

---

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN INDIA

---

Prashasti Pathak, Student, Maharaja Agrasen Institute of Management

### ABSTRACT

*Human trafficking is a severe crime that is also a form of modern-day slavery that involves exploiting a human through coercion, fraud, or threat for labour, cheaper services or even commercial sex. Women and children remain a vulnerable group in society due to socio-economic factors such as poverty, lack of education, employment, and social inequality. Despite the existence of legal provision and government initiative, human trafficking exists in different parts of the society. The objective of this blog is to understand the issue of human trafficking and how non-governmental organisations with the communities can work together to combat human trafficking, and what is the way forward. The study is based on secondary sources such as legal provision, scholarly articles, government reports, international reports and existing literature that discuss the nature, causes and legal framework relating to human trafficking. Human trafficking remains a complex issue that requires stronger laws, effective implementation, powerful law enforcement agencies, and increased public awareness in these matters. Human trafficking is the biggest crime against humanity. It needs a comprehensive approach focusing on prevention, protection, and rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking to safeguard their rights and the dignity of individuals who have fallen victim to it, and to combat this form of exploitation in society.*

**Key Words:** - Human Trafficking, Vulnerable Groups, Legal Framework, Prevention & Rehabilitation, Community-NGO Collaboration

## I. INTRODUCTION

Almost 8 million people, roughly the whole population of New York, are trapped in human trafficking in India. South Asia is the region where modern slavery thrives the most. According to the UN recently released data, the south Asian region comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Pakistan have most of the children trapped in human trafficking.<sup>1</sup> It can be forced labour or bonded labour, commercial sex act or cheaper service for that matter, the children are most of the time forced to beg on the streets near the railway station or even outside of temples. Human trafficking is a severe crime that is also a form of modern-day slavery that involves exploiting a human through coercion, fraud or threat for labour, cheaper service or even commercial sex. It is one of the most grievous crimes against the human body; involvement of a minor in any commercial sex act is considered trafficking regardless of the presence of coercion. Every year millions of people are trafficked worldwide, including right here in India; victims of human trafficking can be of any age, religion, place, gender or nationality. Nowadays the increasing growth of social media plays a dual role, one in helping the authorities but it also creates some negative impact in the society where the trafficker uses the social media to trap the victims from all over the world by luring them into a high paying job or through a fake love relationship with the minors or the girls.

One such example is the Case of girl named Tina<sup>2</sup> from Darjeeling who was trafficked to Delhi. This was the case of NGO- MARG where a girl named Tina was missing from her home and her father came to the Ngo to report about his missing daughter who was 14 years old and had gone missing from her home, then acting immediately to the complaint the NGO filed a missing complaint to the nearest police station, and also started investigation at their own level where they talked to Tina's classmates and found from her classmate that she was talking to a guy named Rajan and to 4 other boys after talking to each one of the boys the research was narrowed down, showing her photo to all the taxi driver one recognised her and told he dropped her to Siliguri and she was also in constant touch with a guy named Rajan who was located in Delhi, which gave the case new angle although the girl was found but in most of the case registered the Girls are not found.

---

<sup>1</sup>UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in person Report 2024, South Asian region.

<sup>2</sup>UNDOC, South Asia story of young girl.

This case was one of the cases where law enforcement agencies, community organisation and civil societies worked together to rescue a girl that was trafficked but every time we are not that fortunate as till the time the location of the girl is traced, she has been sold multiple times and all the contacts are lost to reach her.

Now, the biggest question arises how do communities work together with the NGOs to combat human trafficking in India?

Communities play a frontline role in combating human trafficking in India, it can serve as the first line of defence against the wicked crime of human trafficking by creating awareness among the people, being vigilant and taking collective actions toward human trafficking which thrives in the shadow of poverty and marginalised sections.

NGOs in India play a critical role in combating human trafficking through a multipronged approach, prevention, rescue, rehabilitation, and advocacy. They work on the ground to raise awareness, assist law enforcement in raids, operate shelter homes, and provide survivors with counselling, legal aid, and vocational training for reintegration. Many non-governmental organisations are dependent on them to combat human trafficking or other wicked crime involving the human body, working with the government or independently, though the working of the NGOs or field of work may differ but their motive or objective of them is to serve the vulnerable section of society. The NGOs have effectively contributed to the implementation of the provision of the Immoral trafficking prevention act, 1956,<sup>3</sup> and also extended multiple suggestion to government to bring various changes in the trafficking legislative to help the survivor of human trafficking.

Creating the village councils along with NGOs and educating the vulnerable population about the dangers of trafficking, fraudulent job offers, and safe migration practices, also connecting them to government schemes like MANREGA to make them economically stable and less vulnerable to traffickers. Being vigilant is one of the most important work a local community can do to help the authorities and prevent human trafficking.

---

<sup>3</sup>The Immoral Trafficking ( prevention ) Acts, 1956

The village council can monitor the area and inform about any suspicious activities, agent, or trafficker also work with local authorities to investigate the case of missing people. The most difficult part for a victim of human trafficking is to rehabilitate in the society again, community support can help the victim to start a new life community-based support system, providing counselling and rehabilitation service can help the victim to start their new live, a critical role of community is to accept, support, and reintegrate survivors reducing stigma which often leads to re trafficking.

India has multiple laws and regulations to prevent human trafficking in any form, section 143 to 146 of Bharatiya NyayaSanhita, (BNS) 2023,<sup>4</sup> provide penal provision for various forms of trafficking in person. The UNDO report of 2022,<sup>5</sup> shows approx. 6,693 people have been trafficked from India in a single year the data consist of the year 2019 to 2022 where approx. 23,997 people were trafficked in these four years

## WAY FORWARD

The government of India has issued multiple Advisory<sup>6</sup>to prevent human trafficking in India where a working Group composed of Directors General of Police of some of the affected States was constituted in 2004 by MHA to study the issues relating to cross border trafficking. The recommendations of this group were sent to the State Governments and they were advised to evolve a comprehensive strategy for effectively dealing with the problem of trafficking.

Also an “Integrated National Plan of Action to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human beings Specially Women and Children” (Nhrc.inc.in)<sup>7</sup>,which has been worked out through a consultation process of all related Ministries and other stakeholders, has been adopted by Government of India in the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

There should be establishment of Anti-Human trafficking units and appointment of well-trained personnel, mandatory education and empowerment of victims, education is an important tool which can prevent trafficking in vulnerable areas of the society. The traffickers target those who

---

<sup>4</sup>Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023

<sup>5</sup>UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in person Report 2024, South Asian region

<sup>6</sup>Government of India / Bharat Sarkar Ministry of Home Affairs / Grih Mantralay North block New Delhi, 09.09.2009 Advisory on preventing and combating human trafficking in India

<sup>7</sup>National human right commission, India human right framework in India

are vulnerable or illiterate, especially girls as there is high demand for young girls in the sex industry. They are easily trapped in lucrative job offers, high paying jobs or love relationships. Sometimes the trafficker marries the girl to avoid the immigration process and later sells them to the traffickers abroad. So, the organization has adopted to educate the school girls and train them with measures to identify the situation and get out of the clutches of the traffickers.

Establishing and monitoring rehabilitation homes which can help the victim to stay safe and constant supervision of these homes, the annual report should be submitted to the government regarding the progress made by such beneficiaries at these homes. The biggest step to combat human trafficking is to spread awareness in the vulnerable section of the society about the lucrative job offers, marriage, fake love relationship or good education and the malice intention of traffickers behind it.

## CONCLUSION

Human trafficking remains a complex issue that requires stronger laws, effective implementation, powerful law enforcement agencies, and increased public awareness in these matters. Human trafficking is the biggest crime against humanity.

It needs a comprehensive approach focusing on prevention, protection, and rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking to safeguard their rights and the dignity of individuals who have fallen victim to such grave crime, and to combat this form of exploitation in society. India is one of the destined countries for human trafficking; victims predominantly women and children from the marginalized and vulnerable sections are forced into bonded labour, sexual exploitation, forced marriage and even organ harvesting. Root cause for these crimes is systematic vulnerability such as poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy, natural disasters and economic crises such as COVID-19 pandemic also increase these vulnerabilities as traffickers use loss of jobs and lure victims into falling victim of trafficking.

Despite laws like Immoral trafficking prevention act, 1956<sup>8</sup> and Bonded labour system (abolition) act,<sup>9</sup> conviction level remains low; this is due to lack of proper implementation of the laws, corruption, slow judicial processes due to excessive burden on judiciary of pending

---

<sup>8</sup>The Immoral Trafficking (prevention) Acts, 1956

<sup>9</sup>The bonded labour system (abolition) act, 1976

litigation and lack of victim confidence in public judicial system, inadequate police training, there are insufficient funds or not properly trained personnel in government shelters which lead to poor rehabilitation of victim which leads to re-victimization of victim.

To reduce human trafficking and eventually eroding it, there should be proper distribution of funds to the government run shelters, properly trained personnel who understand the needs of the victims and rehabilitating them properly in society. Empowering anti-human trafficking unit to prevent trafficking, improve interstate and international coordination and enhance judicial sensitivity by making a different quasi-judicial body to hear the case of human trafficking. The biggest role is played by communities to rehabilitate the victim into the society, the society should have a victim centric mindset rather than offender centric mindset, we can help the victim to start their new life, by support, and reintegrate survivors reducing stigma which often leads to re trafficking.