



Human Trafficking

For Prelims: Operation Storm Makers II, [Interpol](#), [Human trafficking forms](#), [National Crime Records Bureau](#), [Immoral Traffic \(Prevention\) Act, 1956, Article 23](#), [Protection of Children from Sexual Offences \(POCSO\) Act, 2012](#), UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, SAARC Convention on Trafficking.

For Mains: Status of Human Trafficking in India,

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Operation Storm Makers II, orchestrated by [Interpol](#), has illuminated the **expanding network of fraud schemes associated with [human trafficking](#)**.

- It mobilized law enforcement in 27 countries across Asia and other regions to target human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

What are the Major Highlights of Operation Storm Makers II?

- **Arrests and Charges:** The operation resulted in the apprehension of 281 individuals across various countries on charges spanning **human trafficking, passport forgery, corruption, telecommunications fraud, and [sexual exploitation](#)**.
- **Rescues and Investigations:** 149 human trafficking victims were rescued, initiating over 360 investigations, a substantial number of which are currently under active pursuit by law enforcement agencies.
- **Telangana Case:** According to Interpol, the Telangana police registered one of the **first cases in India of human trafficking committed for the purpose of forcing victims to commit cyber fraud**.
 - An accountant was lured to a Southeast Asian country and forced into participating in online fraudulent schemes **under inhumane conditions**.
 - His release was secured after a ransom payment.

Note

Interpol or the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO) is the world's largest international police organization. Interpol's mission is to help police around the world work together to make the world safer.

- It has 196 member countries. India is one of the oldest members of Interpol and joined the organization in 1949.
- It uses a secure network that allows countries to contact each other and the General Secretariat. It also allows them to access Interpol's databases and services in real-time.

What is the Status of Human Trafficking in India?

- **About 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**.
- **Constitutional & Legislative Provisions related to Trafficking in India:**
 - **Constitutional Prohibition:** [Article 23](#) prohibits **human trafficking and begar (forced labour without payment)**.
 - **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA):** This legislation serves as the primary law aimed at preventing trafficking specifically for commercial sexual exploitation.
 - **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012:** Enacted on 14th November 2012, this act is dedicated to shielding children from sexual abuse and exploitation.
 - It provides clear definitions for various forms of sexual abuse, encompassing penetrative and non-penetrative assaults, as well as sexual harassment.
 - **Other Specific Legislations:** Various other laws target trafficking in women and children, including the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006**, the **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976**, the **Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986**, the **Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994**, and pertinent sections in the Indian Penal Code, such as Sections 372 and 373 that address the selling and buying of girls for prostitution.
 - **State-Specific Legislation:** States have also enacted specific laws to tackle trafficking. For instance, The **Punjab Prevention of Human Smuggling Act, 2012**, is one such state-level legislation aimed at addressing this issue.
- **Related International Convention:**
 - **UN Convention (UNTOC):** India ratified the [UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime \(UNTOC\)](#) which includes a Protocol specifically addressing the Prevention, Suppression, and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons, particularly Women and Children.
 - **Legislative Action:** The **Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013**, was enacted to align with the Protocol's provisions, offering a precise definition of human trafficking.
 - **SAARC Convention on Trafficking:** India ratified the **SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution**.
 - **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):** Also known as the International Bill of Rights for Women. It was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
 - India ratified CEDAW in 1993.

What are the Major Causes and Impacts of Human Trafficking?

- **Causes:**
 - **Poverty and Economic Disparities:** **Economic hardships** drive individuals into vulnerable situations, making them susceptible to promises of better opportunities that traffickers exploit.
 - **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.
 - **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.
 - **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.

- **Demand for Cheap Labor and Services:** Industries seeking low-cost labor or services sometimes turn a **blind eye to exploitative practices**, perpetuating trafficking for labor exploitation.
- **Online Exploitation and Technology:** Technological advancements have facilitated online recruitment, making it easier for **traffickers to lure victims through various deceptive means**.

▪ **Impacts:**

- **Trauma and Psychological Effects:** Victims endure severe psychological trauma, including **depression, anxiety** and a sense of betrayal, leading to long-term mental health issues.
- **Physical Health Complications:** Victims often suffer physical abuse, neglect, and inadequate healthcare, leading to various health complications and long-term injuries.
- **Loss of Freedom and Rights:** Trafficked individuals **lose their autonomy and basic human rights**, often living in constant fear, subjected to control and exploitation.
- **Social Stigma and Isolation:** Survivors face **social stigma and ostracization**, making it challenging to reintegrate into society even after being rescued.
- **Global Consequences:** Human trafficking **fuels a global criminal network**, affecting countries' social fabric, economies, and international relations, undermining global human rights efforts.

Way Forward

- **Prevention through Education and Awareness:** Implement comprehensive education programs to **inform communities, especially vulnerable groups**, about the risks and tactics of traffickers.
 - Raise awareness through **campaigns, workshops, and media** to promote vigilance and empower individuals to recognize and report trafficking.
- **Strengthen Legal Frameworks:** Enforce existing laws effectively and consistently while strengthening legislation to provide **better protection for victims and harsher penalties for traffickers**.
 - Provide adequate resources and training to law enforcement agencies to combat trafficking and handle victim cases sensitively.
- **Support and Rehabilitation for Victims:** Establish **comprehensive victim-centered support systems** providing shelter, healthcare, counseling, and vocational training for survivors.
 - Ensure **reintegration programs that help survivors rebuild their lives** and reintegrate into society without stigma.
- **International and Regional Collaboration:** Foster collaboration between countries to **share information, intelligence, and best practices** for effective cross-border cooperation.
 - Ratify and implement international conventions and protocols aimed at combating human trafficking.
- **Tackle Root Causes:** Address **poverty and economic disparities by creating sustainable livelihood opportunities** and economic empowerment programs for vulnerable populations.
 - Combat social discrimination and marginalization by promoting **inclusivity, equality, and social support structures**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. India's proximity to 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)

