



Rehabilitation Scheme for Victims of Trafficking

For Prelims: [National Crime Records Bureau](#), [Article 23 and 24 of the Constitution of India](#), [Immoral Traffic \(Prevention\) Act, 1956 \(ITPA\)](#), [Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006](#), [United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime](#), [Protection of Children from Sexual offences \(POCSO\) Act, 2012](#).

For Mains: Status of Human Trafficking in India, Major Causes and Impacts of Human Trafficking.

Why in News?

The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, has approved a scheme that **aims to provide financial assistance to states and Union Territories to establish protection and rehabilitation homes for victims of trafficking**, particularly in **states with international borders**.

What are the Major Provisions of the Scheme?

- **Financial Assistance for Protection and Rehabilitation Homes:** The scheme aims to provide **financial aid to states and Union Territories** in order to establish **protection and rehabilitation homes for victims of trafficking**.
 - These homes will cater to the specific needs of victims, particularly minors and young women, by providing shelter, food, clothing, counseling, primary health facilities, and other essential daily needs.
- **Strengthening Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs):** In addition to the establishment of protection and rehabilitation homes, the government has allocated funds from the [Nirbhaya Fund](#) **to support the strengthening of anti-human trafficking units in every district across all states and Union Territories**.
 - The funding has been extended to all states and Union Territories, including AHTUS in **Border Guarding Forces like the BSE (Border Security Force) and SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal)**.
 - Presently, there are **788 functional AHTUs, including 30 within Border Guarding Forces**, across the country.

What is the Status of Human Trafficking in India?

- **About:**
 - Human trafficking is a global issue that affects numerous countries, and **India is no exception**.
 - With its **large population, economic disparities, and complex social dynamics**, India has become a hotspot for various forms of human trafficking.
- **Statistics:**
 - According to the [National Crime Records Bureau \(NCRB\) data](#), 2,189 cases of human trafficking were filed in 2022, involving 6,533 victims.
 - Among these victims, **4,062 were female, and 2,471 were male**. Notably, **2,877 victims were minors**.
 - While **more underage boys (1,570) were trafficked in 2021 than girls**

(1,307), the trend was reversed when considering adult victims, with women outnumbering men.

- Certain states have reported higher numbers of human trafficking cases, as indicated by AHTUs:
 - **Telangana, Maharashtra, and Assam** had the highest number of cases registered in their respective AHTUs in 2021.
 - These states, due to their geographical locations and other factors, are particularly vulnerable to **cross-border trafficking and require special attention and resources**.
 - India's neighboring countries often serve as sources for traffickers who exploit women and girls by **offering false promises of employment or a better standard of living**.
- **Various Forms of Human Trafficking:**
 - **Forced Labor:** Victims are coerced or deceived into working under exploitative conditions, including industries like agriculture, construction, domestic work, and manufacturing.
 - **Sexual Exploitation:** Individuals, particularly women and children, are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution and pornography.
 - **Child Trafficking:** Children are trafficked for various purposes, including child labor, forced begging, child marriage, adoption scams, and sexual exploitation.
 - **Bonded Labor:** People are trapped in a cycle of debt bondage, where they are forced to work to repay a debt that often continues to increase due to exploitative practices.
 - **Organ Trafficking:** Trafficking of organs involves the illegal trade of organs like kidneys, liver, and corneas for transplantation purposes.
- **Relevant Laws in India and International Conventions:**
 - **Article 23 and 24 of the Constitution of India.**
 - **Article 23** prohibits human trafficking and begar (forced labour without payment).
 - **Article 24** forbids employment of children below the age of 14 years in dangerous jobs like factories and mines.
 - **Indian Penal Code (IPC) Section:**
 - **Section 370 and 370A of IPC** provide for comprehensive measures to counter the menace of human trafficking including trafficking of children for exploitation in any form including physical exploitation or any form of sexual exploitation, slavery, servitude, or the forced removal of organs.
 - **Sections 372 and 373** dealing with selling and buying of girls for the purpose of prostitution.
 - **Other Legislations:**
 - **The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA)** is the premier legislation for prevention of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.
 - There are other specific legislations enacted relating to trafficking in women and children - **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994,**
 - **Protection of Children from Sexual offences (POCSO) Act, 2012,** is a special law to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.
 - **International Convention:**
 - **United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC)** has a Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children(India has ratified).
 - **SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution**(India has ratified).

What are the Major Causes and Impacts of Human Trafficking?

- **Causes:**
 - **Socioeconomic Factors:** **Poverty, unemployment, and lack of economic opportunities** create vulnerability, pushing individuals into desperate situations where they are more likely to be trafficked.
 - **Gender Inequality and Discrimination:** Deep-rooted **gender inequalities, discrimination, and violence against women and girls** increase their susceptibility to

trafficking.

- This includes issues such as dowry-related violence, child marriage, and lack of access to education.
- **Political Instability and Conflict:** Regions affected by [political instability](#), **armed conflict**, and displacement provide **fertile ground for trafficking**, as people are displaced and left vulnerable without protection.
- **Corruption and Organized Crime:** Widespread corruption within law **enforcement agencies, immigration authorities, and judicial systems** enables traffickers to operate with impunity, making it difficult to identify, investigate, and prosecute cases effectively.
- **Impacts:**
 - **Physical and Psychological Trauma:** Trafficking victims endure physical and psychological abuse, violence, and trauma.
 - They often suffer from injuries, sexually transmitted infections, malnutrition, and physical exhaustion.
 - Moreover, the psychological impact includes **anxiety, depression, [post-traumatic stress disorder \(PTSD\)](#)**, and a loss of trust in others.
 - **Violation of Human Rights:** Human trafficking fundamentally violates the victims' **human rights**. It deprives them of their **freedom, dignity, and security**.
 - **Economic Exploitation:** Trafficked individuals are subjected to harsh working conditions, long hours, and little or no pay.
 - In many cases, **victims become trapped in debt bondage**, where they are forced to work to repay an ever-increasing debt, making escape from exploitation extremely difficult.
 - **Disruption of Social Fabric:** Human trafficking disrupts the social fabric of communities and families.
 - It tears apart families as individuals are forcibly separated from their loved ones. This disruption leads to **loss of social support networks, and strained relationships within communities**.

Way Forward

- **Strengthen Legislation and Law Enforcement:** There is a need to **enact and enforce robust anti-trafficking laws** that criminalize all forms of human trafficking and provide adequate penalties for offenders.
 - Also, there is a need to **enhance training programs for law enforcement agencies, judiciary, and border control officers** to identify and respond to trafficking cases effectively.
- **Technological Solutions:** There is a need to **develop advanced data analytics tools and [artificial intelligence](#) algorithms** to analyze big data sets, identify trafficking trends, and predict potential hotspots.
 - **Blockchain technology** can also be utilised to enhance transparency in supply chains and prevent the use of forced labor in industries prone to trafficking, such as agriculture and garment manufacturing.
- **International Collaboration:** India can facilitate international collaboration and knowledge exchange platforms to share **innovative approaches, best practices, and success stories in combating human trafficking**.
 - There is also a need to foster partnerships between **countries, NGOs, academia, and private sectors** to jointly develop and implement innovative solutions.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. India's proximity to the two of the world's biggest illicit opium-growing states has enhanced her internal security concerns. Explain the linkages between drug trafficking and other illicit activities such as gunrunning, money laundering and human trafficking. What counter-measures should be taken to prevent the same? (2018)

Source: IE

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