

NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON
SAFE MIGRATION TO
COMBAT TRAFFICKING

30th JULY 2024



INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) passed a resolution designating 30 July as the World Day against Trafficking in Persons. This year's theme, for 2024, was "Leave No Child Behind in the fight against human trafficking." According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 1 in 3 victims of human trafficking worldwide is a child. This statistic highlights the alarming prevalence of child victims of trafficking, particularly girls.

To address this pressing issue, a national-level consultation was organised by the Association for Voluntary Action (AVA) with the support of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on the theme of **'SAFE MIGRATION TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING'**. Held at the Constitution Club of India on July 30, the event brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to engage in meaningful dialogue and action.

The consultation was graced by the presence of several distinguished guests. Mr. Priyank Kanoongo, Chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), and Mr. Manoj Yadava (IPS), Director General of the Railway Protection Force (RPF), served as Chief Guests. Ms. Shikha Goel (IPS), Additional Director General of Police, CID, Telangana and Mr. Ajay Chowdhary (IPS), Special Commissioner, Special Police Unit for Women and Children (SPUWAC), Special Police Unit For North-Eastern Region (SPUNER) and Armed Police, Delhi were the Guests of Honour. Additionally, Mr. Bhuwan Ribhu, Founder of the Just Rights for Children, delivered the keynote address.

The event brought together about 250 participants from 12 states, fostering a rich and inclusive dialogue. The regional insights were provided by stakeholders from the State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights, Labour Department, Police and Department of Women and Child Development, while Global perspectives were shared by the International Organisation for Migration and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Around 30 women migrants participated in the event, offering valuable insights from their personal experiences. Over 50 grassroots Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working on child protection, migrants and women's rights, shared their expertise in child protection and trafficking prevention. The participation of school students underscored the crucial role of engaging future generations in tackling these pressing issues.

During the consultation, the sessions explored various aspects of safe migration and combating trafficking. The discussions focused on the connection between safe migration and trafficking, strategies for promoting safety and prevention and recommendations for future actions.

KEY MESSAGES



Mr. Priyank Kanoongo
Chairperson, NCPCR

Mr. Priyank Kanoongo emphasised the necessity of action over mere words in the fight against trafficking. He highlighted the significant efforts by the NCPCR, including initiatives focused on safe migration and advancements in digital monitoring and infrastructure for tracking trafficking activities, emphasising the critical importance of accurate and timely data entry. He called for an increase in rescue operations and more rigorous enforcement to effectively tackle these issues.

Mr. Kanoongo stressed that tackling illegal and unsafe migration requires proactive preventive measures and the linkage of individuals with employment and livelihood opportunities. He advocated for integrating rehabilitation into mainstream society through education and highlighted that successful prevention efforts in India must involve families.

“One should talk less and work more on trafficking. Regardless of how many workshops or conferences we hold, our actions should be impactful and our work should be powerful in this direction”

Ms. Shikha Goel (IPS),
Additional Director General of Police, CID, Telangana



Ms. Shikha Goel emphasised that while migration itself is not an issue, ensuring its safety is crucial. She highlighted the essential role of migrants in the economy and the need to uphold their dignity.

Ms. Goel shared the efforts done by Telangana to aid migrants, combat trafficking and hold offenders accountable. She emphasised the effective implementation of the One Nation One Ration Card scheme and a national database for the unorganised sector. She called for better enforcement of the Migrant Labour Act, increased police surveillance, revocation of licenses for repeat offending employers and a nationwide helpline for migrant workers, along with targeted awareness programmes.

“Establishing a single, nationwide helpline for migrant workers will provide them with a reliable resource for support, reporting issues and accessing assistance”



Mr. Bhuwan Ribhu,
Founder, Just Rights for Children

Mr. Bhuwan Ribhu underscored the importance of promoting safe migration. He proposed implementing targeted awareness campaigns at transit points and guaranteeing education up to 18 years. He also recommended creating a national helpline and portal for the registration of migrant workers, enabling employers to register and make payments. Additionally, he added that one day's labour can pave the way for securing a year's worth of rights and opportunities.

He announced a new initiative named "TACT" (Technology against Child Trafficking), emphasising its six key pillars. Mr. Ribhu called for increased vigilance on platforms like Facebook and Instagram to combat cyber enabled trafficking. He criticised the proliferation of trafficking disguised under various names, including spas and massage parlours and emphasised the need for comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation.

"A comprehensive anti-trafficking law is crucial and urgently needed. We must demand not only the enactment of this law but also its proper implementation"

Six Key Pillars of Technology Against Child Trafficking (TACT)

- ❑ Participation of survivors at all levels in combating trafficking and promotion of safe migration
- ❑ Identification, sharing of intelligence & creation of Global Traffickers database
- ❑ Identification of money trail and involvement of banks and financial institutions in identification of illegal payments and seizure of properties
- ❑ Identifying patterns of technology-driven trafficking by collaborating with Big Technology Firms on Global level
- ❑ Strengthening Government Portals for promoting safe migration practices and ensuring access to Government Schemes
- ❑ Use of Psychological First Aid for survivors to strengthen flow of information and intelligence of traffickers

SESSION 1:

LINKAGES BETWEEN MIGRATION & TRAFFICKING



Ms. Ankita Surabhi,
International Organisation for Migration

“Many companies deny the occurrence of migrant workers in their supply chains, thinking it reflects negatively on them. It is vital to acknowledge and address this reality to ensure ethical practices.”

Dr. Shyamal Prasad Saikia,
Chairperson, State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Assam

“Establish active helplines and hotlines where migrants can seek information and learn about their rights”



Ms. G. Sunanda,
Joint Director of Women and Child Development, Telangana

“Targeted awareness programmes can play a crucial role in reducing trafficking by informing migrants of their rights and protection”

Ms. Rinki Tanti,
Woman Migrant

“There should be some security measures for us. What will happen to us in the future if we can't earn? How will we manage our economic situation when our health is also deteriorating?”



SESSION 2:

STRATEGIES FOR SAFE MIGRATION & PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING



Mr. Vineet Kapoor (IPS),

Deputy Inspector General (DIG), Community Policing and PSO to DGP, Madhya Pradesh

“Community policing for border areas should be established as a national police mission involving BSF, SSB, and state police agencies, working closely with the community”

Mr. Jatashankar,
Manav Sewa Sansthan

“Government infrastructure should be strengthened for maximum registration, especially on open portals. Data will create a significant impact on policies”



Ms. Kanchan Jha,
Woman Migrant

“Proofs should be made easily accessible and the process should be simplified. Not everyone is educated or has access to official documents; many people are illiterate and rely on thumbprints”

Mr. Insaf Nizam,
Specialist on Fundamental Principles and Rights and Work, ILO

“We need to educate parents about illegal migration and inform them about government programmes. Laws alone are not sufficient”



Ms. Parveen Joshi,

Chairperson, State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Haryana

“Children migrate with their parents, arrive independently, or are left behind. Addressing these challenges effectively requires a strong emphasis on education”

SESSION 3:

RECOMMENDATIONS & WAY FORWARD



Ms. Gita Khanna,

Chairperson, State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Uttarakhand

"Everyone is working in isolation at the state level. There needs to be a convergence of data across different organisations and sectors."

Mr. S.S Kumar,

Joint Labour Commissioner, Andhra Pradesh

"Establish a confidential reporting system for individuals to report suspicious activities related to trafficking"



Ms. Laiba Noor,

Woman Migrant

"I hope to become a support system for my mother and obtain the necessary documents to apply for a scholarship. This will enable me to further my education and support my younger brother's schooling"

Mr. Rajeev Bhardwaj,

Co-coordinator, Just Rights for Children Alliance

"Technology empowers us to stay one step ahead in the relentless pursuit of justice and protection for children"



Mr. Nirmal Rishidev,

Representative of Survivor Led Intelligence Network

"To protect children, a migrant register should be created with complete addresses to prevent any incidents"



Mr. Mohit Chowdhary,

Chief Probation Officer (CPO), Women and Child Development, Uttarakhand

“We need to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to address the intersectionality of laws”

Mr. Ajay Chowdhary (IPS),

Special Commissioner, SPUWAC & SPUNER & Armed Police, Delhi

Mr. Ajay highlighted the severe and alarming issues of migration and trafficking, emphasising systemic loopholes that traffickers exploit and the ineffectiveness of AHTUs due to a lack of trained personnel. He pointed out the high acquittal rates in trafficking and bonded labour cases and the lack of familial support for many victims. Mr. Chowdhary called for CSR initiatives to address these issues and stressed the urgent need for serious consideration of reform recommendations.



“It is imperative for all stakeholders, NGOs, CSOs and media to work with full commitment. Trafficking remains one of the least reviewed crimes”



Manoj Yadava (IPS),

Director General, RPF

Mr. Manoj Yadava highlighted the need for new legislation to track illegal money trails. Mr. Yadava expressed his commitment to appeal personally to the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) to emphasise the necessity of a comprehensive law based on collective suggestions and recommendations.

He praised AVA's efforts in intelligence-sharing and training and detailed the collaborative work of RPF and AVA, including the Nanhe Farishtey programme. Mr. Yadava stressed the importance of continued development and effective policies to comprehensively address these critical issues.

“We must work towards overall national development. Only then can we create effective policies and laws”

RECOMMENDATIONS SHARED BY STAKEHOLDERS

Towards the end of the consultation, the recommendations and suggestions shared by stakeholders during the event were presented. It was emphasised that the consultation was not a one-day affair but involved extensive deliberations and the proposed recommendations highlight the comprehensive nature of the discussions incorporating diverse perspectives to develop well-rounded solutions for trafficking and safe migration.

Policies and Legal framework

- ❑ Need for a comprehensive and robust Anti Trafficking law with focus on emerging forms of trafficking such as cyber enabled trafficking, use of spas and massage parlours for sexual exploitation
- ❑ Define cyber crime and include its linkages with trafficking in law
- ❑ Effective implementation of existing laws for migrants
- ❑ Stringent action against repeat offenders with development of their history sheets
- ❑ Community policing in border areas and also for persons with disabilities to prevent distress migration
- ❑ Clarity of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders
- ❑ Convergence of international instruments with national laws for safe migration
- ❑ Special steps to address forced marriages (marriage market based migration)

Institutional Framework

- ❑ National toll-free helpline for migrants as a single platform to address needs of migrants – confidential and accessible reporting of violations
- ❑ Strengthened database of workers in the unorganised sector
- ❑ Accountability of recruitment agencies and placement agencies

Convergence and Partnerships

- ❑ Convergence and collaboration through multi stakeholder approach
- ❑ Partnership of Police and NGOs for sharing actionable intelligence
- ❑ All stakeholders on a single platform for convergent action- starting with dialogue across practices that converts to action on the ground

Knowledge and Data-based decision making

- ❑ Comprehensive data management systems, that leads to data-based decision making
- ❑ Awareness of rights and entitlements of migrants at both source and destination areas

Education

- ❑ Education for all children till 18 years with focus on hotspot areas of trafficking
- ❑ Easy access to vocational/skill building courses
- ❑ Digitalisation of record of out of school children
- ❑ Anti-trafficking and safe migration in curriculum

Technology

- ❑ Using technology to promote information sharing among vulnerable workers, and to prevent trafficking of both adults and children

Prevention

- ❑ Constitution and strengthening of Village level Child Protection Committee
- ❑ Village Migration Registers – formed and maintained in all villages
- ❑ Simple and easy process of developing IDs and access to social welfare schemes
- ❑ Employment for widows to reduce vulnerability
- ❑ Targeted Awareness programmes in vulnerable communities to build resilience
- ❑ Private sector to support safe migration and also facilitate registration of migrants-responsibility of all actors in the business supply chains

Prosecution

- ❑ Field-level actionable intelligence sharing between civil society and law enforcement agencies
- ❑ Access to justice for victims of unsafe migration and trafficking

Rehabilitation

- ❑ Strengthening of rehabilitation focused network – trauma informed and psycho-social support, gender mainstreaming
- ❑ Collaboration with law enforcement agencies for the rehabilitation and reintegration of the children

Just Rights for Children Alliance announces TACT technology initiative to combat child trafficking and ensure safe migration on Global Day Against Trafficking in Persons

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