



HUMAN TRAFFICKING - GS III MAINS

Q. India is one of the major hubs of human trafficking, enumerate the factors favouring rising human trafficking in India. (15 marks, 250 words)

News: *Human trafficking in West Bengal | Living on the edge*

What's in the news?

- As children, these women were trafficked from the Sundarban, in West Bengal. Their panicked parents went to the police for help, but once they were rescued, they were no longer accepted into the communities they left.

Human Trafficking:

- Human trafficking refers to the illegal trade and exploitation of people, typically for the purposes of forced labour, sexual exploitation or involuntary servitude.
- It involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of individuals through threat, force, coercion, abduction, fraud or deception for the purpose of exploiting them.

Status in India:

- According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), India identified over 6,500 human trafficking victims in 2022, with 60% of them being women and girls.

Causes of Human Trafficking:

1. Poverty and Economic Disparities:

- Economic hardships drive individuals into vulnerable situations, making them susceptible to promises of better opportunities that traffickers exploit.

2. Lack of Education and Awareness:

- Limited education and awareness about the risks of trafficking leave individuals unaware of the tactics used by traffickers, making them easy targets.

3. Conflict, Instability and Displacement:

- Areas affected by conflict, political instability or natural disasters create environments ripe for exploitation as people seek refuge or stability elsewhere.

4. Social Marginalization and Discrimination:

- Marginalized groups, including women, children, migrants and minorities, are often more vulnerable due to social discrimination and lack of support structures.

5. Demand for Cheap Labor and Services:

- Industries seeking low-cost labour or services sometimes turn a blind eye to exploitative practices, perpetuating trafficking for labour exploitation.

6. Online Exploitation and Technology:

- Technological advancements have facilitated online recruitment, making it easier for traffickers to lure victims through various deceptive means.



Impacts:

1. Trauma and Psychological Effects:

- Victims endure severe psychological trauma, including depression, anxiety and a sense of betrayal, leading to long-term mental health issues.

2. Physical Health Complications:

- Victims often suffer physical abuse, neglect, and inadequate healthcare, leading to various health complications and long-term injuries.

3. Loss of Freedom and Rights:

- Trafficked individuals lose their autonomy and basic human rights, often living in constant fear, subjected to control and exploitation.

4. Social Stigma and Isolation:

- Survivors face social stigma and ostracization, making it challenging to reintegrate into society even after being rescued.

5. Global Consequences:

- Human trafficking fuels a global criminal network, affecting countries' social fabric, economies, and international relations, undermining global human rights efforts.

Frameworks to Counter Human Trafficking:

1. Constitutional Protection:

- Article 23 provides protection against traffic persons and forced labour.
- Article 21 calls for right to life and personal liberty also provides certain protections against human trafficking.

2. The International Convention for the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others Act ratified by India in 1950.

3. Legal provisions:

a. Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act, 1986

- The Act primarily deals with various offenses like exploiting persons in prostitution and pushing them into brothels.

b. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989

c. Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act

- This act implements the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child (1990)

4. International Framework:

- International Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children (1921)
- The Slavery Convention (1926)
- Forced Labor Convention of ILO (1930)
- International Convention for Suppression of Traffic in Women of Full Age.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1848)
- The Convention for Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of Exploitation of Prostitution of Others (1949)
- The Convention on Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers (1990)



- The United Nations Protocol to Prevent Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women, and Children (2000)

5. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC):

- Established in 1997 is the specialized agency of the United Nations to fight against Trafficking in Humanity.

Measures Taken by Government:

1. Anti Trafficking Cell (ATC):

- It was set up in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in 2006 to act as a focal point for communicating various decisions and follow up on action taken by the State Governments to combat the crime of Human Trafficking.

2. **Women help desks** were established in 10,000 police stations across the country.

3. **The Ministry of Home Affairs** under a **Comprehensive Scheme** strengthening law enforcement response in India against Trafficking in Persons through Training and Capacity Building has released funds for establishment of **Anti-Human Trafficking Units** for 270 districts of the country.

4. Strengthening the capacity building:

- To enhance the capacity building of law enforcement agencies and generate awareness among them.

5. Judicial Colloquium:

- In order to train and sensitize the trial court judicial officers, Judicial Colloquium on human trafficking is held at the High court level.
- The aim is to sensitise the judicial officers about the various issues concerning human trafficking and to ensure speedy court process

WAY FORWARD:

India to strengthen its battle against human trafficking, certain critical shifts are a must in its anti-trafficking laws and policies such as

1. **Investigation of human trafficking** must be mandated to specialized agencies with the requisite training, tools, resources and funding to be able to conduct an interstate and cross-border investigation and collect evidence using necessary technological support.

2. **Rescue protocols** must be well defined to ensure victim-friendly exit processes.

3. **Provisions for implementing intelligence gathering mechanisms** for prevention and rescues must be clearly articulated in the law.

4. **Rehabilitation** must go beyond the institutionalised, one-size-fit-all service providing model, and ensure community-based rehabilitation and reintegration for all survivors in order to strengthen their resilience and agency – not only to prevent further exploitation and trafficking but also to enable their meaningful participation in the justice system and processes.

5. **Adequate funds and robust monitoring systems** must be mandated by the law in order to empower the implementing bodies in breaking the organised crime and business of trafficking.