



**Human Trafficking in Bangladesh: A Study on Narayanganj and Jessore
Districts**

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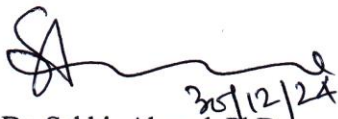
Supervisor's Recommendation

To whom it may concern

It gives me great pleasure to endorse University of Dhaka MPhil candidate Moumita Sen. "Human Trafficking in Bangladesh: A Study on Narayanganj and Jessore Districts" is the topic of her MPhil research project. She was awarded the scholarship MPhil Part I marks. Her eagerness and tenacity paid off well. I should note that she tried to make difficult passages understandable for them. Her skills and demeanor during the studies were quite helpful. She did a great job working hard and handling the challenge. She demonstrated her capacity for teamwork as well. Moumita demonstrated during her studies that she could work both independently and, in a team, to plan the work process. She demonstrated her capacity to function under stress. Moumita has unique qualities, a strong desire to grow as a person, and academic prowess that I am confident will help her in her future endeavors. She embraces her mistakes and does not shy away from making them. But Moumita approaches every issue, in life and in the classroom, with a very rational mindset.

I am confident that Moumita Sen will continue to excel in her future academic and professional endeavors. Her dedication, intellectual curiosity, and exceptional research skills make her an outstanding candidate for any opportunity she pursues.

Sincerely,



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ABSTRACT

Human trafficking is not a single offence, rather it is a process run by the transnational organized criminal groups. In recent years, it has become the most security concern as well as a grave violation of human rights. It is often regarded as one of the fastest growing transnational crime. According to the 2018 UNODC Global TIP report, this illegal trade earns \$52 billion annually in the South Asian region. And now after the Covid pandemic, it is also a challenging issue specially for the South Asian countries to combat human trafficking. Bangladesh, a South-East Asian country, acts as a source country by using the poor vulnerable people as victims in this process. It is a country of about 161 million people including more than 26 lakhs unemployed here, is facing a daunting challenge of providing social security, high wage status, living cost and their responsibilities. To ensure a better standard of life and fight against poverty, many poor, unemployed or low skilled labors knowingly or unknowingly are willing to go to cities as well as abroad to earn more money. Thus they become a prey to human trafficking process. The present study has conducted to explore recent factors besides the existing fact which adds to fuel in human trafficking process in Bangladesh. This paper also highlights on the process of trafficking through different modes or patterns based on several case studies and interviews. This study was conducted at Narayanganj sadar (origin place of victims) and Benapole-petrapole border area (transit point of victims). The author visited different areas of that two places for collecting data and used unstructured interview, conducted a survey and review case study methods for the quest of this study. Data and information were collected from both primary and secondary sources i.e. journals, books, articles, internet, research reports, daily newspaper, different websites, GOs and NGOs reports, etc. Some case studies were also discussed in this paper. From the result, the study identified socio-economic disparity at national or international level, high unemployment rate, low scale of wage, political apathy, demand of cheap labor, lack of awareness, social insecurity as the recent root factors for the rapid growth of human trafficking in Bangladesh. Finally, it concludes that porous and weak border controlling system, lack of proper agreement with the neighboring countries to combat trafficking and lack of punishment make it easier for the traffickers to run this process of human trafficking. And now it is time to take effective plan of action and set up a strong anti-trafficking cell through the government of Bangladesh to combat human trafficking, rescue and protect the victims of this crime.

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Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

The trafficking in persons is an organized offense against humanity. It is a global concern rather than just one that affects Bangladesh. In recent times, there has been an alarming increase in human trafficking in Bangladesh. People especially the poor community are being treated as the victims of this organized crime. Human trafficking is defined as a type of modern slavery that involves the use of force, deception, and coercion to recruit, transport or obtain a person for forced labor or commercial sex acts. It has been used as leverage in a variety of crimes involving the requirement, transportation, and sale of individuals into circumstances of exploitation and violations of human rights. Over 8,000 000 women and children are thought to be trafficked annually across international borders, with 80% of these cases resulting in forced sex labor.¹ It is not a new phenomenon. More than 155 countries are affected by human trafficking. In this context the South Asian regions are not untouched to this organized crime. A number of factors, including South Asia's massive population, high rural-urban movement, persistent poverty, cross-border linkages between history and culture, unemployment, socio-economic disparity and frequent natural disasters, make the region prone to human trafficking. The leaders of SAARC countries expressed serious concerns over the startling growth in the trafficking of women and children through illicit and inter-regional collaboration, given that human trafficking is regarded as a regional issue in South Asia. Human trafficking has also been receiving one of the highest priorities as a regional security concern in 11th SAARC summit, 2002. It is gradually emerging as an issue not separate from social security, human rights, economic stability and poverty. Throughout all of South Asia, the number of victims of human trafficking has been rising day by day. According to a UNDP research, between 300,000 and 450,0000 persons are trafficked within Asia annually, with South Asia accounting for over half of these cases.² Most of the South Asian countries fall into one of three categories when it comes to human trafficking: origin of the victim, destination, or both. Most likely, Bangladesh is the country of origin for trafficking victims. In Bangladesh, the people are trafficked mostly for sexual exploitation, forced

¹ *C. Joffers, E. Mills, M. Joffers, T. Khanna, H. Walia, & D. Ground, "Sexual Slavery Without Borders: Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation in India." International Journal for Equality in Health, Vol.7,2008, P.22.

² **United Nation Development Programme, 2007, op.cit.

labor, camel jockeying, bonded labor, domestic servitude, and organ sales. The trafficking rate is increasing in our country over time. Therefore, it is time to shed light on this issue.

1.2 Background

Slavery has always been a sensitive issue for human rights as well as dignity, dating back to the dawn of civilization. With its varied definitions and forms, it persists for years on end and for decades on end. It is the primary term of human trafficking. In the ancient societies, the poor, infant and women were to be sold as commodities because of profit making and paying debt. Prior to the early 1990s, trafficking was mostly seen as a subset of illegal immigration and human smuggling. Adopted by the General Assembly on November 15, 2000, resolution 55/25, the United Nations convention against traditional organized crime serves as the primary international tool in the fight against this crime. It became operative on September 29, 2003, after member states had the opportunity to sign it during a high-level political summit held in Palermo, Italy, from December 12–15, 2000. Three further protocols that target specific areas and manifestations of organized crime are added to the convention. These are the protocols against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea, or air, the prohibition against the illicit manufacturing of firearms, their parts and components, and ammunition, and the protocol to prevent, suppress, or punish trafficking, especially women and children.

Bangladesh is primarily the country of origin for victims of human trafficking in terms of this process. The history of human trafficking is placed from the very beginning of our country. Though, at present trafficking has emerged as a significant national security issue in Bangladesh. Traffickers often exploit border areas like Khulna, Jashore, Satkhira, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Comilla, Brahmanbaria, and Sylhet to continue their illegal activities. Over the last decade of the 20th century, an extensive legal framework regarding the matter has emerged. The international communities have become aware of this concern and a fundamental shift has taken place. The government of Bangladesh has also taken necessary steps, national plan of action and made trained police groups, administrative measures to face this brutal issue.

1.3 Defining the research problem

Human trafficking is a terrible crime and an egregious violation. Thousands of men, women, and children are trafficked by the traffickers each year, both domestically and internationally. It is a very well-organized crime. The trade of people, usually for the purpose of forced labor, sexual slavery, or commercial sexual exploitation for the trafficker as well as others, is known as human trafficking. After the Covid pandemic period, human trafficking is at high risk, having a massive, uncontrolled character in Bangladesh. It constitutes a threat to security and human rights of the trafficked persons. Due to its clandestine nature of trafficking and rare prosecution, it is very hard to eradicate human trafficking with its roots from Bangladesh.

One of the major reasons behind this fact that trafficking routes of Bangladesh are incredibly fluid in nature. In an attempt to evade detection, traffickers search for and discover new routes every other time. With the help of the police, their extensive networks cut beyond national boundaries. International trafficking networks weave together a web of criminal activity that includes local thugs and small-time crime lords, dishonest law enforcement and border patrol officials, local political elites, pimps, procurers, and agents. As official victims of human trafficking, a large number of private recruiters—either agencies or middlemen—often use their previous connections to victimize more men and women. Establishing a direct connection between recruiters and abusive employers at the end of the trafficking chain is highly difficult.

There is no fixed data on how many men, women, and kids were specifically trafficked from Bangladesh. All the collaborators try to keep no evidence of this crime. Moreover, some important reports and data are as follows:

- According to human rights organizations in Bangladesh, about 10,000 and 20,000 women and children are trafficked each year into the United Arab Emirates, India, Pakistan, Bahrain, and Kuwait.
(S Huda, “sex Trafficking in South Asia”, International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics, vol. 7,2008:22).
- The conviction rate increased progressively from 26% in 2006 to 39% in 2010, according to statistics on arrests and convictions in Bangladesh between 2006 and

2010. In contrast, the arrest rate decreased from 50% in 2006 to 31% in 2010. (Ibid, page-25).

- According to ILO estimates from 2012, there are an estimated 21 million victims of modern-day slavery. Of them, 14.2 million were sexually exploited, 4.5 million were exploited for labor, and 2.2 million were put into forced labor by the government.

(International Labour Organization, 24 oct, 2016).

- Within the last 18 months, 1.5 lakh persons have been transported by boats and ships through the Bay of Bengal, according to a UNHCR report.

(Country Paper on "Combating Trafficking in Women and Children in Bangladesh", 2004, p.6.)

1.4 Research Questions:

1. What are the recent factors and trends of human trafficking in Bangladesh?
2. How does the human trafficking process break down?
3. What policies can be suggested to control of this heinous crime?

1.5 Hypotheses

- Human trafficking is the outcome of several factors such as high unemployment rate, socio-economic disparity at national and international level, low scale of wage, demand for cheap labor along with some other existing factors.
- Porous border and weakening border control help to spur up the trafficking process which threatens human security as well as national security in Bangladesh.

1.6 Objectives of the study

1. The main objective is to identify the recent factors which leads to the process of trafficking from source to destination.
2. To suggest some recommendations regarding this issue.

1.7 Methodology of the study

Methodologically, this paper is based on both primary and secondary sources, which include empirical research reports, journals, articles, booklets, and newspaper clippings, survey on the selected area. This paper draws on research from various organizations, such as the International Organization for Migration, International Labour Organization, United States Agency for International Development, Centre for Health and Population Research, Action Against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association, Centre for Women and Children Studies, and United Development Initiatives for Action. The study was conducted at Narayanganj Sadar, Narayanganj and Benapole-Petrapole, Jessore in Bangladesh as the origin and transit point of human trafficking process. Data and information were gathered from the secondary sources such as books, research reports, journals, magazines, and daily newspapers, the internet, various government and non-government organizations' websites, and so on. The study also included a discussion of case studies, a survey for analyzing factors on origin place of victims and some unstructured interview on both areas.

1.8 Review of Literature

A brief review of the literature is given to identify the scholarly gaps that this thesis will address before outlining the technique used in it. The UN has produced a number of studies that address the problem of human trafficking worldwide. This indicates that the world community is becoming aware of this crime. Furthermore, there are numerous national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that support victims of human trafficking. Both scholars and NGOs have made significant contributions to the research regarding human trafficking. Though it is a global human rights concern, there is comparatively little research on Bangladesh and a dearth of academic publications and papers on the subject. This is unexpected considering that Bangladesh is one of the main nations of origin for this process.

This section summarizes the existing literature on human trafficking in Bangladesh and points out numerous gaps that this study will address. In brief, the following are the gaps:

- i. The literature tends to focus on existing factors and forms of trafficking, rather than analyzing the recent factors, patterns and trends of human trafficking in Bangladesh.
- ii. The literature largely fails to detail the process of human trafficking in Bangladesh.
- iii. Porous border and weakening border security controlling system in BD, has been overlooked.
- iv. Previous literature highlighted more on the role of the local NGOs, rather than explaining the plan of action of the government of Bangladesh.
- v. There is no brief discussion on the importance of victim's protection, repatriation and trafficker's prosecution.

Most of the literature pays attention to the existing factors and different forms of trafficking but not to the recent trends and factors of human trafficking in Bangladesh. One of the exception of this view is the work of Nasrin Khandaker (Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh). In her article "Study on Girls, Women and Children Trafficking in Bangladesh", Khandaker discussed about the political, socio-economic, cultural context of trafficking in Bangladesh. She also described that along with other existing factors, there are some recent push and pull factors for this rapid growth of human trafficking in Bangladesh.

The study of Md. Ruhul Amin and Md. Rashidul Islam Sheikh is more ambitious; they have examined the processes and patterns of trafficking and divided the causes of trafficking into push and pull aspects. Additionally, they provide information about the victims' physical, social, and legal circumstances while concentrating on the survivors' human rights. M Basir Uddin, a different author, has discussed corruption as the primary driver of human trafficking in Bangladesh and has suggested ratifying the Trafficking Protocol as a means of ending this crime.

Afza Ruh Ruhi has also taken into account the work of several foreign NGOs and donors. According to Ruhi's reports, marriage, false promises of jobs in foreign countries and the selling of women to traffickers by parents are the main ways that young women and children fall prey to human trafficking. However neither of these article focus on how can it possible to reduce the socio-economic disparity, unemployment problem and corruption in Bangladesh.

NGOs have not only analyzed how institutions and the law have responded to stop human trafficking, but they have also addressed the causes and manifestations of trafficking. In 2001, the Centre for Health and Population Research conducted an investigation into human trafficking, outlining the different types and causes of the crime as well as the main pathways taken by those who engage in it. Their investigation concentrated on actions made by NGOs to stop human trafficking. It lists the lack of laws protecting citizens as one of the causes of human trafficking, although there is no review of the current patterns in human trafficking in Bangladesh. Unsurprisingly, the work of NGOs does not always center on the reaction of contemporary elements associated to this crime.

A strategic document known as the Human Trafficking Snapshot was published in 2018 by the IOM and USAID to support practitioners in the fight against human trafficking. This study identifies the various forms, channels, and recruitment methods used in human trafficking. One positive aspect of this document is that it recognizes Rohingya refugees as victims. However, there is only a brief mention of their susceptibility. The research also discusses sexual exploitation, stating that victims are trafficked to several brothels in Dauladia, Kandapara, and other large cities. The paper describes different method, tactics of this process, several laws and policies related to human trafficking, but there is no brief discussion on how the process of human trafficking breaks down from source to destinations. The Snapshot also fails to mention any international commitment to combat this crime. It does, however, reveal barriers to successful crime prevention, such as insufficient victim identification and protection, ineffective law enforcement and prosecutions, and corruption, which indirectly reflect the inadequacy of laws and institutions to combat this crime.

The first National Study on Trafficking in Persons in Bangladesh 2022 by UNODC, is a significant document in presenting the trends, patterns and flows of Human Trafficking. This study is the outcome of a collaboration between UNODC and the Government of Bangladesh, which aims to provide a complete and contemporary account of the country's trafficking situation. Though there are some recent missing aspects of this organized crime. This First National Study on Trafficking in Persons is being conducted at a time when the COVID-19-related pressures and vulnerabilities are becoming more apparent, casting a long shadow over our economies and communities. Bangladesh is recognized as

a country of origin, transit, and destination in the context of human trafficking due to its geographic position.

Hosna J Shewly in her article named “Vulnerable Bodies and Dark Networks of Trafficking: Trade in Human at the Bangladesh-India Border” has explained the process of human trafficking in the border areas in Bangladesh. This article aims to prevent human trafficking on the Bangladesh-India border. This research focuses on addressing trafficking routes and networks near the Bangladesh-India border, which has received little attention in academic literature. This article focuses on reducing human trafficking along the border by promoting collaborative activities among border guards. In order to analyze trafficking, this article excludes any particular attention to protection, prosecution, prevention, and rehabilitation. Rather, the role(s) that this border plays in regard to trafficking are the main emphasis of this study, along with how border control systems that specifically target trafficking can aid in the battle against the trafficking of women and children. Another milestone project “Standard Operating Procedures to Counter Cross Border Trafficking in Persons: India-Bangladesh” by the UNODC has also highlighted on designing and implementing measures to prevent cross-border trafficking as well as improving cross-border cooperation among the actors.

Numerous local and international NGOs have documented trafficking incidents and carried out research on a range of trafficking-related topics. The Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA), a well-known local NGO, has undertaken research funded by numerous donor organizations and focuses on the problem of human trafficking. In their study paper, "Human Trafficking in Bangladesh: Analysis, Challenges & Recommendations," BNWLA made the case that the Trafficking Protocol and international standards are both met by the Human Trafficking and Deterrence and Suppression Act of 2012. However, the authors did not conduct a comprehensive research and analysis of relevant international law. There is no mention of the state's responsibilities under international human rights and criminal laws. Rather, they discovered significant difficulties to the application of Bangladeshi laws regarding trafficking. Another international NGO, Winrock International, has briefly summarized data and information, case studies from various parts of Bangladesh relevant to human trafficking, and Rights Jessore, a human rights organization, has focused specifically on the repatriation of trafficking victims.

The existing literature in this field is also characterized by a lack of theoretical frameworks and a deficient methodology. There is a paucity of research that combines the recent factors behind this crime and plan of effective steps in this regard, necessary plan to reduce socio-economic disparity within national or international arena, high wage and opportunities for work, examines the shortcomings and applicability of national and international legal frameworks pertaining to human trafficking in Bangladesh, and examines how these frameworks fail to meet the protection of victims. Moreover, existing literature focuses on the response of local NGOs rather than examining the responsibilities of the government of Bangladesh. This paper represents the first work that discussed the recent trends and factors of this crime and explained the process of human trafficking from source to destination in details. I also address how the process breaks down through the land border routes. In addition, I critically analyze recent case studies based on different modes of trafficking. Finally, I try to highlight some recommendations for completely combat human trafficking from Bangladesh.

Chapter Two

Conceptual Framework

This chapter will highlight on the conceptual framework of human trafficking. It discusses the definition, elements and forms of human trafficking. The definitions from international and national organization are mentioned here.

2.1 Human Trafficking:

Human trafficking is considered as a multidimensional organized crime which has overseen effect on human rights and dignity in this globalized era. It is a new form of human slavery and trade of humanity. Trafficking in persons, can be treated as a trade in people for the purpose of forced labor, sexual abuse, commercial sexual exploitation and the restriction of movement. It covers a wide variety of activities and results, from the planning of the supply of individuals who are susceptible to exploitation to the process of moving to the demand for the labor or services of those who have been harmed. It can currently be considered one of the transnational crime activities with the fastest rate of growth. Similar to the global economic crisis, this catastrophe is also a result of the present globalization trend and the need for both cheap labor and sex workers.

Human trafficking is an illegal process of human trade which can be considered a silent tsunami towards the national security and violation of human rights of the trafficking one. It is a nationally or internationally organized crime. Every year, thousands of people fall into the hands of the traffickers and have a bitter experience of life. The main purpose of this process is forced labor, illicit adoption, sexual exploitation, begging, forced or arranged marriage and other criminal activities.

Definitions

Until November 2000, there was no consensus definition of trafficking among international arena. The term has been defined by several actors from various angles. All of those descriptions emphasize concepts that range from coerced work, forced labor, prostitution exploitation, violence, and the relocation of persons from one location to another under the influence of force and threat for particular exploitative purposes. (Ruhi 2003).³ By contrast with the current viewpoint, the traditional meanings of this term are imprecise, insensitive, and out of date.

³ Suvendu Biswas. "Human Trafficking in Bangladesh: An Overview" Foreign Affairs Insights & Review (FAIR), 5th Nov 2015.

The evaluation or assessment of the present circumstances of the people who are trafficked—men, women, and children—is where the new definition of trafficking originates. As a result, the current definition needs to be clarified in order to safeguard the victims' human rights and understand how human trafficking operates. (Ruhi 2003). So, the core definitions of human trafficking under different constitutional aspects and international organizations are as follows:

The United Nations protocol on Trafficking in persons defines trafficking as in November, 2000:

“the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, or deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor, or services slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, the removal of organs.” (Article-3a)

(Article 3 of the UN. Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons Section 102 of the "Trafficking Victims Protection Act, 2000, U.S")

SAARC countries have included a definition for the prevention and fight against trafficking in women and children in their convention as:

“Trafficking in Women consist of all acts involved in the procurement, transportation, forced movement, or selling and buying of women within or across border by fraudulent means, abuse of authority, for the purpose of placing a woman against her will without her consent in exploitative and abusive situations such as forced prostitution, forced marriage, bonded & forced labor, begging, organ trade etc.”

(Article 1(3) of the "SAARC Convention On Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution")

In the context of Bangladesh, Bangladesh National Women's Lawyers Association (BNWLA) defined trafficking as-

“All acts involved in the recruitment and or transportation of a women or child within or across national borders for work or service by means of violence, abuse of authority or dominant position, debt bondage, deception or other forms of coercion.”⁴

(S. Huda, "Sex Trafficking in South Asia", International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics, Volume 94,issue-3, pp 375.)

It is evident from all of the above definitions that human trafficking refers to any situation in which an individual is fraudulently moved, recruited, abducted, or kidnapped for the purpose of exploitation. The primary intent behind this crime is to abuse the vulnerable people for sexual, labor, or other purposes in order to profit.

2.2 Elements of Human trafficking:

The definition of "trafficking" has evolved historically in response to shifting social, political, and economic landscapes. The methods of human trafficking vary from time to time and from location to place, but their fundamental elements never change. The United Nations Office on Drugs & Crimes narrated three basic elements of human trafficking which are as follows:

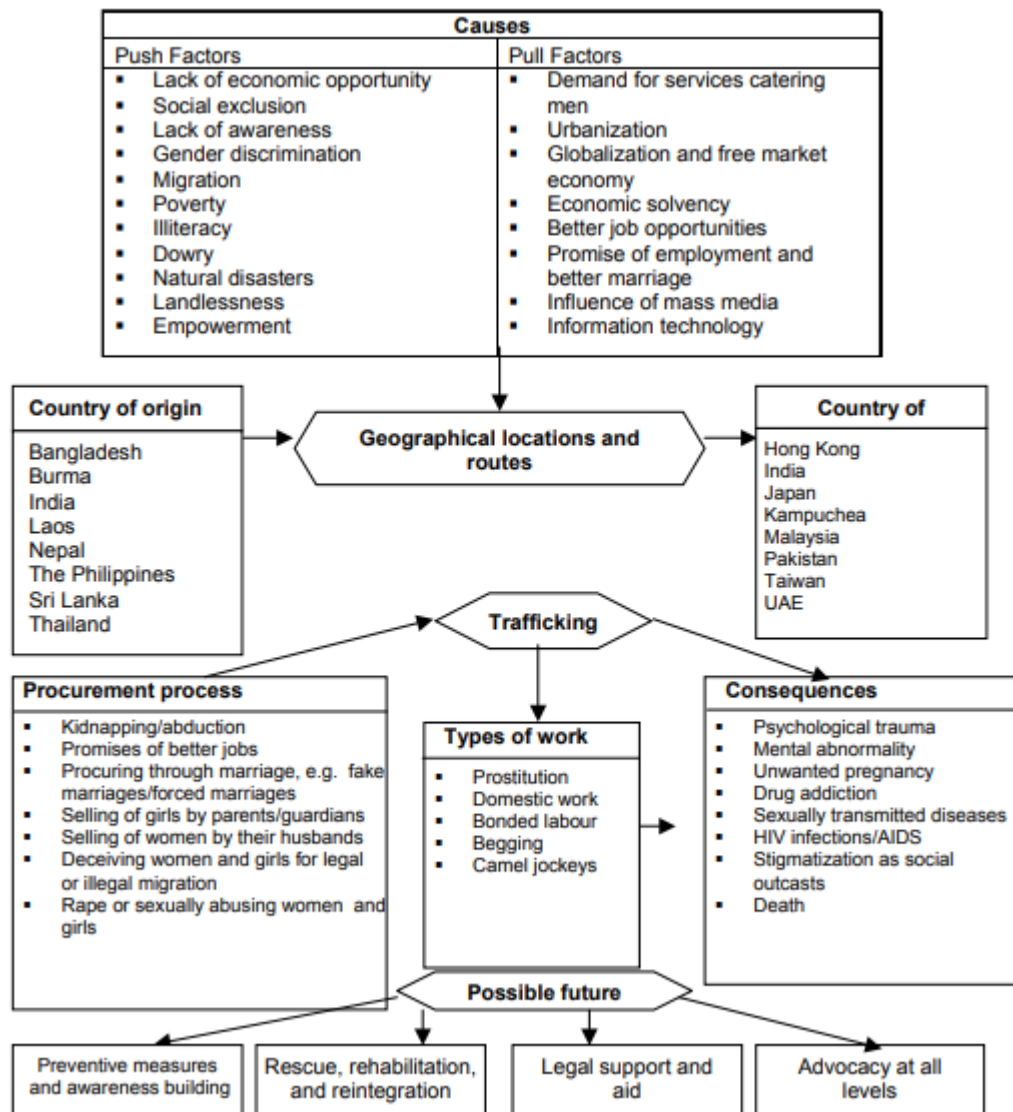
The Act: Recruitment, transfer, transportation, acquirement of persons.

The Means: coercion, deception, abuse of authority or weakness, fraud, kidnapping, threat, or use of force, or providing money to someone in charge of the victim.

The Purpose: With the intent to exploit, which involves taking advantage of other people's prostitution, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery, or comparable acts, as well as organ removal.

⁴ Md Ruhul Amin and Md Rashidul Islam Sheikh. “Trafficking Women & Children in Bangladesh: A Silent Tsunami Of Bangladesh” Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development, ISSN- 2222-1700, Vol-2, No-4,2011.pp-203-205.

2.3 Conceptual Framework of Human Trafficking:⁵



Source: Adapted from Proceedings of the Fact-finding Meeting and the National Workshop on Trafficking in Women and Children. Dhaka: Center for Women and Children Studies, 1997 (18).

⁵ Wikipedia of Human trafficking in Bangladesh. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_trafficking_in_Bangladesh)
 "Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling", United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes [<http://www.unodc.org>]

Chapter Three

Global Perspectives

on

Human Trafficking

This chapter includes a discussion on the context of trafficking in persons in the global arena. It has explained domestic flows within the country as well as cross border trafficking flows connected to Europe, the countries of GCC in the Middle East and other parts of the world to understand the severity of human trafficking in South Asia and other parts of the world. It has also highlighted the factors that helps to spur trafficking and the vulnerable conditions of the victims. In recent years, South Asian countries are in the most vulnerable position for human trafficking among other nations.

3.1 Overview of the context

Globally, human trafficking has become one of the fastest-growing categories of transnational organized crime due to the current state of the global economy, which has increased both the availability and demand for cheap labor and sex workers. And this unlawful trade, often known as human trafficking, is concealed inside the large-scale migration of individuals that occurs through illegal means. Growing economic and demographic divides between developing and developed nations are a primary factor contributing to the persistence of this phenomenon. In this globalized era, trafficking in persons is now a booming and high profitable business run by the organized crime groups and networks. It has become an alarming concern for most of countries across the world. International community stated human trafficking as a form of modern slavery by recruiting, transporting, harboring or obtaining a person for commercial sex acts or bonded labor through the use of fraud, coercion, or force. The main purpose of trafficking includes prostitution, bondage labor, begging, camel jockey, domestic slave, adoption, and organ trafficking. Due to the enormous demand, inexpensive startup costs, low dangers, and great returns, human traffickers also favor this kind of commerce. An estimated 27 million men, women, and children worldwide are trafficked, according to the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report for 2012.⁶

⁶ *USAID (2004). Trafficking in Persons - USAID's Response. Washington, DC, USAID. pp. 51-53.

**Sarker Profulla C. and Panday Pranab Kumar (2006), Trafficking in Women and Children in Bangladesh: A National Issue in Global Perspective. Asian Journal of Social Policy, Vol. 2/2: 1-13. pp. 07

Human Rights Watch/Asia, Owed Justice: Thai Women Trafficked into Debt Bondage in Japan (New York, 2000).

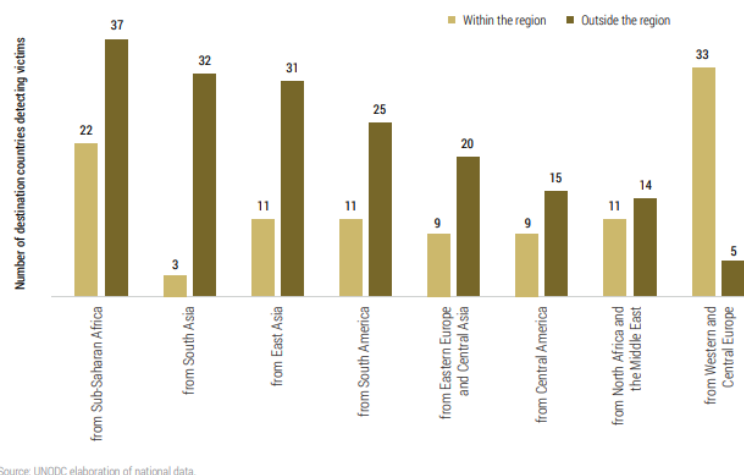


Figure: Number of destination countries where victims originating within & outside of the region were detected, 2017-2020.

Now human trafficking is becoming a global issue that affects many nations. Millions of women, girls, and children are trafficked annually from one nation to another. While a small number of individuals are deliberately trafficked or travel overseas, the majority are coerced into moving from one nation to another. Approximately 500,000 women from less developed countries were trafficked into EU member states in 1995, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). And the Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC) stated that there are 108,613 individual cases of trafficking and 164 countries are exploited by the human trafficking gangs. So, it is not a problem of the developing countries alone.⁷

The following figures helps to explain this transnational organized crime called as human trafficking and its trends which affects the larger part of the world:

Recent trends of human trafficking in global context-

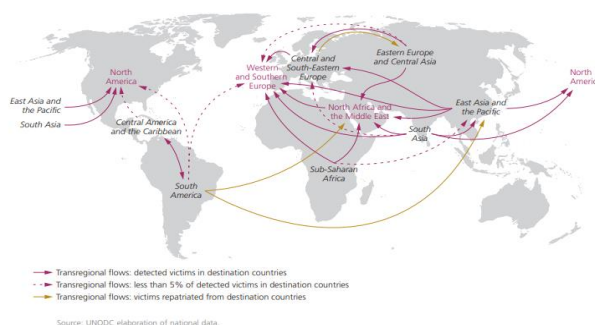


Figure: Main detected transregional flows, 2018 (or most recent)

⁷ Source: CTDC Global Dataset: Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative, 2020.
International Organization for Migration annual report, 1995.pp 37-45.



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Figure: Detailed forms of exploitation among detected trafficking victims, 2018 (or most recent).⁸

3.2 Asian Perspective:

Asia is home to the majority of victims of human trafficking worldwide. Compared to other regions of the world, organized crime frequently controls the trafficking industry in Asia. Internal trafficking may constitute a greater portion of the issue than its cross-border component in the vast and populous Asian nations. For instance, adults and kids with severe injuries are forced to labor as slaves in hazardous conditions in pottery kilns in China. Labor abuse is encouraged by the need for low-cost production. Since the bulk of trafficked victims originate in Asia, the region has emerged as a global hub for human trafficking. Human trafficking is rampant in Asian civilizations due to the high need for inexpensive labor and sexual services, in addition to historical customs and geographic location. Additionally, Asia serves as the process's host, source, and transit hub. The main sources of trafficking victims in Asia are the heavily populated nations of China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and India. Majority of Asian nations—including Japan, Myanmar, Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, and the Maldives—are also act as source countries. Conversely, the majority of the countries that this process ends in include North America, Europe, Australia, and the Middle East.⁹ As compared to other parts of the world, a larger share of trafficking occurs in Asia in both cross-border and intra-border contexts.

Asia is a hotspot for all types of human trafficking, including forced marriages, organ trafficking, debt bondage, forced adolescence, child soldiers, and sexual trafficking.

⁸ Global report on trafficking in persons 2020, pp 45, 60-63.

⁹ For an excellent discussion of baby and child trafficking for adoptions in Cambodia and diverse states in India see David M. Smolin, "Child Laundering: How the Intercountry Adoption System Legitimizes and Incentivizes the Practices of Buying, Trafficking, Kidnapping, and Stealing Children." *Wayne Law Review*, Vol. 56 (2006) 135-59.

The two main aspects of the issue are labor and sexual trafficking. Trafficking in persons for sexual and labor purposes is increasing at the fastest rate in recent years. Even though it is not a recent development, Asian organized criminal groups have long histories and strong roots in their communities for their involvement in the human trafficking process. There are many factors that contribute to the human trafficking process in Asia. These include extreme poverty, illiteracy, lack of awareness, weakening of border controls, economic differentiation, unemployment, high levels of corruption and regional conflicts etc. More or less, trafficking is present in almost all the Asian countries. Most of the Asian countries are underdeveloped or developing which suffer from poverty, unemployment, ethnic conflicts, illiteracy, economic disparity and natural disaster.¹⁰ For this reason, majority people are willing to go to the developed countries for higher standard of life or for supporting their families. The crime groups are targeted those vulnerable poor people and trapped them into the trafficking process.

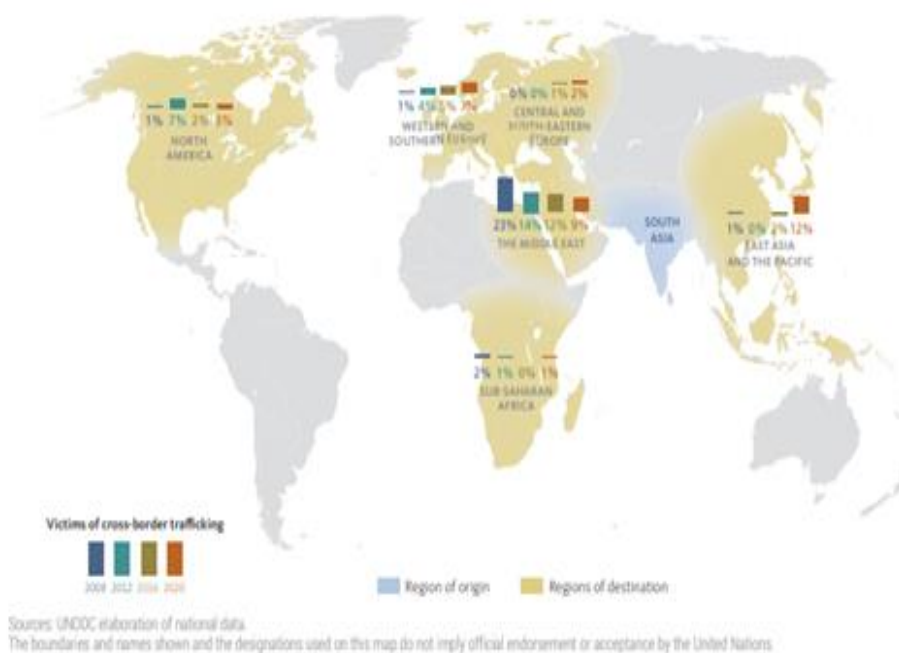
Some examples of Asian Trafficking:

- ✚ From Pakistan and Bangladesh young boys are trafficked to the UAE to perform the work of camel jockeys and forced labor.
- ✚ Many children in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, are forced to be beggars and also for adoption.
- ✚ Young women and children are found in the sex tourism industry of China, Thailand and India.
- ✚ Children are trafficked as soldiers in conflict regions such as Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Philippines.

Source country	Destination country
Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka	Saudi Arabia, Thailand, China, Middle East, Europe, USA, UAE
Philippines, Korea, Japan, Central Asia, Indonesia, Maldives	Europe, USA, UAE, Middle East countries, Thailand

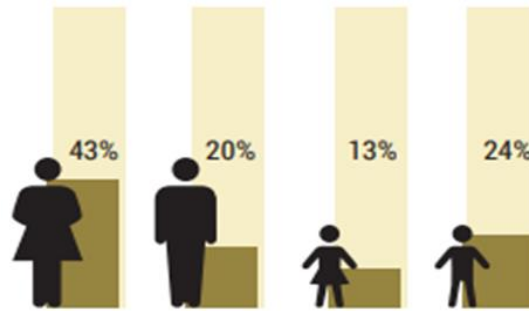
¹⁰ John Picarelli, "Historical Approaches to the Trade in Human Beings," in Human Trafficking, Maggy Lee, ed. (Cullompton, Devon: Willan Publishing, 2007), 33.

There is a significant connection in South Asia between the likelihood of being trafficked and familial poverty. Girls are pulled into the sex industry for a variety of reasons, such as wanting a better life and experiencing domestic abuse or divorce.¹¹ There is also internal trafficking of women and girls from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, India, and other countries for the purpose of forced marriage or commercial sexual exploitation. Human trafficking is the primary activity of Asian crime groups of all sizes, including the Yakuza and its affiliates, as well as Thai, Korean, Chinese, and Indian crime gangs. This figure shows the trafficking patterns of Asia:



Map: Share of South Asian Victims detected in destination regions, 2008-2020.

¹¹ * Louise Shelley, Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010. ISBN-13, p 142-173.



Source: UNODC Elaboration of national data.
 * Based on data on sex and age of 7,878 victims detected in nine countries in South Asia.

A large portion of trafficking is carried out by or with the direct cooperation of dishonest state institutions, the military, police, security elites, and occasionally even wealthy families. Asian criminal networks profit handsomely from the trafficking of women and children into prostitution, the promotion of sex tourism, and the provision of people for forced labor, in addition to the involvement of those authorities and the privileged class.¹² The scenario of this process is not different even in the developed countries of this region such as China, India, Thailand, Japan, etc. Due to a lack of funding, fighting human trafficking is not a top priority in many Asian nations. Japan, a country known for its affluence, has opted not to dedicate a significant portion of its resources towards the fight against human trafficking.¹³ To face of such massive problems of bonded labor and enslaved with such limited state efforts, Asia remains an epicenter of trafficking worldwide.

3.3 Eurasia and Eastern Europe Perspectives:

This region, which consists of Asia and Europe, is characterized by a great deal of diversity in terms of politics, economy, religion, and culture. Notwithstanding the stark disparities across this region, most of the nations have a serious issue with human trafficking. They act as the human trafficking's source, transit, and host state. The Eastern European countries specially Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Turkey and the Baltic states along with the central Asia are stated as the poorer and less developed countries than

¹² UNODC, Trafficking in Persons: Global Patterns, http://www.unodc.org/pdf/traffickinginpersons_report_2006ver2.pdf Chin, Smuggled Chinese, 49–93. Trafficking in Persons Report 2008, 91–92.

Asian Development Bank, Combating Trafficking of Women and Children in South Asia (Manila, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, 2003), 49.

¹³ Khalid Koser, "Why Migrant Smuggling Pays," International Migration 46, no. 2 (2008), 3–26.

Trafficking in Persons Report 2009, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2009), 33.

the western Europe. The living standards of people and income levels of these regions are not equal to the west. There are significant political and economic differences between the East and the West which drives people into the trafficking process. Russia currently has more migrants living there than any other country in the world, behind the United States. The former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have seen a significant increase in trafficking people, with the end of the Cold War having a particularly significant effect. The social and economic breakdown that followed by the Cold War left millions of individuals homeless, jobless, confused, and open to abuse.¹⁴ Initially, women were the main victims of human trafficking but with the fall of the Soviet Union, several types of trafficking emerged in this area. The organized crime groups of Central Asia and Eastern Europe extend this pattern. The vast regions of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia are seen to various forms of human trafficking. The most media attention has been given to sex trafficking, which involves the exploitation of Slavic women from the USSR and the Balkans.¹⁵ However, forced work victims currently outnumber those trafficked in sex. They frequently suffer abuse in hazardous construction labor. Men from Central Asia, the Caucasus, Belarus, and Vietnam make up the majority of them. Due to their abundance of natural resources, Central Asian nations serve as a hub for unauthorized labor. Russia is currently being exploited as a transit country by victims from Southeast and South Asia to reach Western Europe. The majority of them end up abandoned in the former Soviet states, where they can easily be exploited. Social and economic collapse, war, conflicts, discrimination against minorities, poverty, decline of borders and high levels of corruption are the main reasons for increasing human trafficking in this arena.

Some examples of Eurasian Trafficking:

- ❖ Children are trafficked in Tajikistan for commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, and begging.
- ❖ A white slave trade flourished among Moldova to North and South America.
- ❖ Sex trafficking exists among Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and Turkey.
- ❖ Roughly 20 percent of Russia's 5 million illegal immigrants were believed to have been pushed into labor in 2004 by an ILO report.

¹⁴ Sally Stoecker, "Human Trafficking: A New Challenge for the United States and Russia," in *Human Traffic and Transnational Crime*, 13–28.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 548–51.

Wendy Koch, "Russia Curtails American Adoptions," April 11, 2007 <http://www.usatoday.com/news/>

Trafficking in children is all too common. Children that the traffickers get are used in a variety of ways, including forced street begging, sales as prostitutes, and adoptions. Administrators in Eastern Europe also sell adopted children from orphanages and households. In addition, trafficking occurs for pregnant women in order to obtain adoption for their offspring.¹⁶

Source country	Destination country
Central Asian countries, Baltic states, Moldova, Bulgaria, Vietnam, Ukraine	Western Europe, Russia, Turkey, Austria, North and South America, United Kingdom

The US, the EU, donor nations, and international organizations like the IOM and OSCE have committed significant resources to fighting human trafficking and supporting non-governmental organizations' law enforcement initiatives to combat trafficking, human trafficking has continued in Eurasia and Eastern Europe.¹⁷ Still, millions of people are trafficked annually by traffickers. The trafficking process is facilitated by the lack of political will in the countries of Eastern Europe.¹⁸ Furthermore, given the structural disparity that exists between the wealthy Central Asian nations and the Slavic republics, human trafficking may even rise in the future.

¹⁶ Louise I. Shelley, "Privatization and Crime: The Post-Soviet Experience," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 11, no. 4 (December 1995), 244–56.

Ibid., 548–51.

Wendy Koch, "Russia Curtails American Adoptions," April 11, 2007 <http://www.usatoday.com/news/>

¹⁷ Louise I. Shelley, "The Changing Position of Women: Trafficking, Crime and Corruption," in *The Legacy of State Socialism and the Future of Transformation*, David Lane, ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), 207–22.

¹⁸ IOM, "Trafficking in Women and Prostitution in the Baltic States: Social and Legal Aspects," 2001, 163.
Peter Kwong, *Forbidden Workers: Illegal Chinese Immigrants and American Labor* (New York: New Press, 1997).

3.4 The United States Perspective:

The third-largest nation in the globe is the United States of America, or USA. It shares maritime borders with several countries, including the Bahamas, Cuba, Russia, and Latin America. There is trafficking in each of the 50 states that make up the United States. The majority of trafficking victims in the United States are from Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, and Eurasia. The United States is mostly considered a destination country in the context of human trafficking. Except for child soldiers, nearly every type of human trafficking that has been discovered occurs in the United States. The most common types of exploitation include the trafficking of labor, debt bondage, and foreigners for sex. Every industry, including child care, construction, agriculture, landscaping, and street peddling, has a sizable percentage of labor trafficking. The women who are trafficked manage all forms of sexual exploitation in the US, including street walkers, massage parlors, clubs, strip joints, and escort services. The majority of the youngsters that are trafficked create pornography that is accessible online.¹⁹ It is also not necessary for the victims to be present for all forms of trafficking. Body parts taken from victims in organ trafficking are used in transplant procedures conducted in the United States.

There are some leading factors which helps to spread human trafficking in all over of the United States. These include globalization, higher birth rate, history of slavery, ethnic discrimination, intra-state migration, religion conflicts and reliance on technology etc. Among the industrialized western nations, American trafficking is extremely distinct in character. Internal citizen trafficking is a serious issue, especially with regard to minors. Sexual trafficking mostly affects minors who were born in the United nations, but it also deceives women from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet nations into entering the country and engaging in the sex trade. To meet consumer demand, traffickers also relocate their victims within states. The process of human trafficking in the United States heavily relies on race and racial traits.²⁰

¹⁹ Barbara Ann Stolz, "Interpreting the U.S. Human Trafficking Debate Through the Lens of Symbolic Politics," *Law & Policy* 29, no. 3 (July 2007), 311–38.

Anthony M. De Stefano, *The War on Human Trafficking: U.S. Policy Assessed* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007)

²⁰ * John Allen Williams and Richard E. Friedman, "Workshop Report: 'The Intersection of Immigration and National Security,'" *American Bar Association National Security Law Report* 30, no. 4 (Nov./Dec. 2008), 15–17.

Orlando Patterson, "Taking Culture Seriously: A Framework and an Afro-American Illustration," in *Culture Matters*, Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington, eds. (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 210–18.

Some examples of trafficking in the United States:

- ❖ Every year, between 14500 and 17500 foreign women and girls are reportedly trafficked into the United States for the purpose of sexual exploitation.
- ❖ There are between 12.5 and 15 million unauthorized individuals in the United States.
- ❖ According to annual data, one of the main sources of child trafficking in the United States is the 100,000–300,000 children that are taken from the million+ children who run away or are thrown out of their homes.

Among developed nations, the United States stands out. There are no parallels between American sexual trafficking and the circumstances seen in other Caribbean nations with lengthy histories of slavery. Here, sex tourists and kids play a significant role in human trafficking. Black family life is shaped by the heritage of slavery, which is also evident in American society's racism.²¹

Source country	Destination country
Latin America, Mexico, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Europe	The United States

But the last ten years have seen significant changes in American welfare policies, which have increased the number of neglected and abandoned children and made them more vulnerable young people at the mercy of human traffickers.²²

²¹ M. Margaret McKeown and Emily Ryo, "The Lost Sanctuary: Examining Sex Trafficking Through the Lens of United States V. Ah Sou," *Cornell International Law Journal*, no. 41, 3, 739–74.

Ibid., 745–51

²² Louise Shelley, *Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010. ISBN-13, p 229-260.

Larry Long, "Changing Residence: Comparative Perspectives on its Relationship to Age, Sex and Marital Status," *Population Studies* 46 (1992), 141–58.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, 88–89.

3.5 Latin America and African Perspectives:

The two poorest continents in the world are Africa and Latin America. Both areas have experienced numerous, long-lasting effects as a result of colonization. Over a century has passed since the majority of Latin America and the Caribbean were freed from colonization, yet the oppression of indigenous people is still a remnant of this cruel system of governance. Compared to Latin America, colonization of Africa ended much later. It was not until the later half of the 20th century that colonial rule was abolished here. In Africa, the postcolonial era has been marked by civil conflicts that have destroyed millions of people's native homelands and created sizable camps for refugees. The majority of these homeless people attempt to flee their devastation, but far too frequently, both adults and children fall prey to human trafficking.²³ There is extreme poverty and poor access to healthcare and education for the majority of people in both regions. Many flee to Western Europe and the United States, driven by their desperate need for a better life and their irrational beliefs.²⁴ Many Africans, Caribbean, and Latin Americans have a strong desire to relocate far from their homes, which is exploited by human traffickers.

In Africa and Latin America, human trafficking occurs in almost all forms. The majority of victims are taken advantage of in their own or nearby nations. In certain areas, trafficking for sex, tourism, child pornography, adoptions, and organs is more common than trafficking for forced labor, which includes forced labor in the home, begging, and child soldiers.²⁵ The main reasons for trafficking in Latin America and Africa are extreme poverty, low levels of education, high birth rate, gender discrimination, insufficient employment opportunity and regional conflicts etc.

²³ Karen E. Bravo, "Exploring the Analogy Between Modern Trafficking in Humans and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade," *Boston International Law Journal* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2002), 207–95.
Ibid., 53, 109.

²⁴ Kevin Bales, *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 126–30.
Fred Schreier, "Human Trafficking, Organised Crime and Intelligence," in *Strategies Against Human Trafficking*, Friesendorf, ed., 261.

²⁵ Jørgen Carling, "Unauthorized Migration from Africa to Spain," *International Migration* 45, no. 4 (2007), 3–36.

Source country	Destination country
Mexico, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Cuba, Nicaragua, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, Caribbean, North & Sub-Saharan Arica, Chad, Sudan, Uganda	The United states Europe The Middle East

Both Latin America and Africa have high rates of child victimization. Children in vulnerable situations are caused by broken families, poverty and drug addiction at home, starvation, and violent conflicts in Latin America and Africa. This area is the source of both male and female prostitution trafficking. Children have been severely affected by the issue of child soldiers in Chad, Uganda, Sudan, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.²⁶

Examples of Trafficking in Latin America & Africa:

- ❖ Between 2002 & 2003, 8400 children were abducted in Uganda, since its starting more than 20000 children trafficked into the conflicts.
- ❖ From Guatemala, approximately 1000 to 1500 babies are trafficked for adoption annually.
- ❖ Approximately 50,000 women from countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic are thought to be employed overseas in the sex industries of Western Europe, Japan, and North America

These regions have not made much headway against human trafficking. The majority of countries in Central America, Africa, and the Caribbean have already passed anti-trafficking laws; many of these nations have yet to take the initial step.²⁷ Due to a lack of political will, financial resources, and official competence to take action, trafficking continues in both regions. This commerce is further facilitated by the laxer border regulations. Because of widespread organized crime and significant levels of corruption, no state can effectively implement the essential steps. The absence of state action is not effectively countered by a small and underfunded civil society.

²⁶ Karen E. Bravo "Free Labor! A Labor Liberalization Solution to Modern Trafficking in Humans," *Journal of Transnational Law & Contemporary Problems* 18 (2009), 545–615.

Keith J. Allred, "Human Trafficking and Peacekeepers," in *Strategies Against Human Trafficking*, Friesendorf, ed., 311–41.

²⁷ Louise Shelley, *Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, Newyork, 2010. ISBN-13, p 265-282.

Chapter Four

Human Trafficking in Bangladesh:

An Overview

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in human trafficking in Bangladesh. Bangladesh was in the Tier 2 category from 2011 to 2017, and the United States Department of State's 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report states that it declined to the Tier 2 Watch List category. This chapter will discuss the historical, socio-economic, political and cultural context of human trafficking in Bangladesh. It also focuses on the causes and victim's profile of trafficking to understand the real scenario of human trafficking in Bangladesh. Data and available information has been compiled to highlight the recent trends of human trafficking in Bangladesh.

4.1 Trafficking scenario in Bangladesh:

Bangladesh is among the world's most densely populated countries. There are approximately 174 million people living in the country. Even with the successes of several programs aimed at reducing poverty through microcredit and other development measures, the majority of people in Bangladesh continue to live in poverty. The situation becomes increasingly dire for the entire population when natural disasters occur frequently. Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable country for trafficking because of its large population, socio-economic disparity, large-scale rural-urban migration, low rate of wage, the large population living under chronic poverty, unemployment, and recurrent natural disasters. Most of these vulnerable people are traded, sold and exchange for slavery and prostitution, and bonded labor across borders, such as from Bangladesh to India, Pakistan and the Middle East.

Bangladesh is one of the source and transit countries for men, women, and children who are victims of human trafficking among South Asian nations. Thousands of individuals are trafficked out of various parts of the world every year. Women and children in particular are more vulnerable to the trafficking process. Due to its geographic location and the need for inexpensive labor internationally, Bangladesh has become a hotspot for human trafficking. Additionally, an actor-factor nexus organizes the trafficking process. Approximately 400 women and children are trafficked out of Bangladesh each month. (Sultana, 2015.) Usually, they are trafficked for the purpose of forced labor or sex abuse.²⁸

²⁸ Chowdhury, Jamila Ahmed. SOS-arsenic.net. August 29, 2003. <http://www.sos-arsenic.net/english/intro/child-traff.html>
Sultana, Nargis. Scenario of Human Trafficking in Bangladesh. Dhaka, June 6, 2015.

In Bangladesh, there is no other illicit commerce system that is as profitable or expanding as the human trafficking trade. It is currently one of the most lucrative forms of illicit business. The trafficking industry in Bangladesh has become more appealing to criminals and traffickers because to its huge profit margin and lax penalties.²⁹ (Chowdhury 2003)

According to human rights groups, between 200 and 400 young women and children are trafficked into Pakistan from Bangladesh each month. Most of them become prostitutes in the end. In India, Bangladeshi women are disproportionately employed in brothels, primarily in Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata (formerly Calcutta). Newspaper sources state that in 1992, 165,000 Bangladeshi women were involved in the prostitute industry in Pakistan. A trustworthy estimate of the number of women and children who have been trafficked from Bangladesh to other nations does not exist. It has revealed that over a million women and children have been trafficked out of the country in the last thirty years.³⁰

Bangladesh serves as a major hub for human trafficking, connecting South Asia with the Gulf, Western Europe, and the United States. The majority of Bangladeshi victims who seek employment abroad through legal channels primarily depend on the 2500 recruiting agencies that are members of the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA). They wish to migrate voluntarily to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Kuwait, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Thailand, Australia, Malaysia, Liberia, and other countries. However, a few other unregistered organizations are also involved in this organized crime. Over 300,000 Bangladeshi children are estimated to have been trafficked to Indian brothels over time, according to UNIFEM. One million "undocumented" Bangladeshi women are reportedly living in Pakistan. Because the victims are reluctant to divulge complete information, it is also exceedingly challenging to pinpoint the precise statistics of human trafficking. About 200,000 women and girls from Bangladesh were trafficked to Pakistan in the last 10 years, continuing at the rate of 200-400 women per month. The total number of prostitutes in India is 7936509. (Source: Statistics on trafficking and prostitution in Asia and the Pacific. Coalition against trafficking in Women. URL: <http://www.mmediasol.com/projects99/catwap facts.htm>.)

²⁹ Ruhi, Ruh Afza. "Human Trafficking in Bangladesh: An Overview." Asian Affairs, 2003: 45-56.

³⁰ Suvendu Biswas, "Human Trafficking in Bangladesh: An Overview" FAIR Magazine, 5th nov, 2015.

Causes and recent trends of trafficking in Bangladesh can be understood from its historical, socio-economic, political and cultural perspectives and the recent conditions of the victims.

Historical and geographical context:

The Indian subcontinent was divided into India and Pakistan following its 1947 independence from British colonial rule. Located 1,200 miles apart, East Pakistan and West Pakistan are two independent geographic regions that make up Pakistan. It led to the formation of several transnational families. Many Muslim families from India immigrated to Pakistan during the division, especially to East Pakistan. Yet another large influx of Hindus from East Pakistan relocated to India.

A new country called Bangladesh was created in 1971 when East Pakistan and West Pakistan separated. At this time, a large number of Indian-born non-Bengali Pakistanis yearned to return to West Pakistan and were still waiting to be repatriated. Across 14 districts in Bangladesh, they reside in 66 camps. Many of them illegally cross land borders because their repatriation has been postponed. More women and children are trafficked frequently with these groups.

There are numerous "enclaves," or areas of territory that belong to a different country than that which surrounds them, on both sides of the recently formed borders between Bangladesh and India and Pakistan. There are 51 Bangladeshi enclaves in India and 111 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh. Typically, no law enforcement agency patrols or maintains control over these areas. These enclaves have been utilized by traffickers as recruiting and collection grounds, according to BNWLA research.

Socio-economic context:

Bangladesh, one of the world's most densely populated nations, is home to 755 people per square kilometer on a land area of 147,570 sq km (21). The country's current estimated population is 174 million. Although with the successes of several programs aimed at reducing poverty through microcredit and other development measures, the majority of people in Bangladesh continue to live in poverty. Both unemployment and illiteracy are very prevalent. Natural calamities that strike frequently worsen the situation for the entire population. Lack of shelter for females is a major issue in times of crisis. Because of all

these conditions, women and children are particularly susceptible and accessible targets for human trafficking.

Political and cultural context:

Women are particularly affected by socioeconomic conditions that create a backdrop of ongoing poverty and underdevelopment, as they are also subject to powerful religious, historical, and cultural influences that have a tendency to influence every aspect of their lives. Women and men are entitled to equal treatment under the law and share the same rights. Cultural traditions, however, frequently serve as obstacles to the execution of laws promoting equality. As an illustration, because men prefer their preferences, women are neglected nutritionally and receive less care when ill than men. According to the most recent Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS), by the time they were 15 years old, over 60% of women aged 10-49 were married (21). Due to organizational inefficiencies and the insufficiency of law enforcement authorities, the laws intended to protect women and children from exploitation are also not enforced. Because of this, even decades after being officially outlawed, several social behaviors that are harmful to women's standing in society still exist. One example of this is the dowry system, which persists even after 1980 national legislation prohibiting it was enacted. The inability of a young bride to pay her dowry obligations impacts how her husband's family treats her and makes her more likely to be abandoned, trafficked for sex crimes, or forced into bond work.

4.2 Causes of Human Trafficking in Bangladesh:

There are many intricate and multifaceted reasons for human trafficking, including the variables that appear to have increased in recent years. Since these elements are deeply rooted in the nation's socio-economic structure, an in-depth study is necessary. Nonetheless, the components have been divided into two groups for the sake of this writing. The conditions that lead to international human trafficking are included in the first group, known as "push" factors. The set of "pull" factors that sustain the market for

victims of human trafficking is referred to by the second category.³¹ And this trafficking process are in trending through the push and pull factors.

Push & Pull factors in Bangladesh:

A mixture of push and pull variables lead to the process of human trafficking. Pull factors typically entail deceptive claims and illusions that ultimately lead to exploitative conditions, while push factors compel victims to proceed along a route that puts them at risk of being trafficked. In the context of Bangladesh, the reasons can be categorized as push and pull factors as follows:

Push Factors	Pull Factors
Extreme poverty	Economic solvency
Great economic differentiation	Higher standard of life
Low levels of education	Free market economy
Low wage of income	Better job opportunity
High levels of corruption	Urbanization
Gender discrimination	Influential power of media
Unemployment	Communication technology
Natural disasters	

³¹ Human Trafficking – A Security Concern for Bangladesh (Monthly publication of the BD Institute of Peace and Security Studies) Issue 09 August,2011.

Ali S. Survey in the area of child and women trafficking. Dhaka: Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association, 1997. 100 p
Hossain H. Trafficking in women and children from Bangladesh: causes and measures for combating trafficking. Dhaka: Ain o Salish Kendro, 1997. 29 p.

Poverty and Inequality:

In Bangladesh, the root cause of human trafficking are poverty and socioeconomic inequality. Extremely poor people are worth the risk in exchange for the possibility of a better life who have no other means of surviving. Extreme poverty makes them desperate and impoverished ones which lead them to be exploited through trafficking. Additionally, extreme poverty affects 27 million people in Bangladesh, with 31% of those residing in less developed areas. They trust the offers of abroad work or marriage because they want to earn a lot of money for the better standard of life. According to a UNICEF report, the majority of the guardians of women and children who are trafficked in Bangladesh are landless; of them, 45% are farmers, 16% are day laborers, and the remaining 35% are small traders. Regional and national income gaps as well as improved employment prospects push the impoverished into this exploitation.

Most profitable illegal trade:

The economic motive has fostered the process of trafficking. Now a day it has become a profitable business. Its high profit and low penalty nature turns human trafficking into most attractive from of business to the criminal gangs. While there is no need of capital investment, the local gangs become the supplier of this process. The traffickers target specially the poor women and children because it is easier to transport and exploit them. Gang leaders are always finding new ways to get some fast money and they involve teenage children to aid gangs in human trafficking through false marriage promises. Because of its most profitable nature, trafficking is growing at an alarming rate.

Limited job opportunities:

Bangladesh is not only a hub because of its poverty and large population, but also its limited jobs and resources. According to the Quarterly Labor Force Survey 2023, the unemployed portion of the total population is around 25 lakhs 90 thousand in Bangladesh. The number of the unemployed people is increasing rapidly in the recent years specially after the covid pandemic. Traffickers can easily deceive the unemployed one into a trafficking victims as they would like to obtain a job. Those who are impoverished in this

situation are eager to accept any employment or work opportunity they come across.³² Traffickers take advantage of this and exploit promises of a successful profession in another nation to entice illiterate, impoverished people into employment frauds. However, in actuality, the majority of them fall prey to human trafficking via labor scams, prostitution, or torture.

Geographical location:

Another factor contributing to Bangladesh's increasing tendencies in human trafficking is the country's geographic location. It has a significant impact on the trafficking process. Bangladesh is close to the Gulf region, which connects it to other Gulf and South Asian nations. The victims are transported by the criminal groups using boats to any of the 16 districts in the area via one of the 20 designated drop-off zones. Because Bangladesh is surrounded by India, these organized crime gangs exploit India as a transit nation for international trafficking. For the victims from Bangladesh, it is also a destination nation. In Maheshkhali, there were drop-off locations for around 25,000 victims of human trafficking between January and April of 2015.

Porous Border and Corruption:

A new wave of external trafficking is being caused by Bangladesh's porous borders with both India and Myanmar. Seldom are the formal procedures for entering and leaving Bangladesh being followed. There isn't any particular law that addresses cross-border trafficking. The lack of sufficient documents and weakening of border restrictions make it easy for traffickers to move people across borders. Moreover, corruption of customs, security officer and policeman and illegal migration add extra layers to facilitate trafficking in Bangladesh. There is a discrepancy between the quantity of reported missing instances and the quantity of unreported cases, due to the gaps that exist between the victims and the application of the law.

³² Khan M. Shamsul Islam (2001), Trafficking of Women and Children in Bangladesh: An Overview. Edited Book. ICDDR, B Special Publication No. 111, 2001.

Clandestine Nature of Trafficking:

The clandestine nature of human trafficking process in Bangladesh helps to spread this crime. Traffickers always change their patterns and routes for getting fast money. Manipulation and involvement of teenager children is a new tactic to catch up the targets through false marriage promise or work opportunities. There are 1.7 million children are involved with this crime and the number is rising. The vulnerable poor children can do anything to earn money even it is illegal. And the gang leader takes this advantage. Sometimes in the external trafficking, the traffickers use the land border routes or otherwise the water routes for the transportation of the victims. It is really hard to identify the exact routes or process of trafficking because of its clandestine nature.³³

4.3 Recent Human Trafficking Trends in Bangladesh:

A new form of slavery and brutality that has caught the attention of the globe in the twenty-first century is human trafficking, which is killing security concerns and affecting this country's vital labor force. Recent human trafficking crisis in Bangladesh have increased by 61% comparing with the previous time. Bangladesh is a country with extreme poverty levels, with 17.6% of the population living below the lower poverty line and 31.5% living above it. The average literacy rate is 56.75%, according to the CIA World Fact Book 2012. A significant portion of the illiterate and jobless population experiences mental strain and depression regarding their children, families, and society. People have become pessimistic and frustrated due to a number of factors, including high migration costs, internal political upheaval, inadequate rural development, poor government policy implementation, corruption, and natural disasters. Some trafficker gangs take advantage of such people's frustration by spreading false hope and misleading them. Influenced individuals move with new dream, unaware of the terrible fate that awaits them. Opportunities to work abroad have declined recently. There are still a lot of illicit organizations offering confidence and optimism to those who want to travel outside. Sometimes, rumors also circulate concerning the well-developed nations' employment prospects and amenities. Without a question, affluent nations provide a wealth of

³³ Bimal Kanti Paul and Syed Abu Hasnath, Trafficking in Bangladeshi Women and Girls. Vol-90, no.2 (Apr, 2000) pp 268-276.

Kat Fries. 10 Facts about Human Trafficking in Bangladesh, 29 October 2019.

Jahirul Islam and Md Zahir Ahmed, Recent Human Trafficking Crisis and Policy Implementation in Bangladesh. The Journal for Social Advancement, March, 2018. p 4-7.

alternatives for jobless individuals seeking improved living conditions and competitive salaries. However, it is better to accept and follow to the unlawful immigration process to industrialized nations. In this situation, people are unable to make independent decisions, fall prey to misinformation, and choose the incorrect migration route. As a result, a significant number of people are trafficked annually in countries including Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Malaysia, and India.



Source: Elaboration of data from the UNODC Global Database on Trafficking in Persons

Map: Bangladeshi Victims of Trafficking in Persons, by Country of Detection (2014-2018)

Numerous factors show to how misinformed people are and why they are in such anguish. It's a large syndicate, the investigation revealed. Networks were in place to methodically bring the migrants from abroad into the country (The Guardian 2015). In their 2015 UNHCR sub regional operation profile, the South-East Asian region specifically mentions Bangladesh, stating that "the lack of national legal frameworks in most South-East Asian countries makes available protection space for refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless people in the region fragile and unpredictable" (UNHCR 2015). Bangladesh has numerous push and pull elements that make it a highly targeted location for human traffickers. In most cases, Bangladesh is the source of origin for all types of trafficking, while there is some indication that it also acts as a destination (SAARC 2012).

The number of attempts to smuggle migrants (mostly into Malaysia) across waterways and to migrate abroad covertly and illegally has increased recently. A great number of people have already lost their lives as a result of this illicit human trading. Furthermore, the accommodations and transportation provided for the smugglers are

frequently so hazardous and/or inhumane that they may violate their human rights. (IOM 2014)

Recent Human Trafficking Reports in Bangladesh:

- In 2022, the Government identified 240 trafficking victims, including 115 sex trafficking victims, 92 forced labor victims, and 33 victims of unspecified forms of trafficking. Whereas Civil Society and International Organizations reported identifying at least 6781 trafficking victims, including 961 sex trafficking, 3764 for labor trafficking, and 2056 for unspecified cases. (Bangladesh Anti-trafficking Cell as reported by the Ministry of Home Affairs 2022.)
- According to a July 24, 2015, Guardian report, Thailand's state prosecutors are pursuing charges against over 100 individuals, including a general in the army, in connection with a global human trafficking scandal that surfaced following the discovery of several bodies in the country's south earlier this year. Nineteen allegations against nine Thai nationals, nine Burmese nationals, and four Bangladeshis include engaging in a transnational criminal network, supporting or bringing in illegal aliens, and human trafficking. (The Guardian 24th July, 2015)
- Over the course of the last eight years, transnational human traffickers have freed thousands of Bangladeshis held captive in Thailand for ransom, promising them work in Malaysia. The daily star can reveal that these individuals have been freed with the payment of taka. (Prothom Alo 4th May, 2015)
- After leaving Libya for Europe on January 25, 2022, seven Bangladeshis perished in the Mediterranean's bitter cold. They set sail for Lampedusa, an Italian island, departing from Libya. Of the 280 passengers, the majority were from Sudan, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Mali. In July 2021, eighty-four individuals were saved in the Mediterranean; sadly, forty-three of them perished. There are 84 persons who have been rescued, including citizens of Bangladesh and four other nations. (New Age, 31 January, 2022).
- Abdul Kalam, the former president of the Rohingya Club, has said that there are prisoner camps close to the borders of Malaysia and Thailand for Rohingya and Bangladeshi victims. Eighty percent of the prisoners housed in Malaysian prisons have a direct relationship with people traffickers. Every prisoner camp has between 500 and 1000 residents. Additionally, Abdul Kalam stated that the current state of affairs is worse than it was ten years ago. There are about fifty prisoner camps

close to the border. A sufficient supply of food and water is lacking in such jail camps. (The Star Online, Friday, 8th May, 2015)

Traffickers work by taking advantage of social or individual circumstances that make victims of trafficking more likely to become victims themselves. Traffickers may exploit situations of individual and systemic vulnerability that are shaped by 14 distinct risk variables.³⁴ It's crucial to remember that Bangladesh shares many of the same vulnerabilities as other nations; in fact, the UNODC has determined that the continuation of these risk factors is a key component of global human trafficking.³⁵

Risk factors increasing vulnerability to trafficking in persons in Bangladesh:

RISK FACTORS	RATIO
Economic Need	51%
Intimate partner as trafficker	13%
Immigration status	10%
Mental, behavioural or neurological disorder	10%
Child deprived of parental care	9%
Limited education	6%
Physical disability	3%

Source: Global report on Trafficking in Persons 2020

Trafficking Victims Profile in Bangladesh:

Most of the administrative divisions had trafficking cases in 2020, but Khulna, Dhaka, and Sylhet stood out as having the largest numbers. All Bangladeshi regions have victims in the GCC nations, but districts bordering India and close to larger cities record a disproportionate number of casualties who have been returned. For instance, the Indian city of Khulna, which is close to Kolkata and borders West Bengal on the west, recorded the highest number of casualties who were repatriated in 2020.

Regarding the quantity of victims who have been returned home, there is a lack of information. When victims of human trafficking manage to flee, they frequently

³⁴ Focus Group Discussion with KI_BGD_03, Bangladesh, 13 January 2021.
Interview with KI_BGD_02, Bangladesh, 2 March 2021., Ibid

³⁵ Sabiha Yeasmin Rosy, "Bangladeshi Women Trafficking Survivors Situation in Family and Society: NGO Response towards their Reintegration", Multidisciplinary Journal of Gender Studies, vol. 5, No.1, (2016), pp. 911-928

experience challenges in their new environment and seem to deliberately want to hide their identities from others because of the stigma attached to them. In addition to possible discrimination, many victims remain unrecognized. Furthermore, victim flow data only depicts victim movement between nations that have formal repatriation arrangements. Therefore, flows between other nations might also exist that are not included in national statistics.

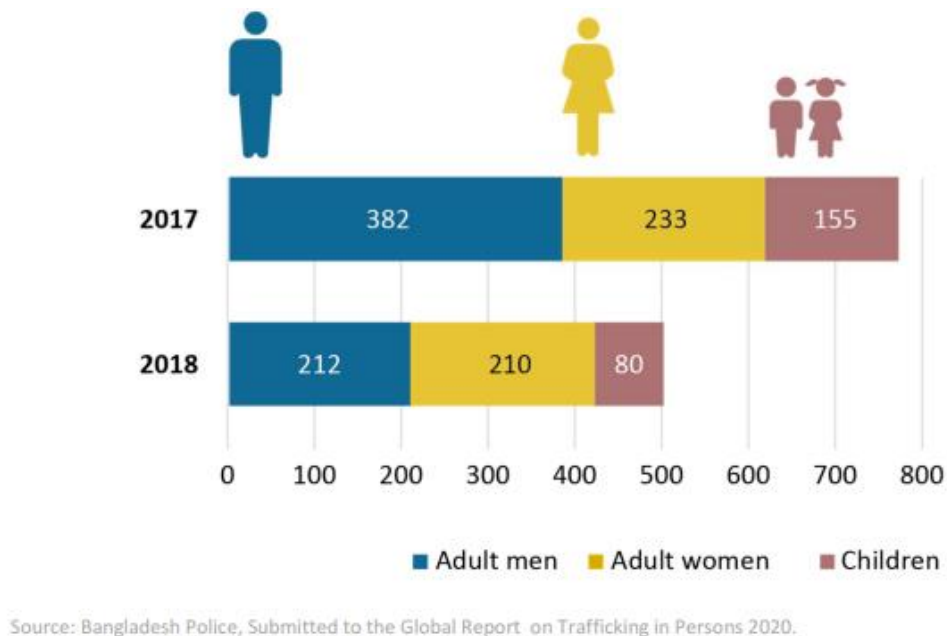


Figure: Number of Detected Victims of Trafficking in Persons, by sex and age (2017-2018)

Women:

Significant numbers of women are trafficked for sexual exploitation both inside and outside of Bangladesh. In addition, a large number of women are being trafficked out of the nation to be exploited as workers at the same time. At Bangladesh, women who are trafficked may be sexually abused at restaurants, brothels, or the streets. According to reports, women make up the majority of those harmed by foreign human trafficking, with most of them being exploited in brothels in the GCC and India. Due to administrative limitations, young women may be the target of traffickers. Furthermore, the availability of regular possibilities is limited due to the relatively costly fees associated with labor migration from Bangladesh, which many people find difficult to pay.

Due to these circumstances, women are more likely to look for erratic ways to migrate for work, which makes them more susceptible to traffickers' recruitment tactics.³⁶

Men:

Men who are taken overseas for forced labor are typically used as slaves in the building and agricultural industries. It was found that migrant men typically have low levels of professional and educational abilities, which puts them at greater risk when they migrate for work. Additionally, men are trafficked within the country to work as forced labor in the ship-breaking sector. The poorer northern regions of the nation are typically where men are recruited for shipbreaking. Promises of more pay have been known to lure many, only to have them trafficked into hazardous situations. Although many people in the business are not trafficked, many are at risk of becoming victims due to the harsh working conditions associated with this line of work.

Children:

By taking advantage of the financial situation of their families, traffickers may target minors, both boys and girls. Traffickers may take advantage of the family's precarious circumstances to violently recruit children, or parents may feel pressured to place their kids in exploitative labor situations in order to maintain household income. 82% certain children might relocate independently to metropolitan areas, where they become the focus of human trafficking.³⁷ Males and female children are both trafficked for forced labor, especially bonded labor. A household that depends on the pre-sale of labor resources is typically more vulnerable to human trafficking. This occurs when traffickers enlist these victims on behalf of employers and pay the parents in advance to have their kids work a variety of jobs, which could put the parents in financial bondage. Children are kept in these forced labor conditions until they have paid off the advance or their parents have made the payment for their release, which is sometimes not possible owing to a lack of financial resources. These techniques have reportedly been used to traffic minors under the

³⁶ Jahirul Islam and Md Zahir Ahmed, Recent Human Trafficking Crisis and Policy Implementation in Bangladesh.(The Journal for Social Advancement, March,2018. 275-291)

³⁷ Ministry of Home Affairs, Division of Public Security, Bangladesh Country Report, 2016: Combating Human Trafficking (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2016).

age of fifteen, especially in the fishing sector. Additionally, young women and girls are trafficked overseas in order to be exploited sexually.³⁸

Forms of exploitation

Traffickers adopt different forms of exploitation in order to control and transport them to the destination. Data from the 2020 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons indicates that victims from Bangladesh are found to be victims of forced labor and sexual exploitation both at home and overseas. Most of the trafficking victims are going through extreme physical and mental torture, abuse, threat, forced bonded labor or sex. Forced labor and sexual harassment are the most used forms of exploitation in Bangladesh. There are also some other forms of exploitation followed by the traffickers. All of those are included in below-

Forced Labor:

Forced labor includes jobs in the fishing industry, the manufacturing of textiles, bricks, and electronics, as well as jobs in construction, agriculture, housework, and tea plantations. Some forms of forced labor are made worse by things like fishermen's seclusion and farmers' seasonal work schedules. In Bangladesh, there are numerous forms of forced labor that entail physically demanding and labor-intensive tasks. Some forms of forced labor are made worse by things like fishermen's seclusion and farmers' seasonal work schedules.

Men are trafficked in the border regions between Bangladesh and India in order to be used as forced labor in industries like steel production. However, there are still more victims—male and female—who were trafficked to dig garbage.³⁹

³⁸ 9 Fraser Murray and others, Study on Modern Slavery in Bangladesh (DAI, August 2019), p. 17. 80
Ibid., p. 18.

³⁹ M. Rezaul Islam and Delwar Hossain, "Protecting Children from Trafficking: Responses of the Governmental and Non Governmental Organisations in Bangladesh", The Malaysian Journal of Social Administration, vol. 10 (2017), p. 11.
"Bangladesh Illegal Immigration: Effects and Consequences", Journal of Eurasian Studies, Vol. 4, No. 3, 2012, pp. 38-58

Sexual Exploitation:

In Bangladesh, specially the poor and vulnerable women and children are suffered through sexual abuse or exploitation. After being trapped by the traffickers, they become more helpless and it's easy to exploit them. Sometimes traffickers use drug and torture them so that victims may follow their instructions. Furthermore, it is common for Bangladeshi women and girls who are trafficked to be sexually exploited at hotels and massage parlors. Similar to this, victims of human trafficking in India have been forced to perform sexual services at beach resorts, and some have even been sexually abused in Delhi and Mumbai dance clubs. Similar to trafficking for forced labor, victims have also been transported to the Middle East and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, where they are sexually exploited in hotels. Prostitution and escort services are involved in sexual exploitation too. For example, there are stories of Bangladeshi women being deceived into becoming sexual slaves in Thailand, Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), by criminals posing as dance group managers.

Other forms of exploitation:

There have also been several other apparent instances of exploitation in Bangladesh. For example, forced organ removal, forced marriage, and forced begging.

Forced and fake Marriage:

In Bangladesh, there have been reports of trafficking linked to forced-fake marriages. Women and girls are trafficked for this purpose include victims of early marriage as well as women and girls who have been divorced or separated and who sometimes look after children on their own. The practice of early marriage places girls at risk of being trafficked and exploited. And the number of early marriage has increase during the COVID-19 pandemic which makes the young girls more vulnerable to the human trafficking.

Organs Removal:

In Bangladesh, the trading in organs was banned in 1999. However, it is not uncommon for newspaper ads seeking organs to appear, tempting low-wage workers to sell their organs in order to improve their financial situation. Rich local receivers in

Bangladesh often find donors prepared to sell their organs, and both parties go to a third country for the transplant surgery. One such scam that is used in Bangladesh is called "the sleeping kidney," which leads victims to believe that one kidney is constantly dormant and therefore unnecessary.

Exploitative Begging:

Street children in big metropolitan centers are typically the target of human trafficking for the purpose of forced begging. Children from their villages have reportedly been trafficked during the last ten years and forced to beg on the streets. The traffickers have even been known to intentionally disfigure the children in order to elicit compassion and, consequently, more money. People in unstable social and economic circumstances or children with impairments are among the victims of exploitative begging. Children are forced to beg as a means of exploitation by traffickers operating in South Asia, some of whom are known to operate in Bangladesh. This type of trafficking is carried out using a similar method.⁴⁰

Extortion for Ransom:

Unauthorized migration routes are used to trade in Bangladeshis. Traffickers specifically target irregular migrants because they are insecure and lack protections. In order to ensure their release, traffickers may imprison migrants and require them to give large sums of money to their captors. In case they lack the necessary finances, the traffickers could get in touch with their relatives and request that the amounts be provided. This practice is documented in Libya where Bangladeshi transit on route to Europe.

⁴⁰ Fraser Murray and others, Study on Modern Slavery in Bangladesh (DAI, August 2019), pp. 17-23.

Chapter Five
Process
of
Human Trafficking in Bangladesh

In this part, human trafficking process in Bangladesh has been discussed. To explain this process, the different modes of trafficking, pattern of this organized crime and who are actually run this process all are highlighted here. It is really hard to locate the exact process of trafficking because of its clandestine nature and unwillingness of the victims to share all information. But the significant aspects of human trafficking are mentioned in this section.

5.1 Factors and actors for the ongoing process of trafficking:

Factors for the human trafficking:

Human trafficking involves certain factors for its process. One of the factors of human trafficking is the aspiration to go abroad, which is frequently taken advantage of by those who commit the crime. The offenders frequently take advantage of this dreamy feeling. Traffickers conduct by taking advantage of social or personal circumstances that make individuals more susceptible to being trafficked. Different risk factors shape environments of individual and structural vulnerability that traffickers may take advantage of. It is also noticeable that Bangladesh has many of the same vulnerabilities as other countries; in fact, the UNODC has determined that the continuation of these risk factors is a key component of global human trafficking.

Economic Needs:

In Bangladesh, the most important risk factor for human trafficking is economic need. People who are poor or have few options to earn money may take risks in the workplace. For people who wish to relocate, socioeconomic factors are also quite important. Individuals relocate with the hopes of leading better lives. Human trafficking is taking place both domestically and internationally. When someone is moved to a new area with high expectations, human traffickers make every effort to seize control of them. Traffickers make lots of money and are difficult to find their location. Those with low economic standing are the most vulnerable. It is suggested to potential victims that moving to the new location will enhance their quality of life. They fall into the trap set by the traffickers because they desire to improve their financial situation at whatever cost.

In the recruitment stage, traffickers employ dishonest tactics to make employment offers seem like realistic ways to improve the financial circumstances of the target population. In

Bangladesh, the rate of extreme poverty decreased from 18% to 10.5% between 2009 and 2019, and per capita income increased from USD 754 to USD 2,064. Still, a large portion of the population in rural areas live in relative poverty. Due to their crisis need for work, many Bangladeshis are vulnerable to human trafficking. Due to the relative lack of economic prospects, people are encouraged to look for work overseas in North America, Europe, and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, where they may find better pay and working conditions. In Bangladesh, there are also disparities in economic prospects between rural and urban areas. A lot of people look for work in the country's largest cities and business centers. This is either because conventional rural livelihoods have grown less profitable or because opportunities are comparatively more abundant in cities and hubs. People may become more vulnerable to human trafficking if they leave their support systems behind for better employment opportunities in large cities or move overseas in quest .⁴¹

Climate Change:

In Bangladesh, internal migration has increased in recent decades due to climate change. The country frequently faces landslides, droughts, storm surges, river and coastal flooding, and tropical cyclones. Climate-related disasters result in the loss of lives, houses, and land, forcing many people to relocate either temporarily or permanently and completely destroying means of livelihood. Bangladesh's coastal regions are particularly affected; Satkhira, Khulna, and Bagerhat account for the majority of the country's displaced people. In 2020, an estimated 4.4 million people were displaced either temporarily or permanently by Cyclone Amphan.⁴² Climate change exacerbates the already dire socioeconomic situations of rural people in some regions of the country, which increases the danger of human trafficking in the context of disaster-related relocation. The low levels of resilience of these communities make them ideal for traffickers to target.

Discrimination, marginalization and harmful traditional practices:

Discrimination, marginalization, and detrimental customs are other risk factors. These interconnected characteristics, which frequently occur along with financial necessity,

⁴¹ Kazi S. Kabir, "Exploring Cruel Business of Begging: The Case of Bangladesh", *Asian Journal of Business and Economics*, vol. 3, No. 3 (2013).

⁴² Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Bangladesh Country Information* (December 2020). Available at <https://www.internaldisplacement.org/countries/bangladesh>
The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020 (United Nations Publication, 2020).

make certain people more vulnerable than others based on their age, gender, or ethnic-linguistic background. For example, The Rohingya population, who have moved to Bangladesh in large numbers, is still stateless and has little access to basic necessities of life and protection. They face social exclusion, are unable to register childbirths, obtain valid employment documents, enjoy freedom of movement, or receive essential services. In addition, they frequently work in dangerous jobs for lesser pay, which puts them at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking. The Hijra people are another marginalized community. Known variously as "third gender" or transgender, hijra are gender nonconforming individuals who live all throughout Bangladesh. Their options to work in fields other than commercial sex are frequently restricted. Hijra people are often sexually exploited, face violence, and have little protection in terms of upholding their rights because of their marginalization and consequent lack of economic prospects. Harmful traditional practices also constitute risk factors for human trafficking, in addition to marginalizing and discriminating against specific populations.

Displacement crisis:

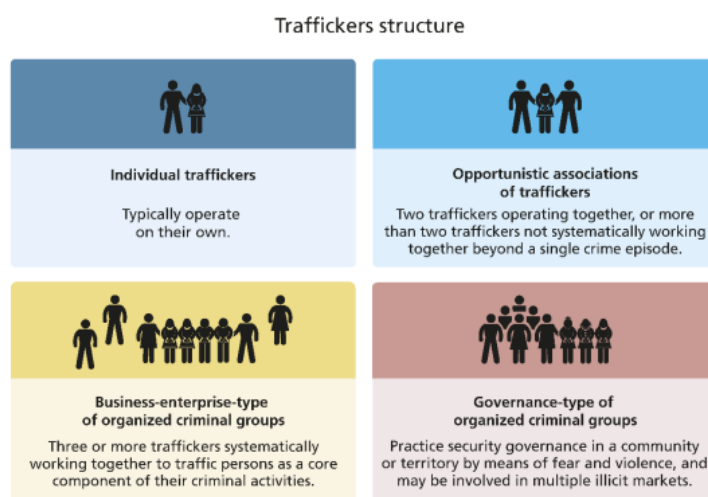
Forced displacement frequently results in persons losing their documents, regular status, access to opportunities for education, and means of subsistence. It also undermines or destroys protective mechanisms, such as family and community support networks. For example, due to the complex humanitarian situation in neighboring Myanmar, Bangladesh is becoming a major destination for displaced people who are trying to escape persecution and acts of armed conflict. Because of factors like marginalization, congestion, food and economic insecurity, disturbances to family structures, and a lack of protection, refugees are vulnerable to human trafficking both on the trip to safety and while residing in refugee camps.⁴³ Traffickers find it easy to target refugee camps. In many cases, the host nation forbids refugees from working. They are forced to live in appalling conditions. They are susceptible to serious human rights violations because they readily believe traffickers. Through false pretenses like promising them desired professions, traffickers transport victims to a new location.

⁴³ International Labour Organization and INCIDIN Bangladesh, Rapid Assessment on Trafficking in Children for Exploitative Employment in Bangladesh (International Labour Office, Geneva, Switzerland, 2002). Interviews with law enforcement representatives. 9sept, 2023.

Actors for human trafficking process:

Trafficking syndicate:

The modes of operation and organizational structures used by traffickers in Bangladesh are almost different. Traffickers may come from a variety of backgrounds, be foreign nationals or citizens, and possess a range of educational and skill levels. Traffickers may work in small or large organizations, or alone. There is an organizer in bigger criminal organizations. Organizers typically operate in the background, avoiding direct interaction with victims, overseeing many aspects of the operation, including the logistics of document provision and transportation, among other things. Members of trafficking networks are tasked with particular duties related to victim identification for later exploitation. Reaching out to those who are viewed as vulnerable because of the many circumstances mentioned above is the responsibility of recruiters. These could be agents from employment bureaus and recruitment firms who are in charge of putting potential victims in touch with human traffickers. Some recruiters make use of Dalals. Dalals serve as middlemen between employers and job seekers and are frequently implicated in fraudulent activities related to labor migration.



Source: The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020

The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020 provides a detailed description of these constellations, showing how trafficking setups can range from a small group of people cooperating to bigger, more structured groups. In a similar vein, traffickers could come from a variety of backgrounds—they could be foreigners or citizens with varying degrees

of education and training.⁴⁴ It is carried out by organized crime syndicates with ties to the police, local elites, transportation companies, hotel management teams, border guard and brothel owners (ILO 2002). The four roles of actors involved in human trafficking are organizer, recruiter, transporter and final abuser. They are all involved in setting up the entire trafficking procedure in order to place the first order with other actors and maximize their income.

The Organizer:

In the process, main player is the organizer. Organizing the entire trafficking procedure to maximize earnings and placing the first order with recruiters and carriers are among the responsibilities in this function. Hostels owners, wealthy locals, or people involved in human trafficking are possible organizers. In some cases, organizers recruited some local dalal for collecting the targeted one and convincing them to go abroad through those illegal agencies by spending little amount of money within a very short time.

The Recruiter (Dalal):

The recruiter called intermediary is the second actor. These performers entice kids—including attractive young girls and homeless kids—to become victims of human trafficking. Teenage girls in disaster-affected communities are specifically targeted, as their chances of success are great. Many girls try to find work in metropolitan areas because there are not many job opportunities in these kinds of districts. Because of this, even if these females are aware of the possibility of being trafficked, it is simpler for brokers to entice them into becoming victims by offering those well-paying jobs or marriage proposals. The risk of human trafficking may be higher in areas near national borders and in communities with established transportation networks because recruiters find it easier to get victims from these locations to their ultimate destination. Also, the fact that it is harder for parents to ask the police for assistance and that it is easier to persuade impoverished parents that "lucrative jobs" exist makes them more drawn to remote or undeveloped places.

⁴⁴ Ruhi Ruh Afza (2003), Human Trafficking in Bangladesh: An Overview. *Journal of Asian Affairs*, Vol. 25, No: 4, October-December, 2003. pp. 49-50

The Transporter:

The third agent, the transporter, is in charge of making arrangements for the victims' transportation to the intended location. Transport employees, illegal immigrants, cross-border dealers, hotel managers, dishonest law enforcement officers, and border security personnel are a few examples of these agents. In order to control victims during transportation, transporters employ a variety of abusive techniques, such as forced drug and alcohol use, house arrest, threats, physical, sexual, and verbal abuse, and sedative injections.

The Final Abuser:

When the victims reach the destination area inside or outside of Bangladesh, they are either sold through bilateral negotiation or an underground auction to the final abuser in the trafficking chain. In order to force them into prostitution, the majority of human trafficking victims are sold to pimps, seasoned sex workers, or owners of brothels and hotels. Travel plans and expenses for victims are influenced by factors such as age, beauty, skin tone, and status as virgins. The price range for victims marketed in Bangladesh is between 15,000 and 30,000 Bangladesh Taka (BDT). The owner initially allows local gangs to rape the victim or places a symbol of a sex worker on the victim's arms in an attempt to persuade them to give up on going home and consent to doing sex work (ILO 2002). Some clients would try to rape a virgin because they think it makes her more valuable. On the other hand, the victims of forced labor are deadly faced physical torture, house arrest, threats for doing as their instruction.⁴⁵ They are forced to work 10-12 hours per day with one meal.

5.2 Routes of Trafficking:

Bangladesh has 64 districts, 30 of which share borders with India and 3 of which share borders with Myanmar. Human trafficking and other illegal activities are extremely difficult to monitor and police, and traffickers take advantage of this. They use the land route, which is their preferred path, followed by the air and the rivers. Along the India-

⁴⁵ Jahirul Islam and Md Zahir Ahmed, Recent Human Trafficking Crisis and Policy Implementation in Bangladesh.(The Journal for Social Advancement, March,2018. 275-291)

UNODC First National Study on Trafficking in Persons in Bangladesh. United Nations Publication 2022, pp 43-50

Bangladesh border, there are up to 18 transit points where people are trafficked out of the country. Traffickers often use the border regions of Khulna, Jessore, Satkhira, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Comilla, Brahmanbaria, and Sylhet as land routes. Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, Naogaon, Chapai Nawabganj, and Rajshahi are most used routes in the northern part of the country. And in the southern regions, Jessore, Cuyadanga and Satkhira are the most vulnerable to human trafficking for women and children. To avoid the law enforcement authorities, the traffickers take different routes at different times. Therefore, the two most popular routes into India through Kolkata are vomra at Satkhira and the Benapole at Jessore, from which over half of all trafficking occurs.⁴⁶ And the Cox's bazar, Teknaf, Moheshkhali are another most used routes by the traffickers. The most vulnerable coastal area for persons being trafficked to Thailand or Malaysia is the Cox's Bazaar and Teknaf, such as Teknaf, Ramu, Ukhiya, Maheshkhali, and Kutubdia upazilla under Cox's bazar, are utilized for trafficking.

Some Cross border and internal trafficking routes:

- From Saidabad to Khulna through Maoa road and Moilapota Bus terminal, to Satkhira or Jessore.
- Sadarghat of Dhaka and Narayanganj to Barisal, Patuakhali by launch, then to Satkhira or Jessore border through land routes.
- Gabtoli bus terminal of Dhaka by road, from there by bus to Satkhira, Jessore, Kaliganj of Jhenaidah, Darshana, Meherpur, Pragpur of Kushtia, Rajshahi, or Dinajpur.
- From Chittagong and Chandpur by train to Akhaura border areas.
- Launch from Mongla to Khulna, Vandaria to Khulna, Takerhat to Khulna, Khepupara to Khulna, then by bus to Satkhira or Jessore.
- Narayanganj sadar to Dhaka airport to Kolkata and then the Middle East countries.
- From Poradah to Rajshahi by train and then by bus to Charghat, Bagha, Godagari or the border of Chapai Nawabganj district.
- From Sylhet to Dawkibazar via Tamabil, then across the border to Shilong.

⁴⁶ Policy Research for Development Alternative. Fact-finding missions on trafficking in women and children from Bangladesh to India and Pakistan. Dhaka: Narigrantha Prabartana, 1999. 30 p.

The counter trafficking framework report: Bangladesh perspective, 2004, op cit, p.23.

- From Sylhet to Jokiganj, then to Manikpur, Chabria, or Loharmol, across the border and through India via Karimganj, Shilchar, or Goahati.
- Thakurgaon, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Nilfamari, Panchaghar via rail to Parbatipur Rail Station in Dinajpur, to Hili and across the border to either Raiganj or Balurghat in India on the highway leading south to Kolkata.

Organized networks are ensnaring and selling men, women, and children across international borders. Additionally, traffickers take high-risk routes, and victims are frequently taken advantage of in transit even before reaching their destination. They typically prey on those who are looking for paid work away from home, on parents or guardians, or on people who have already been abused or exploited because of social structures. Offering high salaries for employment abroad is one of their typical strategies.

Types of Routes for Trafficking:



In Bangladesh, the human trafficking process are mostly ongoing through the land and sea routes. Traffickers prefer those routes because it is easy for them to handle the process through land or sea and hard to detection by the security personnel. The basic patterns and modes of trafficking in Bangladesh through land, air and sea are briefly highlighted here:

Process of trafficking through land routes:

Although Bangladesh's three-sided border with India, the western border districts—Jessore, Satkhira and Cuyadanga in particular—are highly used for human trafficking. Although less frequently, four other border districts—Sylhet, Comilla, Dinajpur,

Ali S. Survey in the area of child and women trafficking. Dhaka: BNWLA, 1997 (2) p 43-54. A Human Rights Report on Trafficking of Persons, Especially Women and Children, 2002, op cit.

and Rajshahi—are also used for human trafficking to India. Traffickers collect the victims from different parts of Bangladesh and gather them into the border areas through bus or train. They cross the border with false documents, fake marriage certificate or by foot at late night with the help of border security personnel. Sometimes the traffickers carry the victims through the truck and goods train by sedative injections. Once the victims cross the border between Bangladesh and India, they are transported by bus or train to the closest city, Calcutta, which is well-known for its prostitution industry. They are typically sold there.⁴⁷ Then the other agents transport them to Delhi, Karachi, or Mumbai or abroad from Calcutta. Mostly India is used as a destination country as well as a transit point in the trafficking process.

Process of trafficking through air routes:

Dhaka, Sylhet, Chattogram and Jessore airports are mainly used by the traffickers to transport victims in Dubai, Saudi Arab, Western European countries and others desire destinations. Here, the victims get tourist visa or work permit visa. They pass through the airport gate which is instructed by the agency. And with the help of immigration personnel they flew to their destination point. After arriving there, slowly they realize that they are trapped by the traffickers. Because their passport and other documents are taken from them and sometimes they become a house arrest for receiving more money from victim's family. Even they don't get the same job which is told them before going there. In new place or a country, they totally become helpless; nothing has to do without the instruction through the trafficking gang.

Process of trafficking through sea routes:

People who fall into the hands of the agency are sold for four times their original price when they arrive in Malaysia. This selling procedure begins in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, and ends at the Thai border with Malaysia. Victims have said that the last stages of the selling process are particularly frightening and unpleasant. If the victims fail to pay the ransom, they will undoubtedly face the death penalty. The first stage begins in Taknaf,

⁴⁷ Lives in Motion: Mobility, Smuggling and Trafficking along the Indo-Bangladesh Border, 2006, Kolkata: Group Developpement, July.

Combating Trafficking of Women and Children in South Asia, Country Paper: Bangladesh, 2002, op cit, p.22.

Bimal Kanti Paul and Syed Abu Hasnath, Trafficking in Bangladeshi Women and Girls. Vol-90, no.2 (Apr, 2000) pp 268-273.

Jahirul Islam and Md Zahir Ahmed, Recent Human Trafficking Crisis and Policy Implementation in Bangladesh, Journal for Social Advancement, March, 2018, pp- 281-297.

Cox's Bazar district, the southernmost point of mainland Bangladesh. Many agents work in smuggling, collecting people from various locations and gathering them at a specified time. The interested individuals take a seat in a small engine boat. The agent receives approximately \$130 per person. Their journey begins at the coast and continues to large engine boats waiting for them in the sea. These boats are mostly used for fishing and resemble wooden trawlers. It takes 4-5 hours to reach the large engine trawlers. Sometimes it takes more than a day to reach trawlers that are located far away. Every boat carries 10 to 15 persons. The boat arrives at the coast of Thailand after 7 days and 7 nights at sea. Afterwards, they use mini boats to get to the coast. The agent paid the large boat \$420 for each victim. They occasionally trek for a day and a night to get to the jungle near the Malaysian border, where there are many camps.

Most used routes for trafficking in Bangladesh:



5.3 Transit and Destination Point:

Traffickers also use Bangladesh as a transit country to transport South Asian victims to other locations. Routes are selected based on their geographic proximity, along with a number of other infrastructure factors like accessibility to communication networks, favorable landscape for crossing, and border security control bodies.⁴⁸ Traffickers prefer less-monitored and unofficial border crossings with neighboring countries as their transit points for moving victims across borders from Bangladesh. People are typically sent to India, where they obtain fictitious travel permits, like passports or visas. The traffickers use commercial flights from India to other countries, often using an intermediate airport in the United Arab Emirates in this process. Some other potential destinations include Italy across the Mediterranean Sea or the GCC countries, and victims may also decide to remain in Libya.⁴⁹

India and Pakistan are the main countries of destination or transit for trafficked persons from Bangladesh into other regions, usually the Gulf States or South East Asia, with Kolkata, India, serving as a significant transit hub for other destinations. This is especially true for the country's western and southeast regions. In addition, trafficking in women and girls from Bangladesh occurs to the Middle East, specifically to Kuwait, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Males from Bangladesh are also transported to the UAE, Qatar, and Kuwait to work as forced laborers as beggars and camel jockeys. Moreover, there is a significant Bangladeshi trafficked woman in Western Europe. And through Thailand, people from Bangladesh enter Malaysia illegally. Bangladeshi dalals establish strongholds in border regions. Women are trafficked out of Bangladesh through as many as 20 transit sites that originate in districts that border with India. The most popular and straightforward land route to India is the Benapole-petropol border crossing, sometimes referred to as the southwest transit point. People who are trafficked into India are carried through the districts of Jessore and Satkhira in the south, and Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Dinaj opur, Naogaon, Chapai Nawabganj, and Rajshahi in the north. In order to go to the different locations in the region, traffickers use additional transit hubs along Myanmar's eastern border. Traffickers smuggle women and girls for sexual exploitation along routes that run from Bangladesh via Myanmar and

⁴⁸ Kapur, R. (2005). Conceptual and Legal Approaches to Trafficking in South Asia, with a Focus on India, Bangladesh, and Nepal. First Annual Forum on Child Development, Beijing, China. pp. 12-14

⁴⁹ Sarker Profulla C. and Panday Pranab Kumar (2006), Trafficking in Women and Children in Bangladesh: A National Issue in Global Perspective. Asian Journal of Social Policy, Vol. 2/2: 1-13. pp. 07

China. Traffickers employ maritime channels as a means of transportation, with many of these routes coming from Cox's Bazar.⁵⁰ The Rohingya diaspora, which is largely composed of people from Myanmar, mainly uses the maritime route to go from Bangladesh to Thailand, Malaysia, or Indonesia. Sylhet is another part of Bangladesh which has few routes used by the traffickers. Many illegal immigrations also take place in Shajalal International airport. Traffickers mainly follow the Dawkibazar, Tamabil, Manikganj, Chabria as their trafficking transit point in this area.

Some of the most used trafficking routes and destination, as identified by Bangladesh Government are:

Place of Recruitment	Transit Point	Destination
Bagerhat	Jessore, Benapol Border, Shaildha	INDIA +
Jessore	Ekorgacha, Kolkata, Howra Station, Mumbai	
Nator	Shaildha, Fotulla, Shalkia,	
Noakhali	Dhaka, Comilla, Lalmonirhat	
Chapai		
Nowabganj+	Rabgpur Kathalbari, benapol Border, +	PAKISTAN +
Shibganj+	Bongah, Shaildha, Mumbai, Delhi	
Khulna		
Cox's Bazar	Dhaka, Kolkata, Delhi	
Dhaka	Alukhad, Pakistan	
Comilla	India	DUBAI
Chittagong	Dhaka, Kustia, Bongah	
Faridpur	Jessore, Benapol Border, Old Delhi,	
	Dhaka, Mumbai	
Bahamman		
-baria	Dhaka Kamalapur, Benapol Border, Kolkata, Mumbai	

Source: Rapid Assessment on Trafficking in Children for Exploitative Employment in Bangladesh, 2002, February, p.34.

Figure: Routes, Recruitment points and Destinations

⁵⁰ USAID (2004). Trafficking in Persons - USAID's Response. Washington, DC, USAID. pp. 51-53.

Frontex, "Detections of Illegal Border-Crossings", FRAN and JORA Database. Available at <https://frontex.europa.eu/we-know/migratory-map/>

Globally, Bangladeshi victims have been found in various countries; India, Thailand, Qatar, Bahrain, China, Dubai, Malaysia, North America and Western Europe are the major destinations followed by the GCC countries.⁵¹ It is significant to highlight that smugglers of migrants and human traffickers frequently utilize the different routes. It has been documented that some Bangladeshis have sporadically traveled to Europe via the Mediterranean Sea routes, both before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately 5.7% of all arrivals between January 2015 and May 2021 via the Central Mediterranean Route—which links North Africa and Italy—were citizens of Bangladesh. Some unofficial routes to Europe might pass through Egypt, Iran, and Iraq; others might pass through Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and, to a lesser extent, Nepal.⁵²

5.4 How the Process Breaks Down:

The trafficking gangs have vast networking system both at domestically and internationally. Usually, a group of traffickers gathers victims from Bangladesh and delivers them to their associates in Myanmar or India. These agents then transport them abroad or to brothels. In the procurement process, both men and women are involved in Bangladesh. Organized criminal groups connections with different law enforcement authorities are responsible for trafficking. Agents, traffickers, and smugglers are closely connected, and all agents get along well with the police, BGB, and BSF. There is an organizer in bigger criminal gangs. In order to control different aspects of the operation, including the production of false documents and the organization of transportation logistics, organizers frequently operate in the background and avoid having direct contact with victims.⁵³

⁵¹ Ahmed Mushfiq Mobarak and Maira Emy Reimão, “Seasonal Poverty and Seasonal Migration in Asia”, *Asian Development Review*, vol. 37, No. 1 (2020).

Shahidur Khandeker and Wahiduddin Mahmud, *Seasonal Hunger and Public Policies: Evidence from Northwest Bangladesh* (The World Bank, Washington, D.C., United States of America, 2012). Ibid 8.

⁵² Zakir Hossain, Ohidul Alam Khan and Jasim Uddin Ahmed, “Determinants of Rural-Urban Migration in Bangladesh including its Consequences for Origin Households and Urban Amenities”, *Research and Reviews: Journal of Statistics*, vol. 5, No. 2 (2016).

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Database on Trafficking in Persons. The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* database contains information submitted by Member States for the biennial Report. The database contains statistics on trafficking in persons dating back to 2007.

⁵³ Yasmin, S. 2006, *Human trafficking in Bangladesh*, The Daily Star, January 25. Dasgupta, Anindita, 2003, op cit.

Human trafficking takes many forms, and its victims are tricked in a number of ways. For example, romantic relationships and romance are the easiest ways for traffickers to gain the trust of their victims; in most cases, traffickers pose as lover boys to deceive victims in a convenient way; job ads tend to attract the attention of jobless or low-wage workers; studying abroad is another phenomenon that can set up a trap because most people want to pursue higher education opportunities; victims are also abducted or recruited through individuals who were previously involved in the trafficking gangs. Some recruiters make use of Dalals. Dalals work as middlemen between job applicants and employers, and it is frequently discovered that they are involved in fraudulent activities related to labor migration. While some dalals may purposefully collaborate with traffickers, others may operate closely with official recruitment agencies. Additionally, since the agents might not be aware of who they are recruiting for, traffickers may employ their services without the agents' knowledge.⁵⁴

Usually dalals involve with the first step to pick up the vulnerable people from slum, bus stands, railway station, industrial areas, lunch ghat and the rural area. The primary targets of dalals are teenage girls, widows, maidservants, women who have been abandoned by their husbands, women and children traveling, people living in slums, women employed in the textile industry, and children from low-income households. One of the main targets of organized child trafficking rings is street children residing in the city. They allure the victims by giving them hope for earning more money through getting a job in cities or in abroad. And thus victims get into this trafficking process. Sometimes close friend or relatives work as an intermediary to deceive the vulnerable one. Recruiters make an effort to get along well with the people they prey on. They can be family members, coworkers, or relatives who are employed overseas. Before putting them in touch with potential labor migrants from their social networks, such as family, friends, or neighbors, migrant workers who are already employed in the destination nation typically secure visas with their employer.⁵⁵ Service providers that aid in human trafficking must offer their services. Along the routes used for human trafficking, intermediaries may offer

Combating Trafficking of Women and Children in South Asia, Country Paper: Bangladesh, 2002, op cit.

⁵⁴ Shamim, I. 2001, Mapping of Missing, Kidnapped and Trafficked Children and Women: Bangladesh Perspective, International Organization for Migration, Dhaka.

⁵⁵ Trafficking of Women and Children in South Asia: Taking Stock and Moving Ahead, A Broad Assessment of Anti-Trafficking Initiatives in Nepal, Bangladesh and India, 1999, op cit.
Combating Trafficking of Women and Children in South Asia, Country Paper: Bangladesh, 2002, op cit, p. 17.

visas, forged documents, lodging, and transit. Victims prefer to do anything as they say for getting this chance. Then traffickers demand a large amount of money for preparing their documents, passport and visa. Victims manage all the money by hook or by crook to fulfill their desired dream. After paying this money, victims are bonded with that persons unknowingly. After that traffickers make a plan to transport those victims. Sometimes they use land route or the sea route. It depends on the destination country. In most of the cases, traffickers use India as an intermediary transit point for trafficked people in GCC countries and other parts of Europe. While traffickers follow the land routes, they collect all the victims and bring them by bus or train in the transit point which are probably the border area of our country with India. And for sea routes, they usually transport the victims through the small ship or container depo. When all of the victims reach at the transit point, traffickers contact with the other members of this gang to receive them. With the help of some corrupted law enforcement authorities like customs officers, BGB, police, bureaucrats, traffickers successfully hand over those victims to other members who are waiting in other side of the transit point.⁵⁶ They take the victims to their shelter and start their next processing. In this new place, victims totally rely on these members and it makes them easy to exploit by the gangs. When the victims realize their mistakes, it is too late to leave this trap.

Modus operandi

Traffickers frequently alter their methods of operation, taking advantage of their victims' weaknesses and influencing outside circumstances to their benefit. To keep their victims under control, traffickers employ a variety of physical and psychological tactics in addition to lying to them and abusing the labor migration system which are discussed below:

Deception in Migratory Process:

The misuse of Bangladesh's labor immigration system is one tactic employed by traffickers. Bangladeshi immigration has expanded dramatically in recent years, which has given traffickers more opportunity to operate in this country. Traffickers take advantage of the complexities surrounding immigration and immigration laws in the countries of

⁵⁶ The counter trafficking framework report: Bangladesh perspective, 2004, op cit, p.27

Rapid Assessment on Trafficking in Children for Exploitative Employment in Bangladesh, 2002, op cit

destination as well as the frequently inadequate understanding of migrants regarding the prerequisites for movement. Utilizing third-party employment agencies gives certain overseas businesses more chances to exploit their workers.⁵⁷

1st Step:

The first method known as "visa processing," which is done by hiring agents. In order to send demand letters from overseas that local traffickers use to apply for visas and arrange transportation on behalf of victims, recruitment agents collaborate with visa agents. When Bangladeshi migrants are trafficked using fictitious contracts or demand letters, they are exploited at their destination and placed under a kind of debt bondage, with their passports being held by their employers or brokers. In the absence of appropriate documents, victims' status is irregular, which restricts their ability to seek legal protection.

2nd Step:

Another tactic is "contract replacement," in which victims are misled about the circumstances of employment at the destination. After the victims reach their destinations, their contracts are often renewed or never signed, which again puts the migrant in an unstable situation and forces them to become dependent. Victims are thus forced into different types of exploitation. Due to financial pressure to pay off debts accrued during migration, both men and women work for several employers without formal contracts, which is against the rules of the countries they are visiting.

3rd Step:

A third method entails traffickers using the availability of non-immigrant visas, such those for travel or study, particularly to locations in Europe. Recruiting organizations are typically not involved in the process because low-skilled Bangladeshis have few choices for getting work visas in European nations. Instead, traffickers arrange exits from Bangladesh by using study and tourism permits. These kind of visas typically do not give

⁵⁷ Siddiqui, T. (2000), 'NGOs in Bangladesh: challenges on the threshold of the new millennium' Bangladesh on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century, The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh. pp. 411-432

the bearer the ability to work in European countries; as a result, when the immigrant shows up and starts working, they are doing so unlawfully.*⁵⁸

Labor Scams:

Another tactic used by traffickers is lying about the presence or terms of work opportunities elsewhere. Prospective immigrants sometimes know very little about the legal prerequisites for moving abroad and the employment market in their intended country. These restrictions are used by traffickers to entice victims by offering them jobs in places where none is available. Moreover, there are instances where employment does exist in destination nations, but it differs from what is advertised.

Resettlement Scams:

Traffickers may also profit from the severe circumstances that face displaced individuals. They entice susceptible individuals by offering to resettle refugees in third-world countries. For example, under the pretext of setting up marriages in Malaysia, traffickers enlisted a group of women in Cox's Bazar. In other instances, people belonging to ethnic minority groups tried to become citizens of Thailand or Malaysia by using trafficker's assistance in order to make migration easier later on, but which makes the path to fall victim under an exploitative scam.

Education Scams:

Additionally, traffickers prey on young people's desire to study abroad by luring them with false promises of helping them get visas and enroll in colleges abroad. Here, traffickers typically target disgruntled, weak people who could fall for this kind of trickery, including Bangladeshi public university applicants who cannot pass their entrance exams.

⁵⁸ Jordan, Ann D (2002). 'Human rights or wrong? The struggle for a rights-based response to trafficking in human beings', Gender and Development, Volume 10 Number 1: pp. 28-37.

Ashraful Azad, "Recruitment of Migrant Workers in Bangladesh: Elements of Human Trafficking for Labor Exploitation", Journal of Human Trafficking, vol. 5, No. 2 (2019), p. 143

Coercion in terms of violence:

In order to keep control over their victims, traffickers rarely employ force during the recruitment stage. Instead, they save it for later. According to the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020, traffickers employ physical abuse to compel victims into remaining in an exploitative situation after initially luring them with lies or the exploitation of their weaknesses. When victims come to realize they have been tricked, traffickers use a variety of tactics to keep them under control, such as coercion, threats, or even creating or escalating drug addiction.

It is noteworthy that the manner of transportation has no bearing on whether or not traffickers resort to violence. In order to maintain control over a large number of victims, traffickers may resort to physical violence on board ships. On the other side victims of land-based trafficking have frequently been beaten or restrained. Under both scenarios, it has been shown that traffickers severely limit the amount of food and water available to their captives on packed boats, sometimes to the point of death.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ UNODC First National Study on Trafficking in Persons in Bangladesh. United Nations Publication 2022, pp 20-69.
Global Study on Smuggling of Migrants 2018 (United Nations publication, 2018), p.116.

Chapter Six

An Analysis of Human Trafficking in Bangladesh: Based on Recent Case Studies and Survey

6.1 Method and Data Analysis:

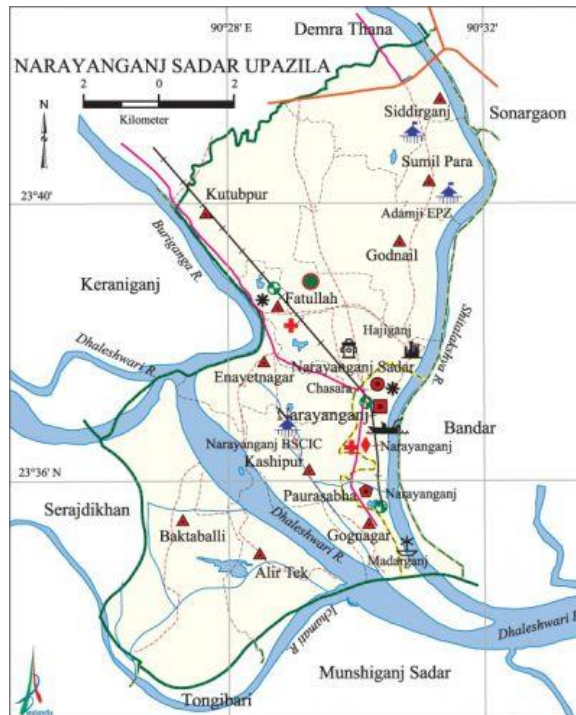
This study has explained human trafficking process through analyzing the recent factors, new tactics of the procurement process, survey database and literature reviews. Here, this chapter is discussed mainly in its two phases: first one is “factors analyzation” phase and another one is “modus operandi”. For “factors analyzation” phase, one of the most victims pick up areas of Bangladesh has been chosen. This part sets out the factors with description which helps to spur human trafficking in the selected area, some victim’s interviews and their real life experiences, and also a public survey’s database have been add to clarify why it is an origin place of victims of trafficking. Besides, one of the most used land routes for trafficking in Bangladesh has been selected for explaining the “modus operandi”. The second part illustrates the procurement process of trafficking through the selected land route and adds some recent case studies based on different modes of trafficking to highlight how the process is going on and what are the most used tactics for human trafficking in this time.

The research is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. I apply the methods of data collection in the research such as interviews, questionnaire to the locals, some victims in both selected areas and analyze the case studies through content analysis, news and articles which are specially conducted through the most used land route to explain the process of human trafficking. And secondary data has been collected based on country papers, Global Reports on HT, CTDC(Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative) reports, BNWLA reports, literature reviews, articles, NGO research papers and reports data, journals and some information from Bangladesh Intelligence groups for this study.

6.2 Selection of Research Area:

Narayanganj sadar in Narayanganj district has been selected as the victims pick up area or origin place of victims and Benapole-Petrapole border as the transit route for explaining modus operandi of trafficking which is a part of the Jessore District. The scope of research is limited due to the clandestine nature of this process.

6.3 Narayanganj Sadar:



Narayanganj Sadar is a upazila of Narayanganj district nearby the capital city of Dhaka, Bangladesh. It is located about 16 kilometers southeast of Dhaka. The entire area is 38.90 square miles. According to the 2011 Bangladesh Census, Narayanganj Sadar has 1,323,600 inhabitants and 313,312 households. The total area is 100.74 km² and the gender ratio is 916 females for every 1000 males. Here, 94.29% people are Muslim, 5.65% are Hindu and 0.06% are others. It has an average literacy rate of 49.6% (7+ years).

Narayanganj Sadar as the Origin Place of Victims:

Narayanganj Sadar-the central part of Narayanganj district which is called as the “Dandee of the East” is an important town for trade and commerce. It is well communicated with Dhaka by road, river and railways. The river Shitalaksha and Dhaleswari both flow beside this town and it has steamer connections with major inland ports and Chittagong. It is among the busiest trade markets in the country. Together with Dhaka, it also develops a large industrial region, with many jute and cotton mills, garments, ship scrubbing sectors, processed food and beverages, machinery and metal products, chemicals and pulp and wood products. All these small and medium factories create vast areas of employment and plays an important role in our national economy. In recent years, Bangladesh experiences

highest levels of internal and international migration of people seeking better employment opportunities. Thousands of rural people in Bangladesh involve in internal migration for higher standard of life basically from the northern part and north-east rural areas to urban centers, due to seasonal factors, climate change and loss of traditional livelihoods. In this circumstances, many of those destitute people choose Narayanganj sadar as their work spot due to its industrial infrastructure, work opportunities, proximity to the capital city and comparable lower cost of living. Some of them also prefer this place as their intermediary place for finding the path to go abroad for higher standard of life. In Narayanganj Sadar most of the people work as a day laborer in the factory or involve with trade and commerce. They are also economically vulnerable and want to earn more money. For this circumstances, significant portion of them are willing to go abroad to find a job; besides the low-skilled day workers earn less in Bangladesh than the international minimum wage. For examples, the low-skilled workers receive around \$163 per month while most in Malaysia earn between \$61 and \$244 per month. This discrepancy lifts the risk of trafficking due to underlying economic vulnerability and misrepresentation by recruiters, high migration fees. So, the large portion are seeking better employment opportunities through informal recruitment agencies which basically relate to smugglers because of the complexities in the international migration process and higher migration fees. Thus it has fostered the path of trafficking in persons in Narayanganj Sadar. Local trafficking gangs in here, mostly pick up those persons who are economically vulnerable and try to find a job in Dhaka or abroad. Sometimes relatives or dalals operate here as an intermediary. Politically powerful gangs or the smugglers operate the informal recruitment agencies and maintain contacts at various transit points for continuing the trafficking process. Knowingly or unknowingly the poor devastated people or the job seekers become their prey to run the “Adam Pacher” business. This illegal practices place the migrants at the risk of exploitation through trafficking gang members. In recent years, Bangladesh has faced onward immigration flow both formally or informally. It is hard to find out the exact figure of illegal migrants. According to IOM’s World Migration Report 2020, Bangladesh ranks sixth globally in terms of top origin countries for immigrants. On the other side, the EU Border and Coast Guard Agency Frontex stated, between January 2015 and May 2021, nearly 44,500 irregular border crossing by Bangladeshis were detected and a significant portion of the 103,255 Bangladeshi asylum applicants recorded in Europe between 2015 and 2020, who reached the continent by irregular means.

Factors Analyzation:

Human trafficking in Narayanganj Sadar is exacerbated by systemic shortcomings in victim care and law enforcement, socioeconomic disparity, and cultural norms that uphold gender inequality. People who are poor, illiterate, or work in informal labor markets are more susceptible to exploitation. Cultural norms surrounding gender roles heighten vulnerability, and the issue is made worse by insufficient victim assistance and inadequate law enforcement. There are several push and pull factors that may contribute to the prevalence of human trafficking in Narayanganj Sadar such as-

Economic vulnerability of rural people
Work opportunities for low-skilled worker
Easy to communicate with Dhaka
Approximate location to Indian border
Increase number of informal recruitment agencies
Industrial area and nearby to river ports
Oppression through local smugglers and gangs
Comparable lower cost of living

Socio-Economic Factors:

One of the primary drivers of human trafficking in Narayanganj Sadar is the pervasive poverty that afflicts many of its residents. Poverty creates a vulnerable population susceptible to exploitation by traffickers who promise lucrative job opportunities elsewhere. Lack of education and job prospects exacerbates this vulnerability, as individuals are lured by the prospect of a better life, only to find themselves ensnared in the web of trafficking networks. Moreover, the presence of informal labor markets in Narayanganj Sadar provides fertile ground for traffickers to operate. These markets often lack regulation and oversight, making it easier for traffickers to exploit workers,

particularly those from marginalized communities. The demand for cheap labor in industries such as textiles and construction further incentivizes traffickers to prey on vulnerable individuals, trapping them in exploitative labor conditions.

Industrial Based Area:

Narayanganj Sadar is an industrial area. There are many factories and mills such as manufacturing factories, jute and textile mills, paper mills, tobacco factories, machine and tools factories etc. Most of the rural people are working as day laborer in those factories. The working opportunities make the area more attractive to the rural people who find jobs in town to earn much money to support their family. Moreover, this Sadar upazila is well-connected by road, river and train, facilitating the movement of goods and people. For this reason, people from different parts of our country prefer to shift in Narayanganj Sadar for working in those sectors. But often their earnings are not enough to live in a better way or to support their family. And majority of them find another way to earn a handsome amount. The traffickers take the advantage of this innocent rural people. Many victims often lured by false promises of employment, but find themselves trapped in exploitative working conditions at home or abroad. Industries such as construction, manufacturing, and agriculture become hotspots for these illegal activities. The traffickers, operating both locally and internationally, prey on the desperation of individuals seeking economic opportunities.

Cultural Norms and Gender Inequality:

Cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality also contribute to human trafficking in Narayanganj Sadar. Deep-rooted patriarchal values relegate women and girls to subordinate roles within society, making them more susceptible to exploitation. Traffickers exploit these societal dynamics by promising employment opportunities to women and girls, only to force them into prostitution or domestic servitude upon arrival at their destination. Furthermore, the stigma associated with sex work and trafficking often deters victims from seeking help or reporting their exploitation. Fear of social restriction and retribution from traffickers perpetuates a culture of silence, allowing trafficking to thrive unchecked within the community.

Geographic Location:

It is situated in the Dhaka Divisions, sharing borders with Gazipur, Brahmanbaria, Munshiganj districts. This strategic location of Narayanganj Sadar, near the capital city of Dhaka and sharing border with Brahmanbaria, Gazipur has contributed to its significance as a transportation hub for trafficking. Its connectivity makes easy to move people from rural areas to Dhaka or abroad. Narayanganj Sadar's proximity to international borders, particularly with India, adds a layer of complexity to the issue. Cross-border trafficking is a significant concern, with criminals exploiting porous borders to transport victims across countries.

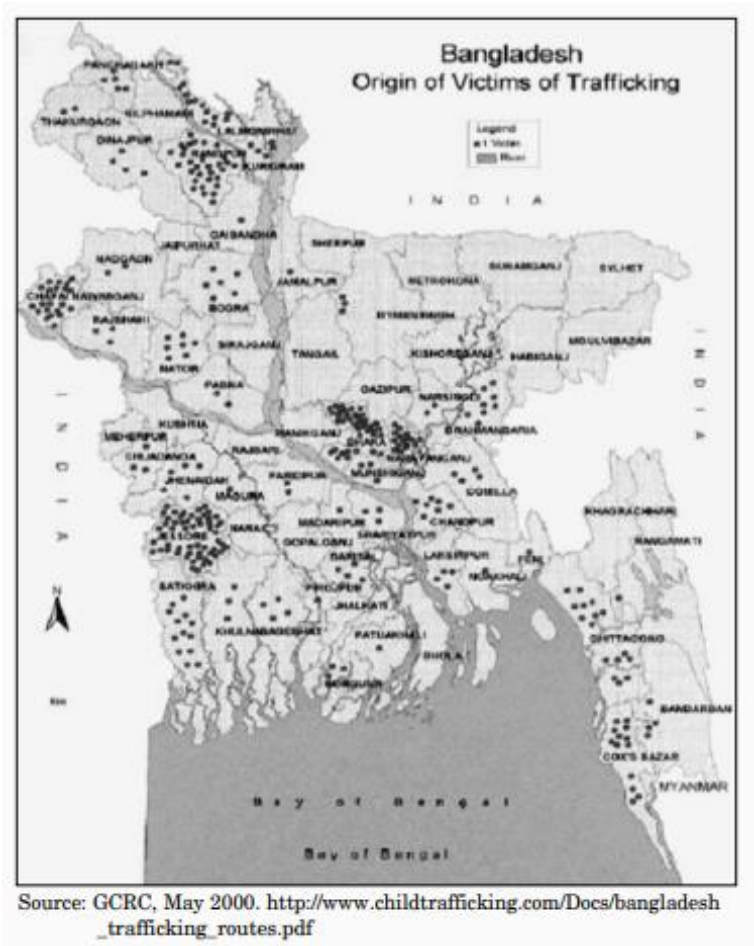
Corruption and Weak Law Enforcement Bodies:

In addition to socio-economic and cultural factors, systemic failures also contribute to the prevalence of human trafficking in Narayanganj Sadar. Weak law enforcement, corruption, and a lack of resources allocated to combating trafficking impede efforts to address the issue effectively. Trafficking networks operate with relative impunity, knowing that they are unlikely to face consequences for their crimes. The absence of comprehensive victim support services further compounds the problem. Victims of trafficking often lack access to essential services such as healthcare, shelter, and legal assistance, leaving them vulnerable to re-victimization and exploitation. Reports from local authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) suggest that Narayanganj Sadar has witnessed an increase in human trafficking incidents in recent years. The victims often hail from marginalized communities, making them susceptible to exploitation due to socio-economic vulnerabilities.⁶⁰

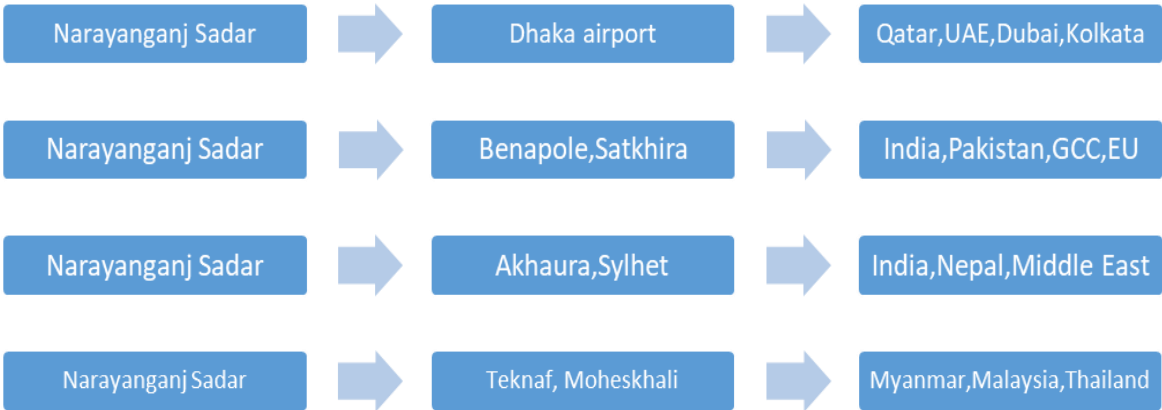
⁶⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narayanganj_Sadar_Upazila

Ruhul Amin Prodhan (2012), "Narayanganj Sadar Upazila", in Sirajul Islam and Ahmed A. Jamal (ed.), *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh* (Second ed.), Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.

The following Map highlights the most vulnerable origin places of trafficking in Bangladesh and Narayanganj Sadar is also one of these hotspot points of trafficking:



Most used routes by the traffickers in Narayanganj Sadar:



There is some recent human trafficking news and victim's interviews which may clarify the real scenario of this heinous crime, also the factors which lead them to become a victim of human trafficking in Narayanganj Sadar:

- A human trafficking group attempted to smuggle three young ladies to India with the promise of lucrative jobs at Siddhirganj upazila in Narayanganj district, but the RAB apprehended six of them. The individuals who were taken into custody were Jhuma Akter, 28, Sharmin Akter, 29, Minara Rina, 35, Rabeya Akter, 27, Komly Khatun, 32, and Shahjamal, 40years old. A woman was taken by human traffickers to the Benapole border in an attempt to transport her to India, which is nearby. She was promised a high-paying position at a beauty parlor on the other side of the border. After spotting the trap, the woman managed to get away from the alleged traffickers and made her way back to Narayanganj, where on next afternoon she filed a formal complaint against them at the RAB-11 headquarters. According to the complaint, the elite force detained the human traffickers during a drive in the upazila's Mizmizi Batanparra area under the upazila. The local police station filed a case on the incident, and the people who had been arrested were sent to appear in court. (Source: New age,5th August,2022)
- RAB has arrested three human traffickers on allegations of collecting ransom after holding 19 youth hostages in Myanmar and also killing one of them. The mastermind (Md Ismail,45) and two other Md Elahi and Md Jashim were also arrested during a drive in Narayanganj district on Friday. The gang took 19 people of Narayanganj to Myanmar, promising that they would be taken to Malaysia for a better life. Three of the victims of trafficking were held captive at the traffickers' hideout in Myanmar and subjected to torture for ransom from their relatives after the traffickers and the victims managed to escape, according to Moin.Jahirul Islam's family members might offer a partial payment to the kidnappers in order to purchase Jahirul's release and travel to Malaysia. Jahirul Islam was a victim who died in Malaysia. Jahirul was abandoned by the captors in the Malaysian city of Johor Baru, nonetheless, as he was too sick and feeble to leave at that point from his torment. Critically ill, Jahirul was saved by Malay police, and on May 24, he passed away at a nearby hospital. Jahirul's body was returned on May 28 by the Bangladeshi authorities. (Source: The Financial Express, 19 August, 2023.)

- A raid in the capital's Paltan neighborhood resulted in the arrest of four victims and the suspected number of a human trafficking group by the RAB. Shamsuddin, 61, of Narayanganj, is the person who was arrested. One Mohammad Ziauddin, who resides in Dubai, was his supervisor.⁶¹ Girls were tricked into offering work abroad by the group in the past. The arrestee acknowledged that they had trafficked over 100 girls at the time of the initial questioning. (Source: The Daily Star, 22 November, 2021.)

Interview of the Rescued Victims

Now, recent three victim's experiences of trafficking process have been shared below. First victim's interview was conducted over mobile phone and another two victim's interview was conducted directly through semi-structured question. The patterns and modes of trafficking of those victim's is also most used tactics of this process in recent time:

“Gaming process”

Victim 01:

Badhon Mondol 32, who comes from Rajyor, Madaripur to khashipur at Narayanganj Sadar for working as a supply man in a garments factory. But it is very hard for him to maintain his family expenses with this tiny income. After discussion his problem with one of his colleagues, one day he told Badhon about how it is possible to go to Italy for earning more money through the local mediators help. Badhon started to dream about it. A local mediator, named Rubel came to know about Badhon's condition and his dream to go to Italy. Then the mediator contacted with Badhon, told him to collect 10-15 lakhs money for passport, visa and immigration procedure. After paying the amount, he got his passport and visa. On the departure date, Badhon went to Rubel's agency where some other people also came to go to Italy. Rubel said them, all of the instruction they will get over phone. As the instruction, Badhon came to Dhaka airport and had passing through gate no 01. He reached to Mumbai where he stayed two days at the airport. Then he arrived Dubai by air and it took seven days for further procedures. So after seven days he flew to Egypt where

⁶¹ Kohinur Urmee. Human Trafficking in Bangladesh: An Analysis from Victimological Perspective, 2016, ELCOP Summer School YEAR BOOK. Pp 1-19.

Interview was recorded by myself, victim 01, 23.03.24, 2.30pm.

he stayed two hours and then to Bengazi, Lybia. He spent two days in Bengazi, then the gang members took him with another 20-25 people to Tripoli to the shelter home of the mediator by road. Badhon said, the shelter house was mainly two rooms where 50-60 people were lived, almost we had lack of food, water and tortured by the gang members. There was no place to sleep, we had to drink salty water and many of us had suffered from various diseases and physical illness due to severe torture. Badhon also realized that their documents were not legal. Thus after two months, gang leader took 6-7 people along with Badhon to the gaming house where they lived 15days. Here, the living condition was far worse and regularly they were tortured by the members. One day they gathered 25-30 people and loaded them along with other 20 people side by side into a minitruck. Sometimes, the victims got fainted or even died because of oxygen deficiency. After two hours they brought them to the Mediterranean Sea shore for gaming. They were instructed to run by the sea shore and then after 2-3 hours running, some gang member loaded them into a small fishing trawler which was dreadful. Lower and upper chamber of this trawler were fully loaded with 45-50 people where it was capable of loading 15-20 people. There is no food or water only some oil tanks. Then the trawler started at night. But after two or three hours later, suddenly there was a massive storm. Somehow 6-7 people managed to live but caught by the Libya Coast Guard. Badhon immediately managed to call his mediator and told everything. They were prisoned for 7days with only water. After releasing them, they were told to start their game again on the same day. But Badhon told them, he is too weak and cannot go through this process, he wants to come back home. To hear that the mediator had beaten him brutally and demanded another 15lakhs for going back. There was no way to escape, so Badhon forced to go to the trawler. But unfortunately again they were caught by the Libya Coast Guard and took them to Tunesia. Somehow Badhon was able to convince a coast guard and told everything. Badhon asked him to help in retuning to Bangladesh. With the help of this guard Badhon was able to return home. But still he is sick and his family is going through a hard time. Lack of proper documents and information, Badhon cannot be filed any case against the agency or the mediator.

“Using the coaches of the goods trains for human trafficking”

Victim 02:

Momtaz begum 34, is a housewife by profession, lives in Fatulla. Her husband is a van driver. They have no children but her husband is going through a lot of trouble with her sick husband. One day Papia, (who travels to India illegally through goods trains), a local broker living near the railway area, starts encouraging Momtaz that there is a well salaried job in Kolkata as a beauty product seller. Papia told her about the sickness of her husband and the cost of his treatment. She said, if you (Mamtaz) take this job, you will be able to manage the treatment cost as well as your other expenditures. Momtaz believed Papia's word and agreed to do the job. According to Momtaz, she left for India on the morning dated on 23.02.23 with the cost of 35000tk with Papia. Mamtaz did not know that Papia went to India illegally in such a risky way. When she came to know that she had already stepped into this trap. Papia met some other people at the railway station and told Mamtaz to eat some food and took rest into a coach of goods train because this train was not going anywhere now. Mamtaz thought that the train was empty, so she could take some rest in here. She ate bread and juice, then tried to sleep in the coach. When she awoke up, the train was running and the coach was full of goods. Mamtaz could not understand what was going on. She waited until the train was stopped. After arriving in Kolkata, Papia and her gang members opened the coach's door and forcefully brought Mamtaz into a house. Mamtaz said, it was night and they closed my eyes, I could not scream because they put cloth into my mouth. Papia sold Mamtaz into a brothel in Kolkata. They gave Mamtaz seductive injection to senseless for some time but Mamtaz heard everything when they were talking. Because she was not fully senseless then. After going Papia, they tried to abuse her physically but could not and then they tortured her brutally. She had to starve, they gave her drug and tried to get her customer. Mamtaz could not realize what to do and how can she escape from this trap. After 19days, one evening a boy came into Mamtaz room to give her injection. Mamtaz noticed that no one was in the outside, so somehow she had to trash the boy and run away from here. When the boy came near to Mamtaz, she hit the boy by a whisky bottle in his head and run as fast as she can. Mamtaz tried to reach into the main road. Suddenly she was hit by a jeep. Mamtaz got fainted. When she opened her eyes, she was in a hospital with some Indian police man. Because it was a police jeep. She told them everything and her illegal entrance into India. After spending four months in

prison, she was brought back to Bangladesh on 02.08.23 with the help of Rights Jessore. After returning home, a case was filed in the court, the PBI investigated and submitted a report to the court. Police have already arrested some accused in this case. The case is currently pending in court.

“False Promise of Job in trafficking process”

Victim 03:

Suruj Ali 35, lives in Siddhirganj as a day laborer. He has three daughters and a son. His wife works as home maker. But it is too tough to bear the expenses of such a big family. He has few lands in the village but it is infertile. His uncle suggests Suruj ali to sell this land to him and go to Dubai by utilizing this money. Suruj discusses this idea with her wife. To manage the cost of his daughter's marriage and son's future, both are agreed to this idea. Suruj's uncle introduced him with a dalal and told him he could get you a high paying job in Dubai. The money was commuted by his uncle. Within a month Suruj had got his passport and visa. The dalal told him an agency name and gave him the contact detailed with whom he could contact with at Dubai. From the Dhaka airport Suruj Ali flew for Dubai. After arriving Dubai, Suruj followed the address and tried to call the number. But he cannot recognize the address and the phone was switched off. He tried to contact with his dalal but same thing here, the phone was switched off. Thus after 7 days, Suruj had no money or food to eat. His family had no contact number, so he could not inform them about his situation. His uncle blocked Suruj's number. He was so helpless in there. He understood that there was no such agency and he had no job here. But he had no money to return or no way to inform his family. So Suruj tried to get any kind of work so that he could survive and he also had to make some money for his family. After 20 days he got a job in a construction site as a labor. He had to work 10-12hours per day and he became sick day by day. Working such a bad condition, Suruj had an accident in the site and he lost his left leg.

Day was far worse for him. Few months later he got caught by the police. Because his was expired. After one-and-a-half-year prison, Suruj Ali returned to Bangladesh. Now he is not

Source: This case study of Victim 02 and 03 is made up from experiences of two trafficked victims, interviewed and recorded by myself, 15.02.24, at narayanganj Sadar Police Station, 10.30am.

As an ethical requirement of this research I use pseudonyms to preserve participant anonymity and to protect participant confidentiality.

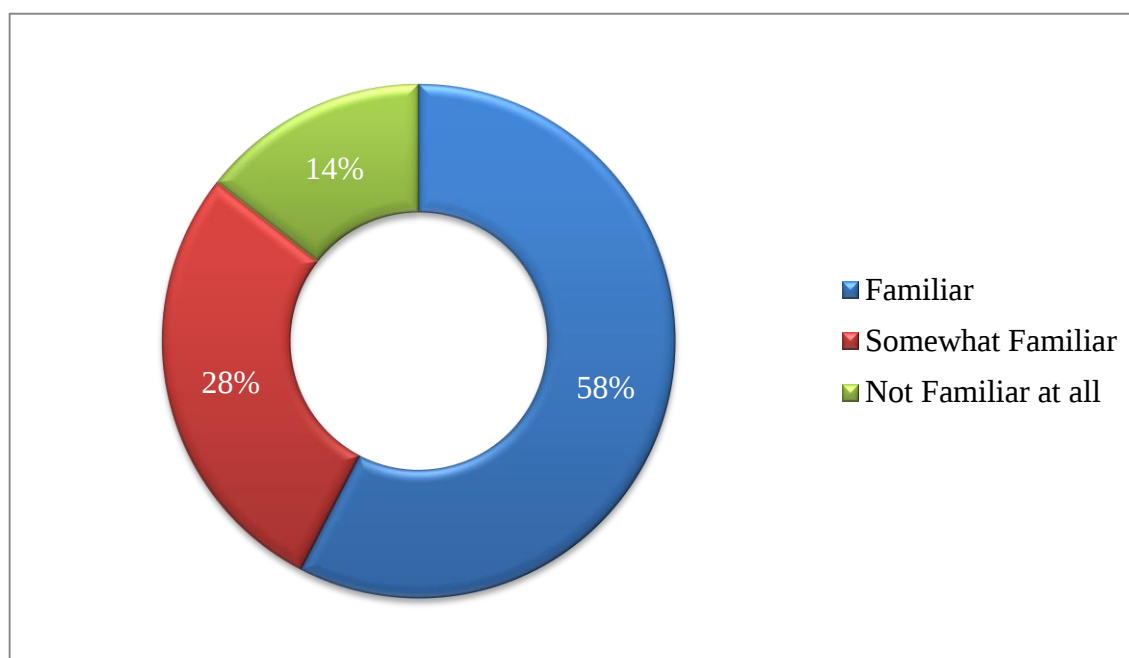
capable to do anything because of his sickness. His wife is working in a garments factory and it is not easy to run the family all by herself. Even they do not file any cases against his uncle or the dalals. They believe that nothing can change their fate or their sufferings.

Data Information:

I have conducted a survey in Narayanganj Sadar on total 250 respondents. A diversity of professions can be observed among the respondents. All respondents answered these questions. Respondents included businessman, labor, farmer, government employee, student, teacher and other occupations. Among the respondents, the labor has the highest number and teacher have the lowest number. Out of 250 respondents, 18-25 years are 87 people, 25-45 years are 113 people and 45-70 years are 50 people and 145 respondents are male, 105 are female in this survey. Respondents below 18 years of age were not chosen in this study.

1. Do you familiar with the issue of Human Trafficking in Bangladesh?

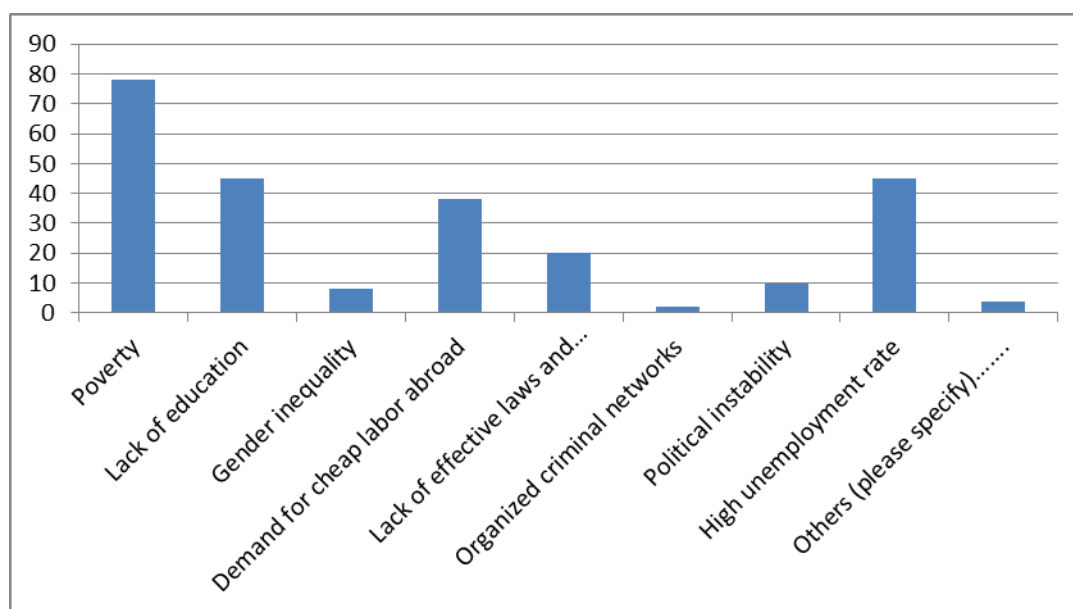
Option	Number of Respondents
Familiar	144
Somewhat Familiar	70
Not Familiar at all	36



I have asked 250 people for this survey. Among them 144 people are familiar and 70 people somewhat familiar with the issue of human trafficking, 36 people don't know about the context.

2. In your opinion, which factors contribute most to human trafficking in Narayanganj Sadar?

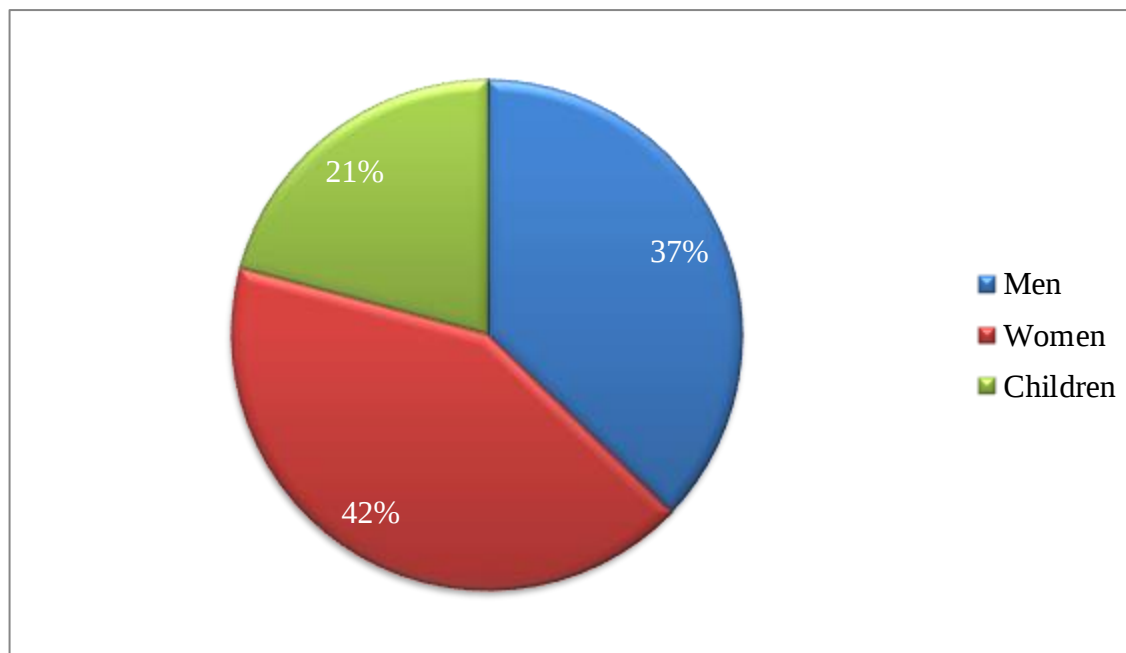
Option	Number of Respondents
Poverty	78
Lack of education	45
Gender inequality	08
Demand for cheap labor abroad	38
Lack of effective laws and regulations	20
Organized criminal networks	02
Political instability	10
High unemployment rate	45
Others (please specify).....	04



I have asked about the most leading factors to human trafficking in Narayanganj Sadar. Among 250 people, 78 people agree on poverty, 45 people agree on lack of education and another 45 people are on high unemployment rate, 38 people agree on demand for cheap labor, 20 people are on lack of effective laws and regulations, 10 people are on political instability and rest of them give their opinion on gender inequality, organized criminal networks and others.

3. Who is the most victimized person in trafficking in Narayanganj Sadar?

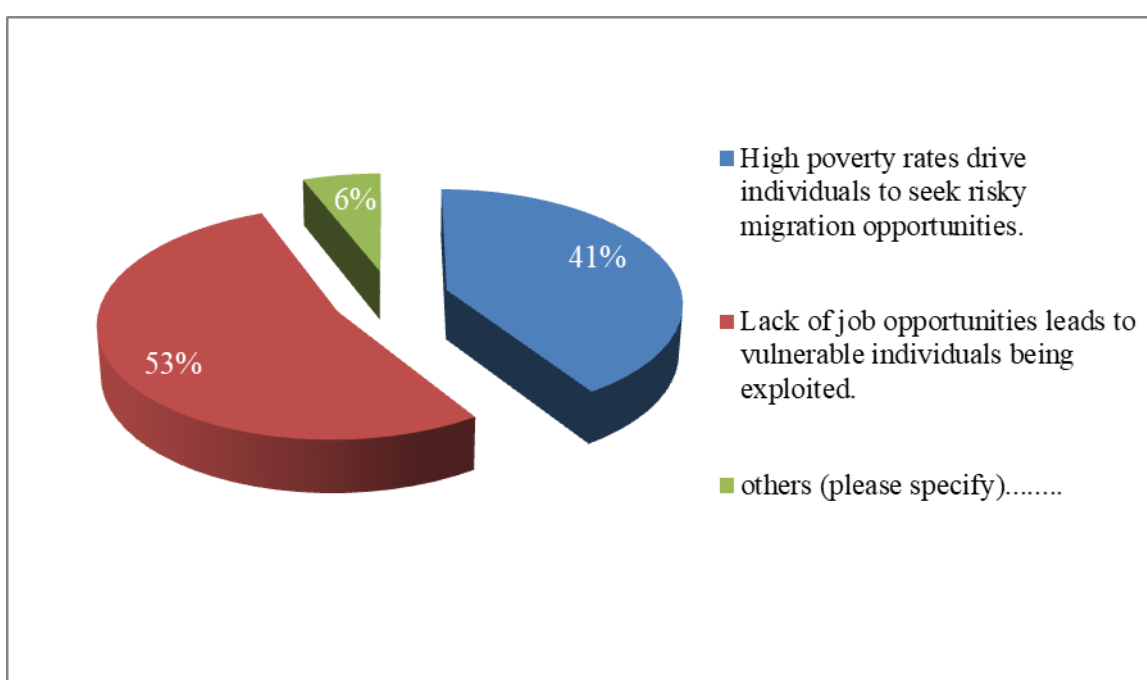
Option	Number of Respondents
Men	93
Women	105
Children	52



As the answer of the question 105 people think the most victimized is women, 93 people think it's men and 52 people think it's children.

4. What role do economic factors play in human trafficking in this area (Narayanganj Sadar)?

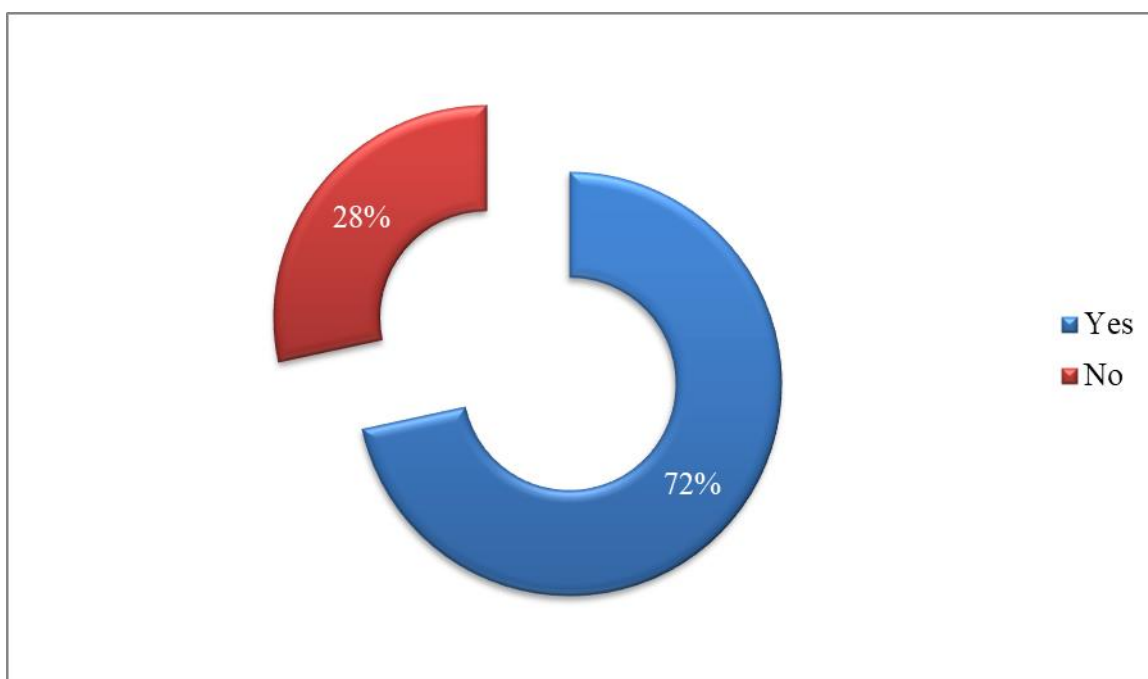
Option	Number of Respondents
High poverty rates drive individuals to seek risky migration opportunities.	102
Lack of job opportunities leads to vulnerable individuals being exploited.	133
Others (please specify).....	15



About the role of economic factors in human trafficking in this area, 102 people response it's high poverty rates drive individuals to seek risky migration opportunities, 133 people response it's lack of job opportunities leads to vulnerable individuals being exploited and other 15 people give different opinion on this regard.

5. Do you think the proximity of this upazila to international border as well as to Dhaka play important role for human trafficking?

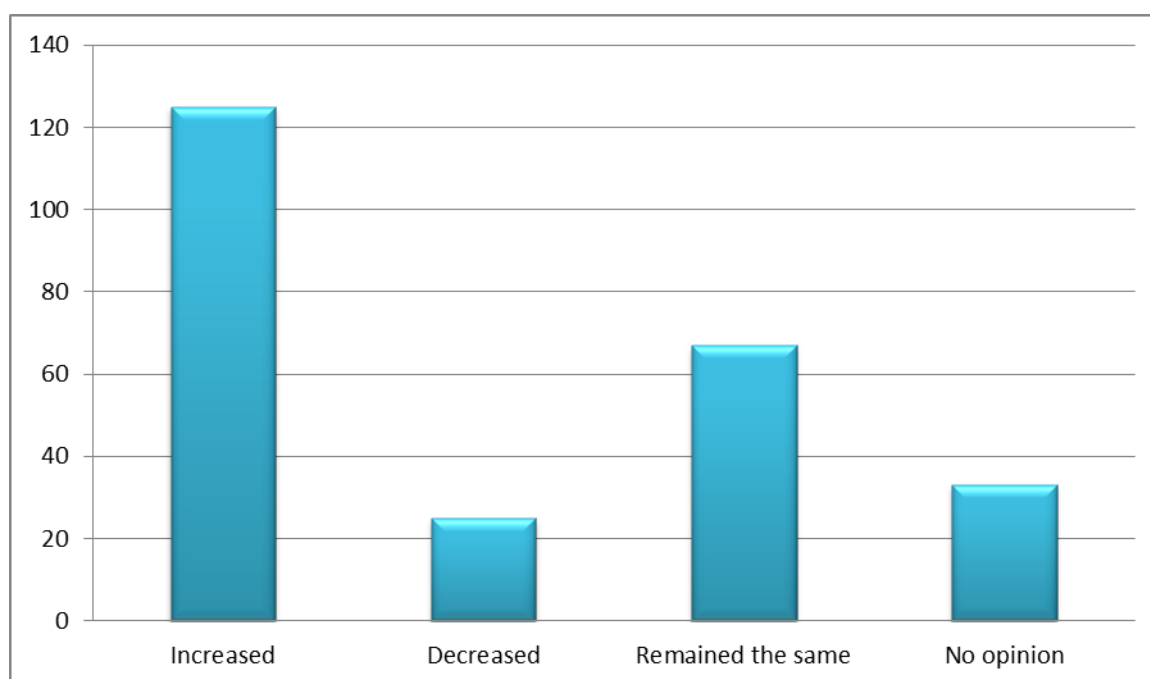
Option	Number of Respondents
Yes	179
No	71



I questioned about the role of proximity of this upazila to international border area as well as to Dhaka for increasing human trafficking issue in this area, 179 people response as yes and 71 people response as no.

6. In the past 5 years, do you believe that human trafficking has increased, decreased or remained the same in here?

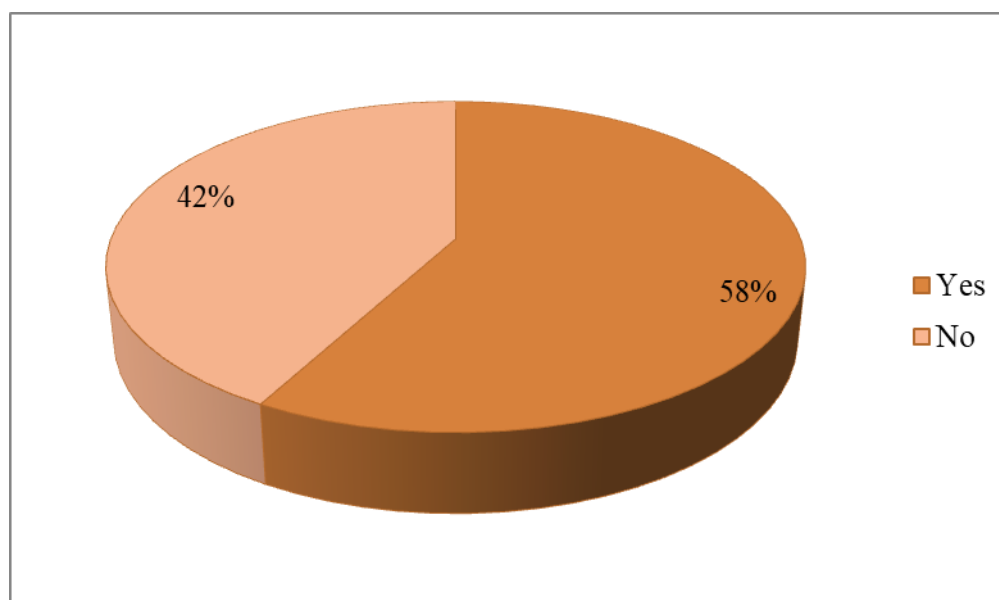
Option	Number of Respondents
Increased	125
Decreased	25
Remained the same	67
No opinion	33



Among the respondents, 125 people think human trafficking has increased, 67 people believe it has remained the same, 25 people think it has decreased and 33 people has no opinion on this regard.

7. Do you think people from rural and urban area (mostly from northern part) come to Narayanganj Sadar for searching a job in the industrial sectors?

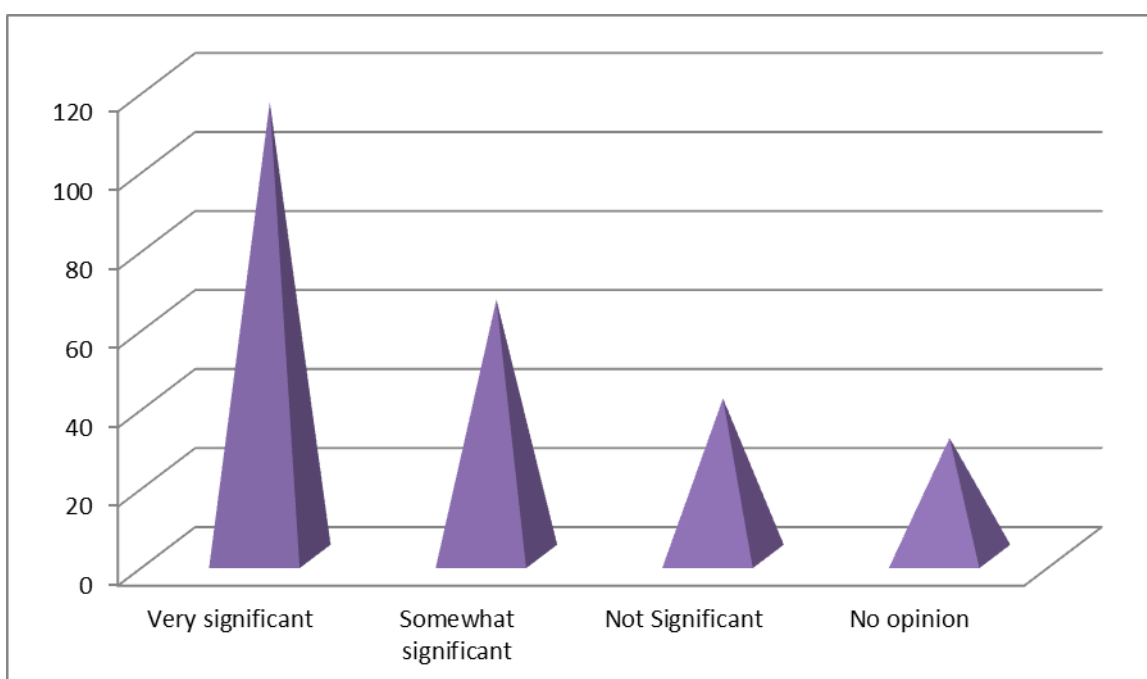
Option	Number of Respondents
Yes	145
No	105



I have asked this question to all respondents, 145 people think rural and urban people come to Narayanganj Sadar for searching a better job in the industrial sectors and 105 people don't think so.

8. How significant is the role of social media and online platforms in facilitating human trafficking in Bangladesh?

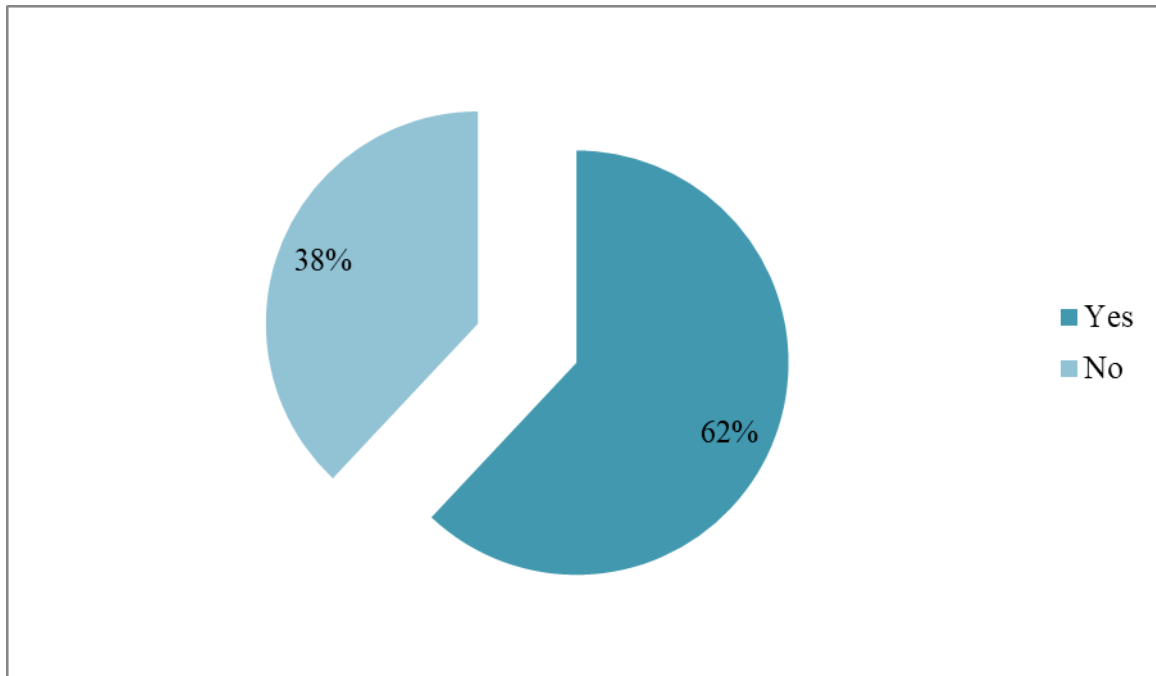
Option	Number of Respondents
Very significant	115
Somewhat significant	65
Not Significant	40
No opinion	30



Among 250 respondents, 115 people think social media and online platforms play very significant role in facilitating human trafficking in Bangladesh, 65 people think somewhat significant, 40 people think not significant and 30 people has no opinion on this regard.

9. What do you think people prefer to go to abroad for higher wage to ensure a better standard of life?

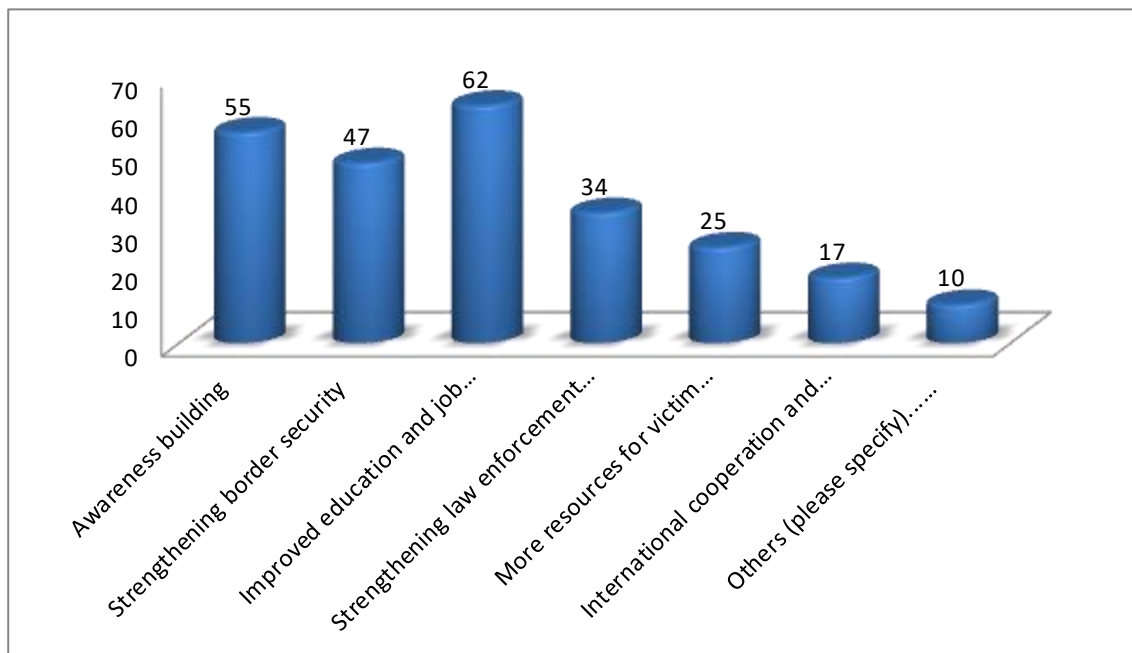
Option	Number of Respondents
Yes	155
No	95



On the basis of the preference to go to abroad for higher wage to ensure a better standard of life, 155 people response as yes and 95 people response as no.

10. What measures do you think are one of the most effective in preventing human trafficking in here?

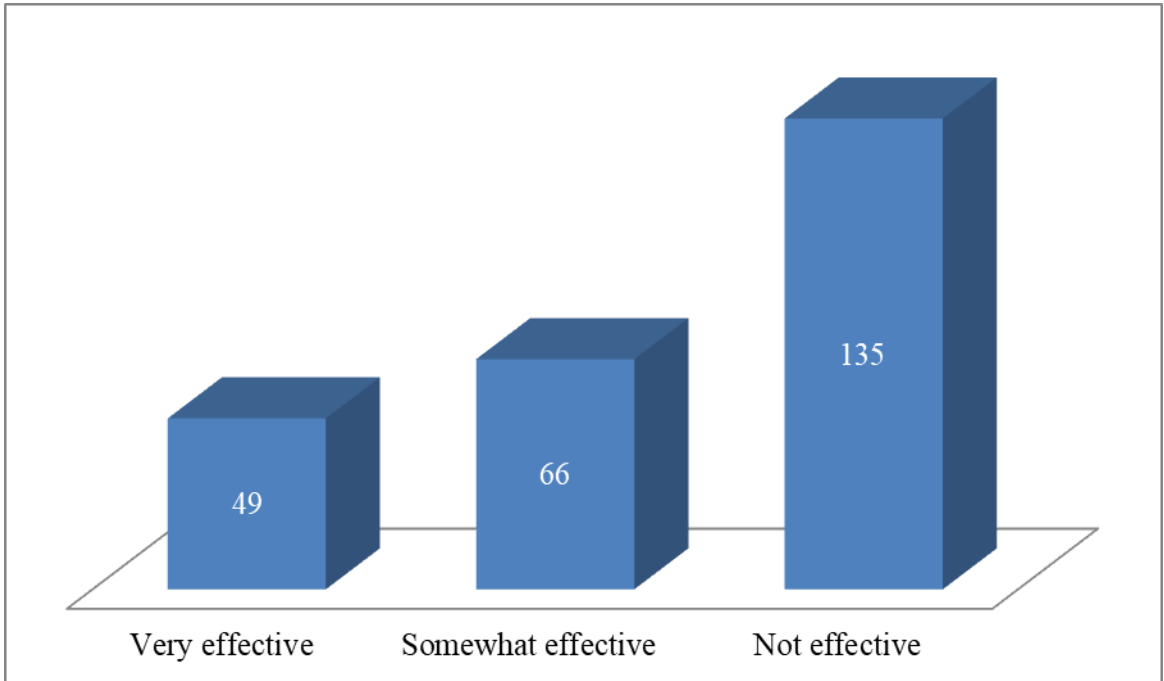
Option	Number of Respondents
Awareness building	55
Strengthening border security	47
Improved education and job opportunities	62
Strengthening law enforcement and judicial action.	34
More resources for victim support and rehabilitation.	25
International cooperation and anti- trafficking agreement.	17
Others (please specify).....	10



Among 250 respondents, 55 people think awareness building, 47 people think strengthening border security, 62 people think improved education and job opportunities, 34 people think strengthening law enforcement and judicial action, 25 people think more resources for victim support and rehabilitation, 17 people think international cooperation and anti-trafficking agreement are the most effective measures in preventing human trafficking in Narayangang Sadar. Besides 10 people give some other opinions.

11. How effective do you think the current laws in Bangladesh are in preventing and addressing human trafficking?

Option	Number of Respondents
Very effective	49
Somewhat effective	66
Not effective	135

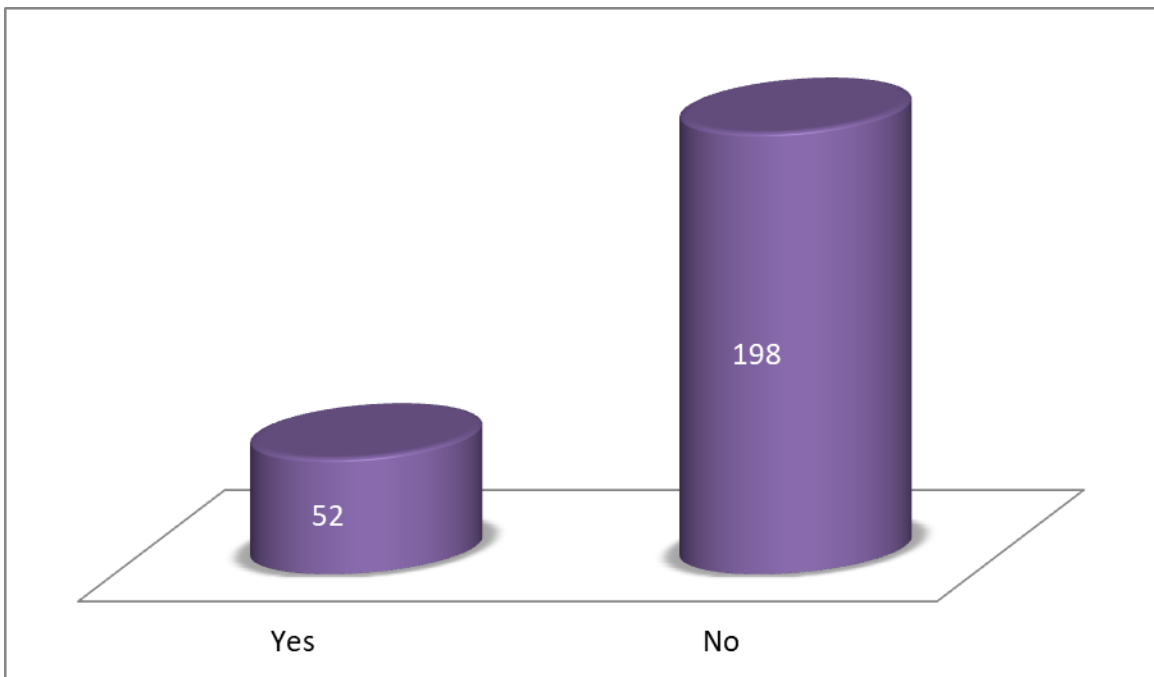


As the answer of this question , 49 people response as very effective, 66 people response as somewhat effective and 135 people response as not effective.

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12. Are you aware of any recent government or NGO-led initiatives to combat human trafficking in Bangladesh?

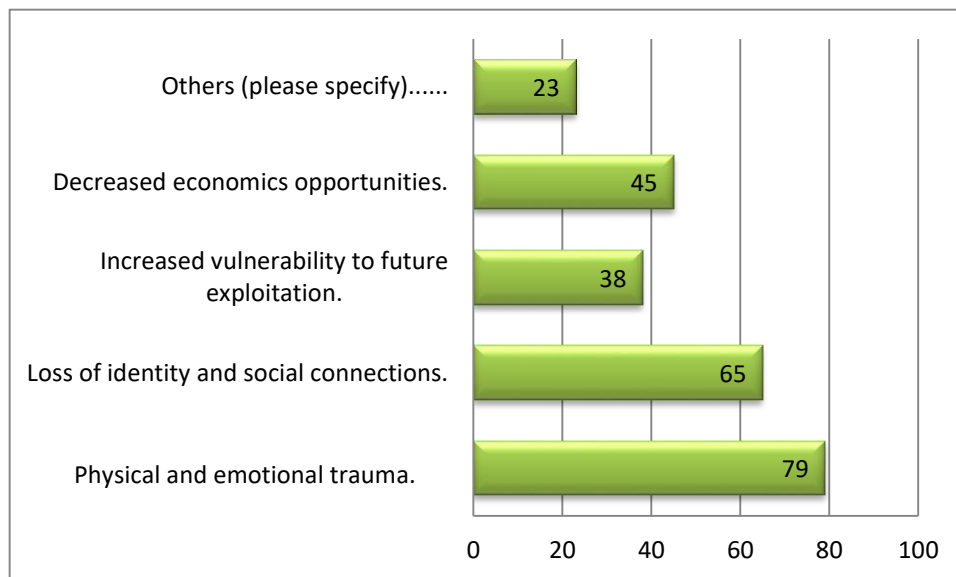
Option	Number of Respondents
Yes	52
No	198



As the above mentioned question, 52 people are aware of recent government and NGO-led initiatives to combat human trafficking in Bangladesh and 198 people are not aware of this concern.

13. What do you think are the main consequences of human trafficking on individuals and families?

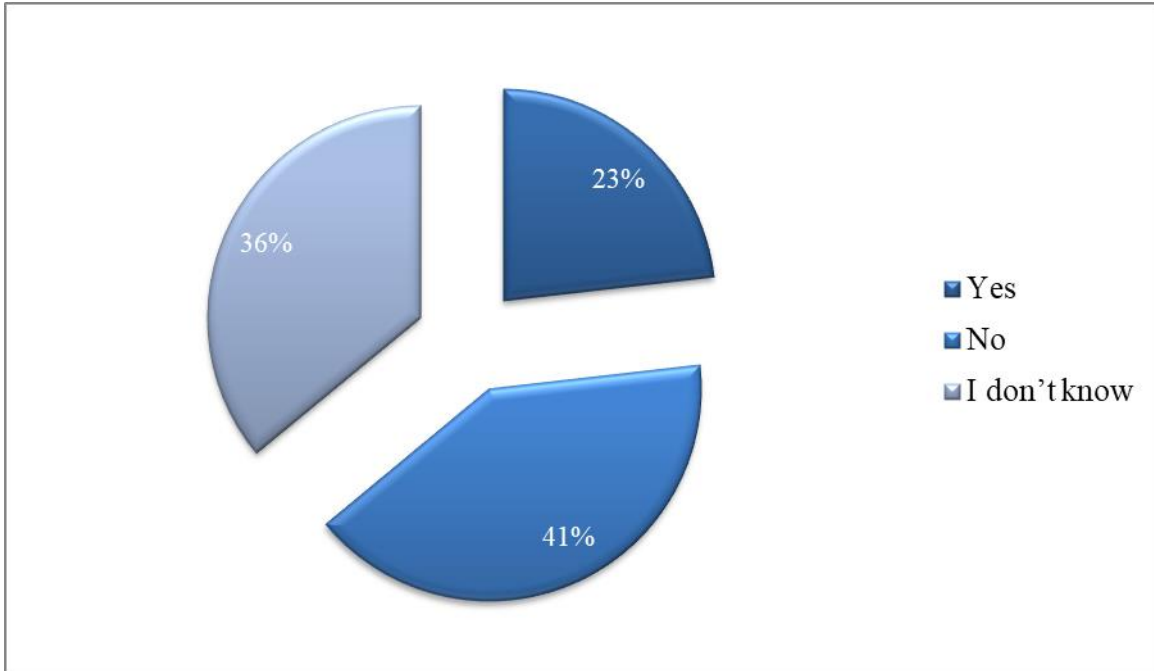
Option	Number of Respondents
Physical and emotional trauma.	79
Loss of identity and social connections.	65
Increased vulnerability to future exploitation.	38
Decreased economics opportunities.	45
Others (please specify).....	23



Among the total 250 respondents, 79 people think physical and emotional trauma are the main consequences, 65 people think it's loss of identity and social connections, 38 people think it's increased vulnerability and 45 people think decreased economic opportunities and 23 people response in different way.

14. Do you think victims or their family filed any case against the traffickers or the gang?

Option	Number of Respondents
Yes	58
No	102
I don't know	90



About the filed case against the traffickers, 58 people are agree on that the victim or his/her family filed case against them and 102 people are not agree on this issue. Rest of the respondents has no opinion in this issue.

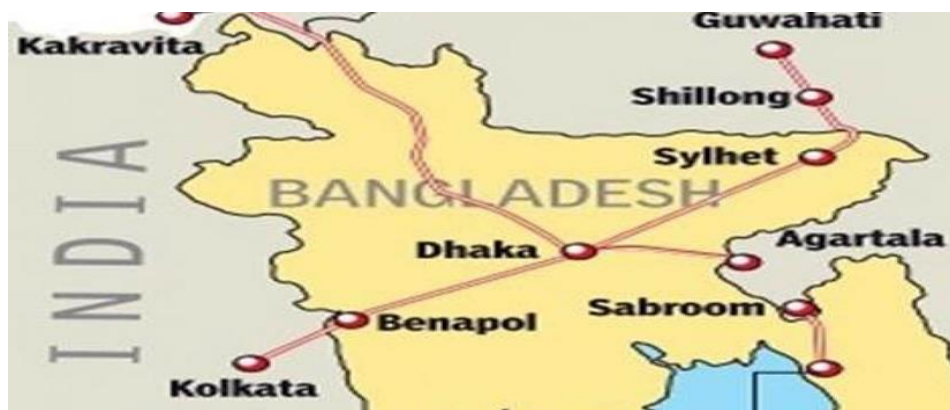
“Summary of Collected Data and Information”

Narayanganj Sadar is one of the most victims' pick up area among other districts in Bangladesh. Human trafficking is not a single problem in here; rather, it is a sign of deeper issues within its society where despair, inequality, and poverty are the norms. This place has become a hub for the trafficking gangs because the rural poor people, mostly come from the 15 poorest districts of Bangladesh are the prey for the traffickers as they need to earn more money for their livelihood. Due to poverty, unemployment, wage disparity, lack of awareness, high immigration cost, weakening border control and corruption along with the other factors, human trafficking is rapidly growing as a matter of security concern in here. This crime has also spreaded here mostly for its work opportunity as a day laborer or industrial based area. Traffickers lure the vulnerable poor people by making a false hope of a high salaried job in abroad. As it is mostly a warren area based on industrial sectors, most of the people live in here with a hope of changing their fate by earning more money for their family. And sometimes they become desperate to do anything for the fulfillment of their dream. So, the above recent factors and dream of high wage, to ensure higher standard of life, leads most of the people of Narayanganj Sadar to become a prey of human trafficking. Though the law enforcement agencies and some NGO are aware enough in this matter, but still there has a lot to do to eradicate this heinous organized crime from Narayanganj Sadar.

6.4 Benapole-Petrapole as Transit Point:

Bangladesh and India are the countries of origin, transit, and destination for human trafficking. The Border Security Force (BSF) on the Indian side and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) on the Bangladeshi side are in charge of policing and controlling the shared border between India and Bangladesh. And there is an increasing as well as noticeable human trafficking ratio between the border regions of Bangladesh and India. At about 4,096.7 kilometers, these two countries have the fifth-longest international border in the world. The border is gated for the most part (around 60% of it), and it passes through many types of land use, including residences, farms, villages, fishponds, and rivers, some of which are in Bangladesh and others in India. On the BD-India land border, Benapole-petrapole land port is the most important port of Bangladesh. About 50% land cross-border trafficking happens through this port. Due to poor roads and challenging terrain,

this large border zone security is therefore not an easy task and this facilitates the illegal border crossing by illicit groups.⁶²



Benapole-Petrapole border, Jashore.

In recent years, Benapole has become a hub for illegal border passing from Bangladesh to India which mostly relates to human trafficking cases. Many people from Bangladesh try to cross the border each day through Benapole in pursuit of a better life, job opportunities, and access to healthcare. Because of this, it becomes very challenging for First Responders, including border patrol officers and civil police, to recognize and tell the difference between an unauthorized immigrant and a victim of human trafficking. Major locations such as sarsha, shazadpur, kashipur, rogunathpur, salkuna, putkhali are most used points of entry for human trafficking networks in India. There are some reasons for fostering this illegal process through this port. Firstly, it is well connected with India both by road and railway line. Secondly, the enormous length of this land port makes it very difficult for the customs to ensure fully legal, safe and secure border crossing through this route which helps to create a ground for the traffickers. And Kolkata, one of the major destination of the trafficked people, is only 80 kilometers away from this border. That's why traffickers also choose this route because it is short-distanced and easy to handle the illegal entrance through this port. As the largest corridor of transit in India as well as in

⁶² Standard Operating Procedures To Counter Cross-Border Trafficking In Persons: India-Bangladesh-Unodc, September 2017, p 01-12. Policy Research for Development Alternatives, "Fact-Finding Missions on Trafficking in Women and Children from Bangladesh to India and Pakistan". Dhaka: Narigrantha Prabartana, 1999. Shamim and F Kabir, Ibid

South Asian region, the trafficking gangs also use this route for the Middle East country's or European country's trafficking.

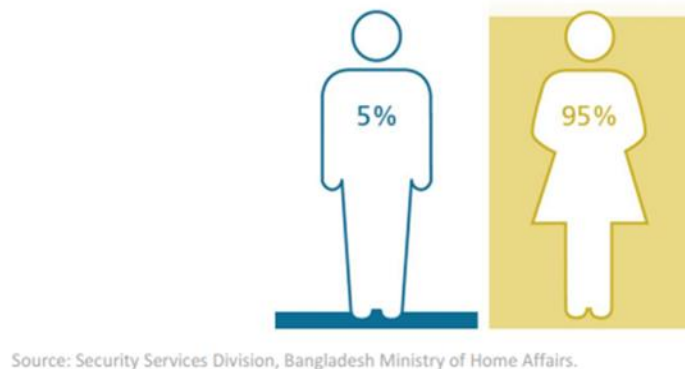


Figure: Repatriation Information of Bangladeshi victims from India, by Sex, (2019-2020)

According to IOM World Migration Report 2020, the top 20 migration corridors from Asian countries where the top two being Bangladesh to India and Bangladesh to Saudi Arabia. (IOM, Migration Report 2020, pp 72).

At least, 193 women and children were trafficked illegally to India through different bordering areas in Benapole of Jashore last year. It was stated by a survey conducted by human rights organization "Rights Jessore". (2 Jan, 2015, Rights Jessore).

Process of Human Trafficking through Benapole-Petrapole:

Traffickers use a variety of enticing tactics to entice and enlist vulnerable, impoverished individuals in their trafficking business. The victims who are trafficked through this route usually collected by the mediators, partner or relatives from Narail, Jessore, Kaliganj, Khulna, Cuyadanga, Jhinaidha, Dhaka, and also from different parts of our country. Here, Job prospects, promise of marriage, kidnapping and tourism are the most used tactics by the traffickers. They trafficked the victims directly through the checkpoint with false documents or illegal entrance through different border areas specially Sarsha, Kashipur and Salkuna. Local agents at immigration checkpoints have been trafficking victims across Benapole's border with forged family relationship documents; gang members have sometimes married their captives only to sell them into prostitution. Most often traffickers set up little huts near the Benapole border, where victims from all over the country gather. There, they are treated kindly and told that they are actually going to India in quest of a

better future. When their Indian counterparts notify their partners, the victims are moved to the other side of the border. Traffickers commute on motorbikes, just like the people who live in nearby areas, and they always bring gifts, fish, or sweetmeat to avoid being uncovered. The traffickers apparently use the Jashore points of Putkhali, Sadipur, Boroachra, and Gathipara to sneak their victims into India without a passport, according to the victims and local law enforcement officers. The victims are initially taken by motorcycle to Jessore and then to the border crossings before being placed in the little shelters. Locals and law enforcement officials assert that each border crossing is under the control of local trafficking gangs. To maintain a strong trafficking operation, they pay cops large sums of money. ⁶³ For financial benefit and private sexual favors, some dishonest border police in Bangladesh assist in smuggling women trafficked across this border. For this job, the police are typically paid in local currency by traffickers or their representatives. It has been stated that some border police hold girls and abuse them sexually. Until new people arrive, the cops make new decisions based on the special choices they have in their possession.

According to Binoy Krishna Mallick, Executive Director of Rights Jessore, "We have learned from rescued victims and our local network that some people are leading the nexus at border points using political identity."

The Daily Star was informed by sources close to law enforcement that one Ghana Biswas is currently in charge of the Putkhali point, Ashok Sen is in charge of the Boroachra point, and Jahidul Islam is in charge of the Sadipur point in Benapole.

Recently, the traffickers have changed their strategies. These days, they cross the border with their prey by taking the "legal" path. Masud Karim, the officer in charge of the Benapole Police Station, said, "The traffickers give a woman fake documents, including a marriage license and passport. Then they cross the border, like a couple going to India. Similarly, traffickers acquire children's passports. They pretend to be their siblings or children and issue fake passports and other documents. There are cases where

⁶³ *Hosna Shewly, Vulnerable bodies and dark networks of trafficking: Trade in Humans at the Bangladesh-India Border, BISS Journal, Vol 34.No 1. January 2013 pp 01-09.

Documents and Articles from Rights Jessore, Human Rights Organization.21April,2024

UNODC STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES To Counter Cross Border Trafficking In Persons: INDIA-BANGLADESH,sep,2017.pp 1-08.

The Daily Star, 7 July 2022.

some trafficker marries girls and then sell them to brothels. Another popular tactic adopted by the traffickers is using the coaches of the goods trains for transporting those victims to India. Most of those victims are brought to Kolkata or Mumbai by train or bus for selling and women and girls mostly for sexual exploitation. Sometimes traffickers use India as the transit point for trafficking to GCC or European countries.

Recent Trafficking Points of Jessore:

District in Bangladesh	Transit upazila	Trafficking route or last transit point in Bangladesh	First transit point in India
1. Jessore	Sarsa	Chanduria Bhulat Putkhali Doulatpur ICP Benapole Sadipur Rogunathpur Bhadurpur Salkuna	Gopalpur Jaw Dhanga Bannabaria, Angrail Kalini Petrpole ICP Jaintapur Haridaspur Ramchandrapur Sutia Bazidpur
	Jhikargacha	Shikarpur Kashipur	Bassgata, Mustaqpur Meherani, Boyra
	Chowgacha	Shazadpur Mashilia Hizli Andulia Borni Jadabpur Zaluli Samanta	North Boyra Boyra Pasbaria Mama Vagne Musaumpur Kulia, Modhupur Zitpur Pasti Gata, Chawhali Singamari

Source: Shamim and Kabir. Child trafficking: the underlying dynamics, 1998 (1)

The Scale of Trafficking across Bangladesh-India border:

It is hard to meet the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking, but the government of Bangladesh is taking significant efforts to do so. Though the government accomplished a vast efforts compared with the previous periods, therefore Bangladesh remained on Tire 2 on its anti-trafficking capacity; considering the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to publishing its first national research on human trafficking in Bangladesh, the government extended the NAP until 2025. But in several areas, the government fell short of the requirements. At present, India has a serious problem with both domestic and international trafficking on an ongoing basis and also remained on Tire 2 for its anti-trafficking measures. It indicates that although both government are making a lot of efforts, they do not yet fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act at the very least. India took some initial steps to establish a central law enforcement

organization to combat trafficking, while not having a national law enforcement response to any kind of criminal activity.

- Between 200,000 and 300,000 Bangladeshis are thought to have been trafficked into India for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE). (Joffres et al, 2008, op. cit.)
- According to officials from Bangladesh's Home Ministry, the annual number of victims of human trafficking may vary from 100,000 to 200,500. ("Bangladeshi Girls Trafficked under Honeymoon Cover: BGB", Deccan Herald, 19 May 2012, available at <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/250720/bangladeshi-girls-trafficked-honeymoon-cover.html>)
- About half of all sex workers in India are immigrants from Bangladesh or Nepal. (Asian Development Bank, 2003, op.cit.)
- Daily 500 women and children are trafficked to Pakistan through India. (A K M M Ali, op. cit.)
- The Indian Border Security Force estimates that 50,000 Bangladeshi girls are trafficked into or through India annually. (The Daily Star, 30July,2018.)

Because of the clandestine nature of trafficking, estimates are difficult to verify. The true number of trafficking cases is most likely larger than those shown above. These figures have a limitation because they are 'estimations' based on some newspaper articles or sample surveys. There are no hard data on the scope of the issue, hence these are anecdotal conclusions. Nonetheless, the majority of reports from INCIDIN, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA), Action against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children (ATSEC), USAID, Rights Jrssore, Winrock International and other organizations indicate a marked rise in the number of individuals who have been trafficked into India and other nations in recent years.⁶⁴ The extent of trafficking is unclear, but the information that is currently accessible paints a frightening and alarming picture.

⁶⁴ UNODC, STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES To Counter Cross Border Trafficking In Persons: INDIA-BANGLADESH, sep, 2017. pp09-16.

Hoque, N.M. 2009. Female Child Trafficking from Bangladesh: A New Form of Slavery, presented at the 16th World Congress of IUAES held in China.

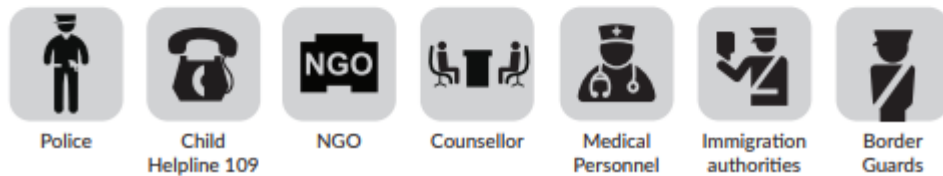
Hosna J. Shewly, vulnerable Bodies and Dark Networks of Trafficking: Trade in Humans at the Bangladesh-India Border, January 2013, Vol- 34, No. 01, pp 07-08

Involvement of partners in case of Trafficking:

In India



In Bangladesh

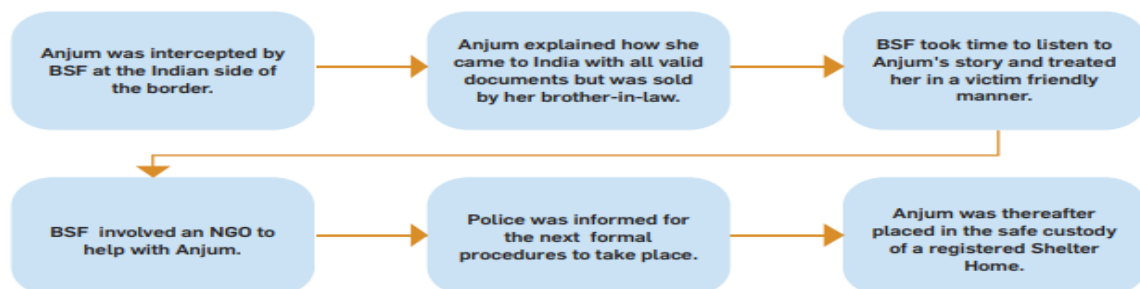


Procurement Process in the context of case studies:

The following case studies offer illustrations of the tactics used by the traffickers engaged in international human trafficking in Bangladesh via the Benapole–Petropole border:

Case Study: 01 Employment Prospect

Through Jessore and the Petrapole–Benapole Border, 18-year-old Anjum traveled to India from Bangladesh with her brother-in-law and cousin. All of their paperwork was in order, and their visa to enter India was valid for one month. Anjum was sold by her brother-in-law to a Mumbai brothel two days after she arrived in India. Should she attempt to flee, she would face severe repercussions. Anjum was able to flee the Mumbai brothel after seven months and make her way to the Bangladeshi border. Following Steps are given below:



First responders involved: Border guards, NGO, Police, Shelter-home.

Case Study: 02 Employment Prospect

Shewly khatun (35), a young woman's dreams of better future brings her into a exploitative journey. Coming from Dakshinkhan, Dhaka, she was enticed by the promise of a better job in nearby Jashore. But it was a cruel trap placed by the trafficking gang. She was trafficked to brothel in Delhi in 2017, thousands miles away from her home. Her sister filed a trafficking case in 2019 to uncover the gang behind her disappearance. The investigation brought into light about the mastermind behind this crime. The mastermind was her sister-in-law, named Golapi. She promised Shewly to providing a tailoring job, but Golapi sold her to the ruthless trafficking syndicate.

Shewly had faced heinous experience of sexual exploitation for three years. Despite this critical conditions, she managed a mobile phone to contact with her sister. With the help of NGO, justice and care and the CID, she was able to secure a bail from India to return her home safely in 2021. First responders involved: BGB, Police, NGO, CID.

Case Study: 03 Love Affairs

From a low-income family, Jahanara (16) hails from Magurkhali village in Keshabpur. Her father could not work because he was unwell and elderly. She began working as a housemaid in Jessore as a means of subsistence, where she met and fell in love with a hotel boy. If she accompanied him to India, the young man proposed, they would marry once he secured a respectable job there.

After passing through Benapole, they first traveled to Bongoan in India. They then traveled to Darjeeling, where they tied the knot. They were there for fifteen months. She later went on a visitation to Kolkata. They were staying at a hotel, where her boyfriend was being seen by a few strangers. He welcomed them as friends, talked to them for a time, and then he left the hotel without warning, saying something had come up. After some while, the outsiders came back and informed Jahanara that her husband had asked them to come get her.

They told her that her spouse had gone to purchase tickets because they were taking a train to a different city when she asked about him. She was informed that her spouse was in a different carriage that evening after she was unable to locate him on the train. When her husband did not arrive after a considerable amount of time, she started to doubt their

company and eventually came to the conclusion that she was trapped. She escaped their grasp while they were asleep, which was after midnight. She discovered later that Bombay was the train's destination. She found a way to travel via Kolkata to return to Bangladesh.⁶⁵

Case Study: 04 Promise of Marriage

Fatema (age 14) is one of the three daughters of Satkhira-based rickshaw puller Rupchand. He met "Pakhi's mother" last year, an Indian woman from Chabbis Pargana, India, introducing herself as such from the Doharkanda villages. She used to go to Rupchand's residence all the time. She once suggested that his daughter be married in India. Due to his poverty, Rupchand was unable to afford his daughter's wedding. So, taking into account the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, he quickly accepted the proposition. After Fatema was taken to India by Pakhi's mother, Rupchand had no idea where she is. When Pakhi's mother returned to the village a few months later, Rupchand had already passed away. Fatema's mother asked how her daughter was doing, and she was told that everything was good without giving any more details. Pakhi's mother skillfully evaded her thereafter whenever she inquired about her daughter's wellbeing. She is now persuaded that Fatema was sold into trafficking in India. Because she is impoverished and defenseless, she chose not to report it to the police.

Case Study: 05 Kidnapping

In the Jessore district's Keshabpur upazila, the people of Rishipara village caught a human trafficker named Shahidul. Ten-year-old Rubel was found and saved by the police while under Swapon's care. The young man is the son of shopkeeper Abdus Salam from the village of Khadimpur in Keshabpur.

Residents of Bejdanga village in Keshabpur arrested another trafficker, Hajera. She was taking Rupa to India from Pakistan. She was also given over to the local law enforcement.

⁶⁵ *Dibyajyoti Nag & Dipankar Chatterjee. Ensnared Innocence: A Study on Cross-Border Child Trafficking in the Context of West Bengal, India, Afro Asian Journal Of Social Sciences vol-V, No 3, Quarter 3 2014, pp1-13.

Ibid.

Case Study: 06 False Promise

The 15-year-old girl Hasina was being accompanied by a trafficker when the residents of Tuzulpur, in October 1996, discovered them. Up till class VIII, she had studied. Altapur Village, Keshabpur Upazila, Jessore district was the home of her father, Hazrat Ali. With the prospect of marriage, Samad of Satkhira enticed her. With the hope that things might turn around for her, she went to Satkhira with him. However, she quickly learned that his plan was to sell her to a brothel in India by trafficking her. When the villagers managed to get a hold of Samad and send Hasina back to their father's house in Keshabpur, she then related her story to them. The trafficker, however, was not turned over to the authorities.

Case Study: 07 Tourism

Moharuddin's eleven-year-old daughter Sumi hails from the Mymensingh district's Khanbari hamlet. Sumi is a day laborer's daughter. Of her seven brothers and sisters, she is the youngest. She continued towards Dhaka in pursuit of employment. She was lost and alone at Kamalapur Railway Station when a woman picked her up, gave her a job guarantee, and warned her not to run from her workplace. The woman gave her to a Delhi brothel. After seven months, she was permitted to see her parents, but only if she promised to go back to the brothel. Her parents and other villagers thought something was wrong when she got back home, but she had no choice but to go back to her.⁶⁶

Case Study: 08 Sexual Exploitation

Bangladeshi woman Jaeda Akhter, 30, had aspirations of rising beyond poverty and giving her family a better life. She was convinced to immigrate to the UK by a local agent. She gave the agent a sizable sum of money and left her husband and small son behind. She was trafficked through the Benapole border to India. When 2020 came to an end, Jaeda was stuck in Bangalore, India. She was not able to live out her dreams since the trafficking ring drove her into prostitution. When Jaeda refused to give in to this nightmare, she suffered

⁶⁶ Tales Of The Girls Recovered. Url:[Http://Www.Hsph.Harvard.Edu/Grhf/Sasia/Repro2/Fleshtrade.Htm](http://Www.Hsph.Harvard.Edu/Grhf/Sasia/Repro2/Fleshtrade.Htm)

Unodc Standard Operating Procedures To Counter Cross Border Trafficking In Persons: India-Bangladesh, September,2017. pp 09-18.

Kohinur Urmee. Human Trafficking in Bangladesh:An Analysis from Victimological Perspective,2016,ELCOP Summer School YEAR BOOK. Pp 1-19.

Rights Jssore's Annual Report papers 2023. Visited 21 April,2024.

The Dhaka Tribunal, 12 July 2022.

both psychologically and physically. Jaeda called her family in desperation, and they came together to save her. Her family managed to obtain her release by giving the traffickers an extra sum of money. She was left behind close to the border with Bangladesh and was subsequently detained for nearly a year by Indian officials. Jaeda was able to return home after 11 grueling months because to the persistent support of her family and the Bangladeshi government.

Case Study: 09 Kidnapping

The subject of this case study is a 35-year-old woman from Pallabi in Bangladesh's capital city of Dhaka, who undertook a valiant and audacious rescue effort to free her daughter from human traffickers in India. The remarkable story of the kidnapping, trafficking, and final rescue attracted the interest of people in Bangladesh and the neighboring countries. The mother's daughter was persuaded with promises of a decent job by the traffickers, Sohagh alias "Nagin Sohagh" and his uncle Iqbal Hossain Kalu, who then transported her to India. The mediators of Benapole-Petrapole route managed to successful operation with the help of BGB. After that, the daughter was bought for Tk 2.5 lakh by a brothel. After learning of her daughter's predicament, the frantic mother voluntarily fled to India, where she was subjected to sexual abuse and exploited by the same gang. With the assistance of the people in Panjipara, West Bengal, the mother was able to successfully rescue her daughter thanks to her extraordinary bravery. She filed a lawsuit against the traffickers after they returned to Bangladesh, and as a result, Sohagh, Kalu, Billal Hossain, and his wife Razia Khatun were all taken into custody. The family's suffering did not, however, end with the traffickers' incarceration; relatives and allies began threatening to kill them. Since leaving their home, that mother and her family now live in constant fear.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Rukhsana Gazi, Ziaul Haque, Elma Chowdhury, Nurul Alam. Trafficking of Women & Children in Bangladesh: An Overview. ICDDR,B Special Publication No 111, January 2001, pp 23-38.

Shamim, I. 2001 Mapping of Missing, Kidnapped and Trafficked Children and Women: Bangladesh Perspective, pp., 1, 33, 67, 69, 73. International Organization for Migration, MRF Dhaka
ICDDR,B, 2001, op. cit.

Case Study: 10 Tourism

Two little girls named Anita and Nupur were taken from the traffickers by the residents of Labsa village. These females were transported to Jessore in order to be transnationally trafficked through the Benapole-Petrapole Border. They were tricked into becoming trafficked by people they knew who pretended to be tour guides. The females accompanied them because they believed them. The girls were rescued by the villagers and given to their parents with the aid of the local police.

Interview of the Rescued Victims:

On 25 April, 2024, I started my journey from Dhaka, by road and across the Padma bridge to the city of Jessore. I was going to visit a Human Rights based organization named “Rights Jessore”. It is a top human rights organization in Bangladesh that works to prevent human trafficking, promote and defend human rights, and assist victims of human trafficking. I had contacted with the manager of the organization before I reached there. So, when I arrived, the manager named Mr Azahar Hossain of Rights Jessore introduced me to some victims of trafficking whom I supposed to interview and met with other officials of this organization. I had prepared a semi-structured questionnaire to interview them. But when I met them, I thought it would be best to record their story. So I did so and the manager also sent me some other documents and information through email.

Victim one:

Achia Begum (27 years old) works as a homemaker. Habib Shikder, his spouse, works as a day worker. Labib, their one and a half-year-old son, was a happy addition to their family. He only completed the fifth grade of schooling because of his family's financial situation. In her private life, she leads a pretty straightforward life. She and her spouse shared a leased home after their marriage. She once became close friends with a neighboring renter named Alamin and his wife Najma. Alamin and his spouse Najma are regarded as brothers and sisters by both spouses. They invite and feed their brothers and sisters when they cook well at home. Owing to their closeness, Alamin's village house invited him to visit Chalkidanga Bazar in Monirampur three days following the previous Eid-al-Azha. He accepted Alamin's remarks with a mind of simple faith. On April 3, 2023, Alamin and his spouse then brought Achia and her infant to a home in the Benapole

border's nearest village Kashipur. Masud and Mahbub, the two brothers of Alamin's bride Najma, were present. It gets darker and later in the evening after visiting this house. Following their departure, Alamin and his spouse left him and her infant boy pretending to converse on the phone. Next, Achiya revealed the brothers' whereabouts to a woman and two men living in that house. The statement "they have sold you" was then made by one of the women. Additionally, they take Achiya's phone. The woman once held the baby child in her arms. Achiya was taken to the canal bank by a man who arrived on a motorcycle later that evening. When he crossed the canal to the other side, i.e. to India, the broker on the other side came and received her and kept her in a house. There was no woman in that house. Achiya told the people of that house to return my son to me. I will go to the country. Then those people say you are in India. In the morning a man will come with him on a motorcycle and you will go to Sealdah Railway Station. The man first took Shelaydah to her and handed it over to another person. He took me to Durganagar. He was taken there and kept for 1 night. The next day, the man was taken to Howrah station and put on the 12- midnight train along with another person. That man did not allow anyone to talk on the street. After staying on the train for 3 days, I reached Ahmedabad station. Then Najma's ex-husband Hannan, who was already stationed at Ahmedabad station, took his rickshaw and took Achiya from the station to Durgapur, next to the Gujarat Narkal Bridge. He was taken there and forced into prostitution. 3/4 more girls are kept in that house. According to Achiya, everyone including her has been sold. The child in the arms of Achaia was not given to her. They keep baby Labib under them in the next room. Even if he cried for the child, he was not given to him. If they did not follow their word, they would torture them in various ways. They told that you had sold out, "You have to go according to our word. Even if you die, your family will not know". Always misbehaved. Not eating properly. After being detained in that house for 2/3 days, the women of the neighboring house may complain about the inhumane treatment of Achiya. Later, with the help of a woman, she called her husband at home and pleaded to be brought back to the country. The matter increased the level of physical and mental torture and at one point, he got angry and told if they paid 1 lakh rupee then he will release Achiya. But it is impossible to manage this money by Achiya. At one point, with the help of his intelligence and the help of the locals, he was rescued from captivity with his infant son. Later she returned to the country after 2 months and 7 days through a broker with the help of one Kamal resident of Bombay Mira Road as per the address given by her husband. Meanwhile, on May 27 of this year, when

she informed her husband about the whole matter, when her husband went to the police station, the police station authorities did not accept the case against the accused, and at one point a petition was filed in the court. Later, as per the order of the court, the police station accepted the case under the Human Trafficking Crime Prevention and Suppression Act 2012. The case is currently ongoing. Achia is currently living a miserable life with her husband and baby son Labib. Rights Jessor helping Achia for her court case and trying to improve her quality of life.

Victim two:

Salma Khatun, father Md. Abdul Malek. He is a farmer by profession and has no land. Daughter Salma Vecutia was married to Majnu Mollah, son of Ali Mollah of Jessore. He was a hawker. He used to run his family by selling bracelets and ribbons from village to village. But he hardly ever went to work. Stays at home and there was almost a fight at home for not going to work. But Majnu did not wear them. He walked like that. Because of his use, Salma finds out that he often goes to India lately and brings goods and sells them in the country. Anyone who is seen with him is known by the people of the area as broker. Thus he went to India and worked with that broker and another person. But Salma did not know what was the work in there. And so it goes on. In this situation, one day Majnu was killed by a truck coming from behind while crossing the road with goods from India. Meanwhile, Salma became helpless due to Majnu's death. Days pass without eating. Seeing her condition, Tapas, a local broker, persuaded her by offering her a good job and a higher salary in Mumbai. On 1st June 2018, one night, Tapas tried to take her to the border and send her to India with money to forcefully cross the border. But Salma denied it and not agree to go with him. But Tapas also threatened her that if she did not want to go, he would kill her here and flee to India. Thus Salma was threatened and forced to go to India. After going to India, Tapas left her near a station shop and ran away. There two brokers came and took her and locked her in a room. Salma does not understand where exactly she is being held. After being detained there for 3/4 days, when Salma protested about work, they brought her from there to another place. There she and another girl were forced to engage in sexual activities with customers. If they protested, they used physical and mental torture. After staying like this for a month, Salma contacted her sister on the phone at her home in Bangladesh through Somaiya, a girl there. Her sister advises her that if she comes to the border somehow, she can get him out. After that, Salma requested Somaiya a

lot to help her reach the border if she is not in the country. Agreeing to her words, Somaiya arranges for Salma to be placed in a trusted man's house near the border through a known client of hers. After Salma worked in the house there for 5 months, on November 30, 2018, her asylum provider arranged for Salma to cross into Bangladesh at the border. When Salma called her sister after crossing the border, her father came and took her home.

Victim three:

Rubina was from a low-income household in a Jessore tiny village, Raghunathpur. She was made to wed a man who was already married to another woman. However, a few months into their marriage, her spouse began to physically and psychologically abuse her. After becoming a mother of two tiny children and becoming reliant on her husband for financial support, Rubina sought to make amends with her husband and put the blame on fate. Her spouse ceased giving her and the kids any financial support when he made the decision one day to put her and the kids in the custody of her father's relatives. Rubina searched for a job. She received a job offer from her uncle in Mumbai. Within a year, Rubina was tricked into thinking she would have a lucrative career and make a ton of money. She was so anxious to make sure her kids had enough food and shelter that she consented right away. Rubina's father approved of the idea and sold some land to enable her get the money she needed to go to Mumbai. As soon as Rubina gave her uncle the money, her path to a fresh start began. She was unaware that a terrible surprise was in store for her and that her life would soon come to an end. Rubina entered into India through Benapole checkpoint with fake ID and passport and arrived at Mumbai by train. When she arrived two individuals greeted her and took her passport along with other papers. She was unaware that she had been sold at this point. Rubina was promised a job in a company, but instead she was imprisoned in a hotel, where she was regularly raped and tormented by multiple persons. Her abusers burned her entire body with cigarettes and beat her severely when she refused to have sex. One day Rubina had a Bangladeshi customer. Rubina pleaded with him to save her from this misery and requested him to call her father as quickly as possible to come to her aid. Rubina's father urged her uncle—the go-between—to bring her back right away. But to get her back, the middleman wanted 2 lakh taka, or \$3,350. With the assistance of a non-governmental organization called Rights Jessore, Rubina was able to return home in the end. Rubina was mentally and physically sick when she came back. She keeps having nightmares. When she returned, her

husband—who had previously deserted her—divorced her, and her neighbors shunned her. No one permitted their kids to play with her kids. She was too embarrassed to look for work or go outside. For a brief while, Rubina sought counseling from Rights Jessore.

Victim Four:

Laboni, lived in Doulodiya, Khulna who met with Abdul Kader Jelani over mobile phone in 2020. Jelani told her he lived in a village named Peruli, Kaliya, Narail. After 3 years, they had got married in July 2022. But within three months she faced mental and physical torture by her sister-in-law and mother-in-law. To avoid this problem Jelani offered his wife to visit to India for few days. Laboni agreed with her husband and prepared their documents. They started their journey on 7 Oct, 2022. They entered into India through this border. But Laboni did not realize that her documents were fake. After passing the border, Jelani took her to Kolkata by train. They stayed in hotel and after some time Jelani told his wife to get ready for going out. Then Jelani went down for bringing some foods. Laboni got ready and waited for Jelani's coming back. At the evening, two people came to her room and told her Jelani sold her at 25lakhs to them. Laboni could not believe that but already they locked her in this room. After 2 days passing, laboni tried to escape from this trap through the window. But they caught her and hit her with a knife. They locked her again in that room even at her critical condition. She locked there without any food, only water for 10days. The guard of this building noticed it. One day Laboni escaped from this room with the help of this guard. Laboni was able to return home with the help of an Indian citizen. After coming back, Laboni went to her in laws but they totally denied her. Then she filed a case in anti-trafficking tribunal section at Khulna. Her case is pending now.

Victim Five:

Tisha Makhal (16) is a school student by profession. As they could not meet the monthly needs of the family of 5 members, they wanted to go to India with their father and mother for bread and butter during the last corona epidemic through a broker. At one point they crossed the border through the illegal crossing of Benapole and entered India. After illegally entering India, he was sent to SMM Lilua Safe Home at Howrah as 4 minors working as day laborers with their parents in Basirhat area of Uttar. 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. His father and mother were sent to Dum Dum Central Jail in Kolkata. After

learning about Tisha's incident through the family, Rights Jessore started the process to bring her back to the country. At one stage, after completing all the procedures, he was repatriated to his homeland on 01.06.23 after one and a half years. After repatriation, he was reunited with the family on the same day based on the family's application to Rights Jessore. He went to the poor father's family and re-enrolled in school. He is currently studying 9th standard in a local private school from home. The family has to pay approximately two thousand taka per month for his education expenses (coaching fees and incidental expenses). He along with his family claims that there are chances of his education being discontinued due to financial hardship. In this reason, Rights Jessore provided livelihood support to her, so that she can continue her education.

Source: This case study is made up from experiences of different trafficked victims.

As an ethical requirement of this research I use pseudonyms to preserve participant anonymity and to protect participant confidentiality.

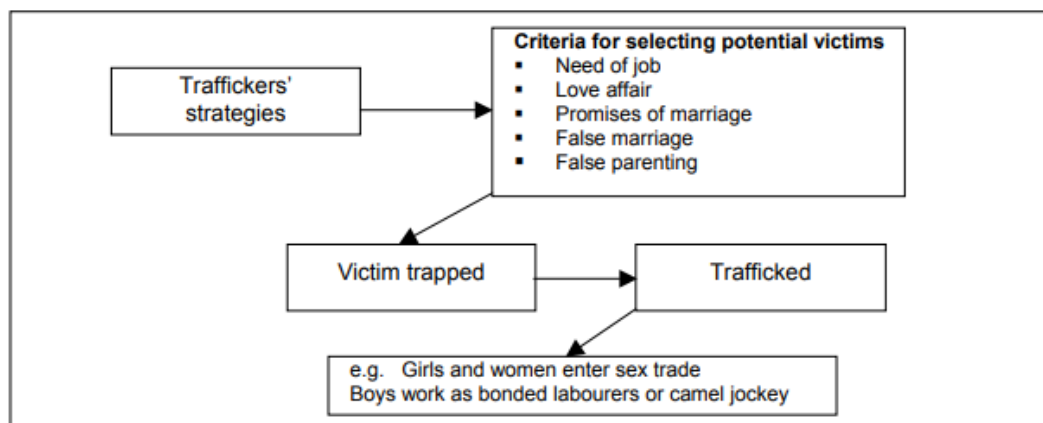
Rights Jessore, 'Home', Rights Jessore 21 April, 2024 .

Trafficked into nightmares, Mohammad Jamil khan, The Daily Star July, 2022.

Focus group discussion_BGB-Interview, 19 April, 2024.

“Summary of Recent Case Studies”

From the review of the above case studies as well as its factors, it can discern that traffickers operate both domestically and internationally through a large network across the country. Typically, a group of traffickers gather victims from different parts of Bangladesh and transfer them to their Indian counterparts, who use them for forced labor abroad or to brothels. Both men and women are involved in the procurement process. Although it can be assumed from various sources that a large proportion of victims are trafficked out of the country through this route, but there is no fixed data on it. Almost all forms of human trafficking are noticeable through Benapole-Petrapole land route. Every year hundreds of people are trafficked to India or referring India as a transit point to go to the Middle East countries, Europe by using the Benapole-Petrapole land route. About 60 percent of human trafficking through the land routes are conducted here. The trafficking gangs prefer this land route because of its approximate location to Kolkata. Sometimes traffickers pass their clients by walking border areas land or field at night, by border areas local hat. So, it is really difficult to maintain full security in here and ensure the legal entrance to India. They also use the Benapole land border according to regional agreements allowing for free movement, Bangladeshis frequently do not need to show a visa or have any other travel documents. All of these factors foster the human trafficking process via Benapole-Petrapole land port. And India is also one of the first transit countries used by smugglers and traffickers to go to destinations further west. The recruiters travel their victims from India to Libya, often via an airport in the United Arab Emirates. The following diagram summarizes the procurement process of Benapole-Petrapole border illustrated by the case studies highlighted before:



Chapter Seven

Conclusion

7.1 Key Findings of this Study:

In this twenty-first century, human trafficking is one of the most significant soft security concerns in Bangladesh. The term "human trafficking" has been used to refer to an extensive variety of crimes and violations of human rights that involve the recruitment, transportation, and sale of individuals into abusive situations. Even if its enduring nature and social influence have come to light more recently, this phenomenon is not new; rather, it persists as a collection of acts and impacts that is hard-to-quantify. Due to our country's geographical location, it is not only a major regional source of victims but also a destination for victims of human trafficking from nearby nations and beyond. The human development index (HDI) 0.661 of our country, extreme poverty, unemployment, low wage and economic disparity push people to go abroad for better employment opportunities, where many of them end up in worst situation and human rights violation of trafficking. The countrywide economic downturn, job losses and difficulties in earning livelihood have fostered the risk of human trafficking in Bangladesh. It has experienced a new form of digital abuse and exploitation in recent time, which is also connected with this organized crime. Though Bangladesh has achieved significant progress in anti-trafficking movement at national level, the government also needs to amplify its plan and action at international arena as it is a multi-dimensional problem. To combat this crime, it is also needed to give more concern about the economic downturn of our country, unemployment problem, socio-economic disparity within our society. And the other final important step is to address the most used routes and patterns of trafficking in Bangladesh and take strong measures to catch up the trafficking gangs both nationally and internationally. In this regard, the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012 is a milestone step of our government. Though Bangladesh is still in Tier 2 and cannot meet the minimum standards for the abolition of human trafficking, the government has paid a greater attention to make efforts in light of the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on our country's proficiency to combat trafficking. Recently, the government has designed the first national report on human trafficking in Bangladesh and extended the NAP until 2025. The government of Bangladesh also set up an anti-trafficking cell to investigate properly and collect actual ratio of human trafficking at national and international levels.

So, the core findings of this study are as follows:

- The economic disparity makes poor people more vulnerable to engage themselves in this illegal process of trafficking.
- Growing unemployment problem has also paved the path of human trafficking.
- Lack of minimum wage leads the young men and women for being trafficked.
- Porous border and weakening border control help to spur up the trafficking process.
- Poor law enforcement agency, lack of punishment and lack of proper funding to combat trafficking help to rise this organized crime in Bangladesh.
- Use and abuse of technology broaden this illegal trade of people in Bangladesh.

7.2 Concluding Remarks:

This study has emphasized the magnitude, process and routes of human trafficking in Bangladesh and has suggested policy measures to stop this illicit network by giving priority to cross-border initiatives. It has provided an alarming picture of trafficking and significant routes across the Bangladesh-India and Bangladesh-Myanmar border area. Limited knowledge and a lack of adequate focused research on human trafficking can conceal the severity of the issue. As previously stated, the majority of data on trafficking is collected by human rights organizations or development agencies. To combat human trafficking, comprehensive data collecting and coordination among authorities, including border guards, is necessary to create an accurate database. This study argues that human trafficking occurs through international networks, and effective anti-trafficking efforts require collaboration and coordination among origin, transit, and destination countries. This study contends that cross-border initiatives are not the whole solution to this problem, rather conducts an in-depth analysis of its recent factors, trends and the component of anti-trafficking policies i.e. the prevention of human trafficking via border control mechanisms. This study emulates Ronald Skeldon's statement that 'the elimination of trafficking is unlikely to be realistically achieved through legislation declarations of intend but by improvements in the socio-economic status of the population'. (R.Skeldon, 2000, op. cit.) It is essential to realize that 'understanding trafficking plays a role in combating efforts' because 'trafficking is the symptom and cannot be combated without addressing the root causes'. If the conditions that foster trafficking persist, traffickers will simply have to change their strategies and forms of exploitation to stay one step ahead of law enforcement'. It is time to give more concern on the anti-trafficking measures as well as the recent causes beside the existing ones of human trafficking in Bangladesh.

7.3 Recommendations:

In Bangladesh, the Ministry of Home Affairs has played the lead role in organizing the measures to combat human trafficking. The Ministry of Home Affairs is home to a number of committees and subcommittees that are tasked with developing policy, among them the GO-NGO National Coordination Committee to Combat Human Trafficking. Though Eliminating human trafficking is a challenging task due to its pseudo nature, the government of Bangladesh has taken necessary steps and plan of action to combat this crime. Besides the existing recommendations, there are some other recent recommendations which may help to combat this organized crime according to this study:

1. The anti-trafficking cell should extirpate the fraudulent travel agencies and create a country-wide database on it.
2. Adopt a 2020–2030 National Plan of Action that has been updated and given more funding, giving prosecution and protection initiatives more priority.
3. Initiate GOs and NGOs seminars, programs on recent patterns and trends of human trafficking for understanding and taking efficient action to combat this crime.
4. Start new project for addressing the recent most used routes and active gangs of trafficking to increase more security over there and capture those gang's leader as well as dalals or intermediators.
5. Create sufficient job opportunities and increase investment, policy for the entrepreneur at the national level.
6. The government should have taken necessary steps to empower border security controlling system both administratively and technologically.
7. Induce new effective agreement on counter trafficking approach with other neighboring countries.
8. Make more shelter house with self-reliant work facilities in every districts for repatriated victim's livelihood.
9. Enhance services and protection networks for individuals who have been trafficked, as well as for witnesses who may be involved in legal proceedings.
10. Establish a nationwide reporting system and ensure capital punishment for the traffickers.
11. Provide training for law enforcement, immigration agents, labor inspectors, and health care providers regarding anti-trafficking plan and actions.

Questionnaire

- Age:
- Gender:
- Occupation:

1. Do you familiar with the issue of Human Trafficking in Bangladesh?

- ☐ Familiar
- ☐ Somewhat Familiar
- ☐ Not Familiar at all

2. In your opinion, which factors contribute most to human trafficking in Narayanganj Sadar?

- ☐ Poverty
- ☐ Lack of education
- ☐ Gender inequality
- ☐ Demand for cheap labor abroad
- ☐ Lack of effective laws and regulations
- ☐ Organized criminal networks.
- ☐ Political instability
- ☐ High unemployment rate
- ☐ others (please specify).....

3. Who is the most victimized person in trafficking in Narayanganj Sadar?

- ☐ Men
- ☐ Women
- ☐ Children

4. What role do economic factors play in human trafficking in this area (Narayanganj Sadar)?

- ☐ High poverty rates drive individuals to seek risky migration opportunities.
- ☐ Lack of job opportunities leads to vulnerable individuals being exploited.
- ☐ others (please specify).....

5. Do you think the proximity of this upazila to international border as well as to Dhaka play important role for human trafficking?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
6. In the past 5 years, do you believe that human trafficking has increased, decreased or remained the same in here?
- ☐ Increased
- ☐ Decreased
- ☐ Remained the same
- ☐ No opinion
7. Do you think people from rural and urban area come to Narayanganj Ssadar for searching a job in the industrial sectors?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
8. How significant is the role of social media and online platforms in facilitating human trafficking in Bangladesh?
- ☐ Very significant
- ☐ Somewhat significant
- ☐ Not Significant
- ☐ No opinion
9. What do you think people prefer to go to abroad for higher wage to ensure a better standard of life?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

10. What measures do you think are one of the most effective in preventing human trafficking in here?

- ☐ Awareness building
- ☐ Strengthening border security
- ☐ Improved education and job opportunities
- ☐ Strengthening law enforcement and judicial action.
- ☐ More resources for victim support and rehabilitation.
- ☐ International cooperation and anti- trafficking agreement.
- ☐ Others (please specify).....

11. How effective do you think the current laws in Bangladesh are in preventing and addressing human trafficking?

- ☐ Very effective
- ☐ Somewhat effective
- ☐ Not effective

12. Are you aware of any recent government or NGO-led initiatives to combat human trafficking in BD?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

13. What do you think are the main consequences of human trafficking on individuals and families?

- ☐ Physical and emotional trauma.
- ☐ Loss of identity and social connections.
- ☐ Increased vulnerability to future exploitation.
- ☐ Decreased economics opportunities.
- ☐ Others (please specify).....

14. Do you think victims or their family filed any case against the traffickers or the gang?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

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