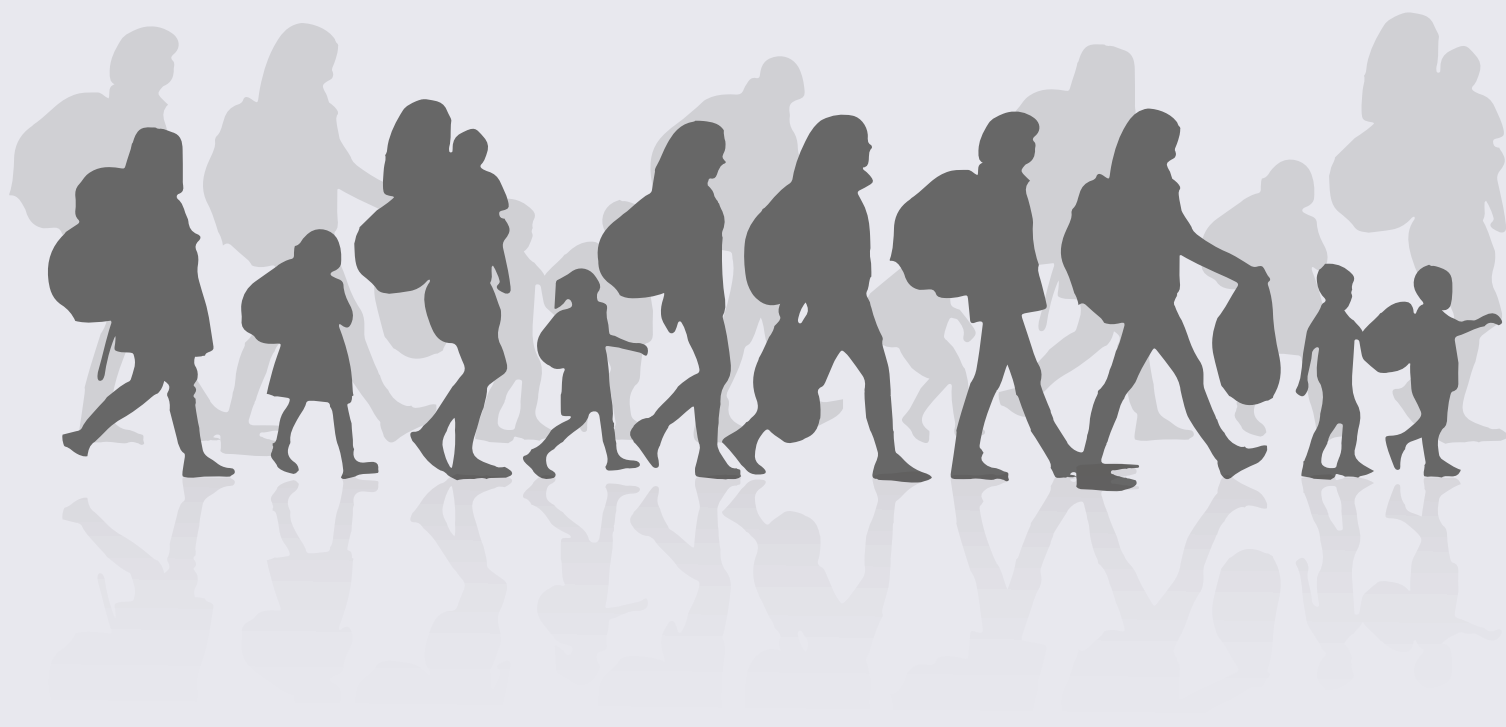


# REGIONAL CONSULTATION REPORT ON **SAFE MIGRATION TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING**

Supported by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

**Date:** 11th July, 2024 | **Time:** 2:00 PM

**Venue:** W-34, Okhla Phase II, New Delhi



## CONTEXT

In preparation for a national consultation in New Delhi, the Association for Voluntary Action (AVA) conducted a series of regional consultations. These events were part of the Global Programme "Shaping Development-oriented Migration" (MEG), an initiative aimed at harnessing the benefits of regular migration and engaging diaspora communities for sustainable development. The MEG programme aligns with the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and forms part of a comprehensive approach to migration and development issues.

## INTRODUCTION

The regional consultations were designed to gather crucial insights from civil society organizations working at the grassroots level. These discussions focused on the intricate relationship between migration and trafficking, aiming to uncover the realities faced by migrants and potential victims of trafficking. The consultations provided a platform for organizations to share their experiences, challenges, and recommendations, which would later inform the national-level discussions and policy formulations.

## PARTICIPANTS PROFILE

The consultations brought together a diverse group of civil society organizations, each bringing unique perspectives shaped by their work in various aspects of migration and anti-trafficking efforts. Participants included representatives from NGOs, community-based organizations, and grassroots activists who have been working directly with migrants and trafficking survivors. Their collective expertise spanned areas such as legal aid, rehabilitation, community outreach, and policy advocacy, providing a comprehensive view of the issues at hand.

## OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the regional consultations were:

- To understand the ground-level realities of migration and trafficking from the perspective of civil society organizations.
- To identify the challenges and gaps in current policies and practices related to safe migration.

- To collect case studies that illustrate the complex relationship between migration and trafficking.
- To gather recommendations for improving safe migration practices and combating trafficking more effectively.
- To create a foundation of insights and data to inform the upcoming national consultation.

## HIGHLIGHT

A key highlight of the consultations was the unanimous recognition of the intricate link between migration and trafficking. Participants emphasized that what often begins as voluntary migration can transform into trafficking due to deception, coercion, or exploitation along the journey or at the destination. This realization underscored the need for a nuanced and comprehensive approach to migration policies that address both the aspirations of migrants and the risks they face.

## Viewpoint of participants on migration

The discussions revealed a multifaceted understanding of migration among the participants. Migration was seen not just as a geographical shift but as a complex process involving changes in cultural, social, and policy environments. Participants stressed that the success of migration should be measured by the fulfillment of the migrant's original purpose and the protection of their rights throughout the process. Safe migration, according to the consensus, involves more than just legal documentation. It encompasses the assurance of equal rights, access to basic necessities, and the preservation of dignity at the destination. Participants noted that people migrate for various reasons, ranging from economic opportunities to escaping conflict or environmental disasters. However, they also highlighted that many migrants face exploitation due to a lack of awareness about their rights and the legal processes involved in migration.

The consultations brought to light the particular vulnerabilities of certain groups, such as women and children, in the migration process. Participants shared experiences of how these groups are often targeted by traffickers who exploit their aspirations for a better life. The discussions also touched upon internal migration dynamics, with many noting the challenges faced by rural migrants in urban settings, including discrimination and lack of access to social services.

## CASE STUDIES

Two compelling case studies were presented during the consultations, illustrating the complex nature of trafficking and the challenges in combating it:

### ***Case Study 1: Cross-Border Trafficking from Bangladesh to India***

A young girl from Bangladesh was lured by two neighbors with promises of lucrative employment in India. She was transported via water routes to West Bengal, where she was initially held in a room with 10-15 other women and girls. The traffickers procured a fake Aadhar card for her, facilitating her movement within India. She was then taken to Delhi and subsequently to Palwal, where she was forced into commercial sexual exploitation. Her rescue came about when she confided in a customer who then alerted the authorities. The case revealed the intricate network of traffickers operating across borders and the use of forged documents to circumvent legal checks. An organization working on anti-trafficking, recognized the case's complexity and sought the involvement of the National Investigating Agency due to its cross-border nature.

### ***Case Study 2: Internal Trafficking of Children for Labor***

Another Civil Society Organization shared a case involving the trafficking of children from Bihar to Maharashtra. A group of children were found traveling unaccompanied on a train, raising suspicions among the staff. Upon investigation, it was revealed that the children were being taken to work in factories. The alert railway staff informed the authorities, leading to the rescue of the children and the arrest of five traffickers. However, the case highlighted a significant challenge in prosecuting trafficking cases – the traffickers were eventually released due to insufficient evidence. This outcome underscored the need for stronger legal frameworks and better evidence collection mechanisms in trafficking cases.



## SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The consultations yielded several innovative recommendations and highlighted existing good practices. Participants praised the Tamil Nadu government's initiative to use Aadhar cards as a universal identifier for school attendance, ensuring that migrant children can access education without bureaucratic hurdles. They suggested that similar schemes could be implemented nationwide to prevent the alienation of migrant children from the education system.

Another significant recommendation was the implementation of Village Migration Registers. Participants proposed that local panchayats should be made accountable for maintaining these registers, which would create a comprehensive database of migrants, including children. This system, they argued, would not only help in tracking migration patterns but also in ensuring the safety and well-being of migrants.

The idea of improved information sharing between district administrations of origin and destination areas was also put forward. Participants believed that such a system would significantly contribute to curbing exploitation by creating a more transparent migration process. They emphasized the need for inter-state cooperation and standardized protocols for information exchange.

## CONCLUSION

The regional consultations provided invaluable insights into the complex interplay between migration and trafficking. They highlighted the need for a holistic approach that addresses both the aspirations of migrants and the risks they face. The discussions underscored the importance of awareness, legal protections, and inter-agency cooperation in ensuring safe migration and combating trafficking effectively.

The case studies presented during the consultations vividly illustrated the challenges faced by law enforcement and civil society organizations in tackling trafficking. They emphasized the need for stronger legal frameworks, better evidence collection methods, and enhanced cross-border cooperation.

As the organizers prepare for the national consultation, these regional insights will serve as a crucial foundation. They offer a ground-level perspective that is essential for formulating effective policies and strategies. The recommendations, particularly regarding the Village Migration Registers and improved information sharing, present concrete steps that can be taken to enhance the safety and dignity of migrants.



The consultations also reinforced the vital role played by civil society organizations in addressing migration and trafficking issues. Their grassroots experiences and innovative approaches will be invaluable in shaping a comprehensive national strategy that aligns with the goals of the MEG programme and contributes to the broader objectives of sustainable development and human rights protection.



CSO sharing their experiences



Another CSO sharing their experience



Regional Consultation with CSOs



Participants of the Regional Consultation

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