 2012 to 2017
UFP	Unmet Family Planning - Percent of married or in union women of reproductive age 15 to 49 years 2007 to 2017
ABR	Adolescent Birth Rate - births per 1000 women ages 15 to 19 2015 to 2020
AHC	Antenatal Health Care - coverage at least one visit percentage 2007 to 2017
CP	Contraceptive Prevalence - any method percent of married or in union women of reproductive age 15 to 49 years 2007 to 2017
Outcome Variable	
	Prevalence of Modern Slavery

## Results

- As hypothesized, maternal health had a significant relationship to the prevalence of modern slavery.
- Regression analysis revealed that the full set of predictors significantly predicted modern slavery,  $F(7, 81) = 4.37, p < .001$ , and explained 21% of the variance in the prevalence of modern slavery, adj.  $R^2 = .21$

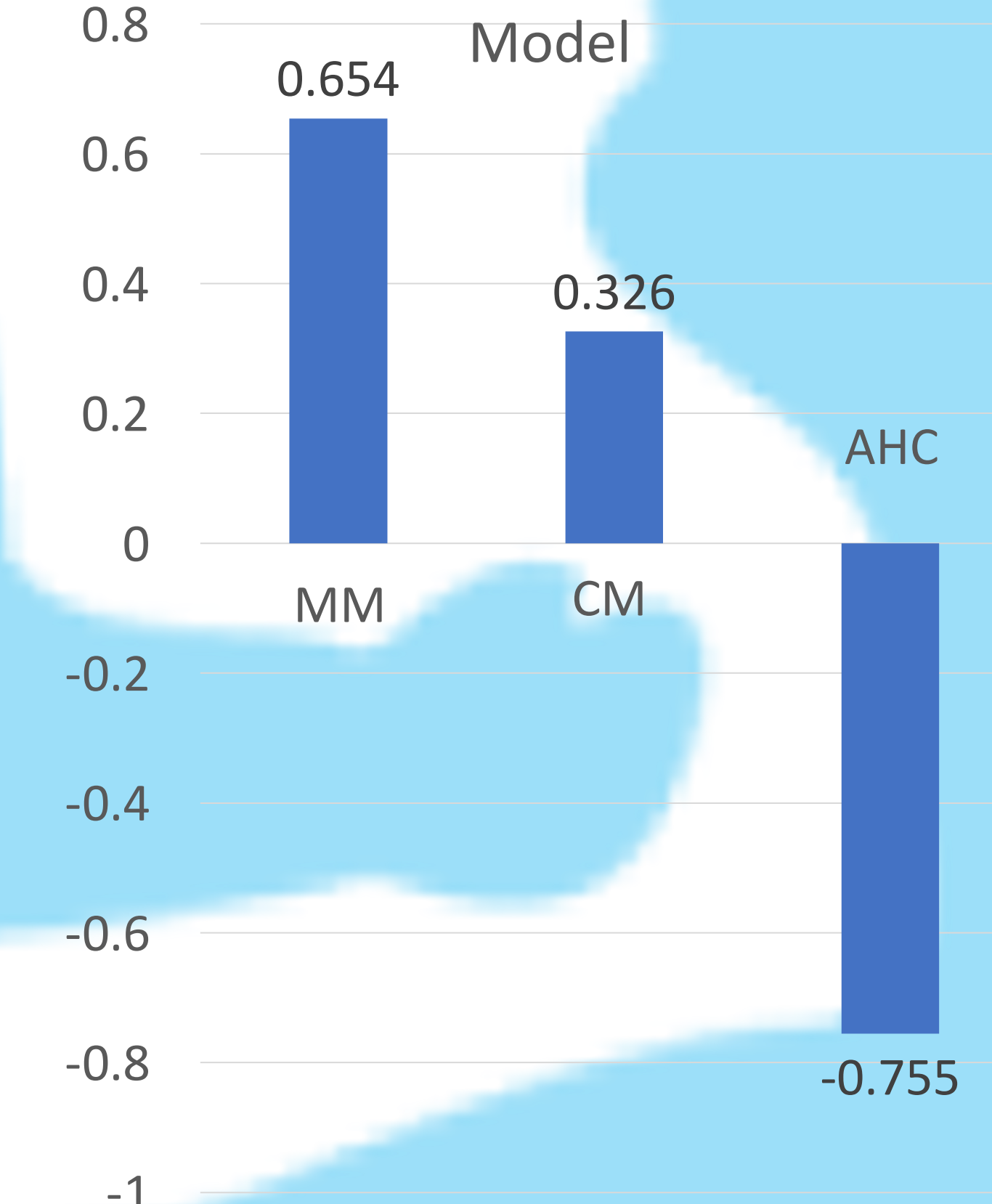
Figure 1: Best Predictors of Modern Slavery in the Full Model



## Results

- Regression analysis revealed that the final set of predictors significantly predicted modern slavery,  $F(3, 85) = 9.17, p < .001$ , and explained 22% of the variance in the prevalence of modern slavery, adj.  $R^2 = .22$ .

Figure 2: Best Predictors of Modern Slavery in the Final Model



## Discussion

- Countries with more gender inequality, as measured by maternal health factors, also have a higher estimated prevalence of modern slavery.
- There is much variability across countries on factors such as religion and access to contraception.
- Due to the illegal nature of modern slavery, statistics are likely underreported and incongruent across countries.
- Further research is needed to understand the complex relationship between these factors.