



LL.M THESIS

**A RESEARCH MONOGRAPH
PRESENTED IN PARTIAL COMPLETION OF THE CREDIT
PREQUISITES FOR AWARDING THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF LAWS BY
DAFFODIL INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN BANGLADESH: LEGISLATION, CHALLENGES AND OUTCOMES

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Letter of Transmittal

To,

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Subject: Motion for Dissertation Submission.

Greetings, Sir

I desire to convey my deepest appreciation and inform you that I, **Syeda Mahajabin Binta Azam**, am a 1-year LL.M. program pupil in Batch 41, with ID number **0242320008133007**. I'm conveying my Research Monograph as an absolute necessity for accomplishing the 1-year LL.M. program degree. I beg your pardon for certain inaccuracies and blunders for which I bear partial accountability.

Mahajabin

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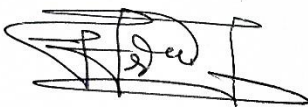
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Letter of Approval

This validates that the task was successfully executed. As part of the fulfilment for her academic work carried out for the dissertation, **Syeda Mahajabin Binta Azam**, ID: **0242320008133007**, Department of Law, Daffodil International University, carried out a real-world task titled **"TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN BANGLADESH: LEGISLATION, CHALLENGES AND OUTCOMES"** beneath my oversight.

Sincerely,



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Dr. Kudrat E Khuda Babu
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Declaration

I accordingly reiterate unquestionably that the subject matter of the study's thesis **"TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN BANGLADESH: LEGISLATION, CHALLENGES AND OUTCOMES"** had been put together by me and had been not generally recently presented for an academic degree or accreditation to any additional educational facility, or the workplace. I therefore took precaution to guarantee that no intellectual property right exists in force concerning the content that is provided here. My furthermore pledge to compensate up the university for any issue or difficulty resulting due to my execution of the aforementioned commitments.

My heartfelt gratitude goes directly to **Dr. Kudrat E. Khuda Babu**, my research supervisor, who showed me driven enthusiasm and compassion.

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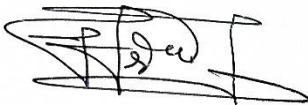
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Certification:

Under my supervision, this research was conducted and officially submitted to the Department of Law at Daffodil International University, Dhaka, Bangladesh. To fulfill the academic requirements of the one-year LL.M. degree program, the findings and analyses provided are entirely original and carefully crafted. This statement affirms the authenticity of the work that forms the basis of this thesis.

Sincerely.



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Dr. Kudrat E Khuda Babu
Professor,
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Dedication:

My remarkable **parents**, whose continuous support and deep inspiration have served as a beacon of light throughout my academic endeavors, are honored in my dissertation. Their unwavering love, unselfish sacrifices, and unwavering leadership have greatly influenced who I am now. I am still incredibly grateful to them for their unwavering belief in my potential and their unwavering support at my worst moments.

I also want to express my gratitude to my respected adviser, **Mohammad Badruzzaman**, and my honorable supervisor, **Dr. Kudrat E. Khuda Babu**, whose outstanding guidance and deep commitment to their fields have greatly impacted my intellectual development. Their priceless advice and knowledgeable insights have given me the information and abilities I need to confidently take on new challenges in the future. I consider myself really fortunate because I had the chance to study under them.

Last but not least, I dedicated this thesis to my beloved **family** and **friends**, whose steadfast love, support, and encouragement have been a continual source of inspiration and strength for me over this journey.

I dedicate this effort to each and every one of you with the deepest respect and thanks.

Acknowledgment

I intend to convey deep appreciation to each person who has offered invaluable advice & constant encouragement throughout the entire effort.

First and foremost, I owe a debt of gratitude towards my supervisor, Dr. Kudrat E. Khuda Babu, for outstanding guidance, perceptive criticism, and unwavering support were crucial in determining the focus and direction of the present paper. His knowledge and insightful criticism have greatly improved the calibre of this piece of writing.

I also want to express my profound gratitude to the distinguished faculty and committed personnel of the Department of Law, because their supply of necessary materials, comfortable surroundings, and priceless chances enabled this study. Their steadfast dedication to educational quality and ethics has served as a constant source of motivation for me, encouraging me to persist in achieving my goals in academia.

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Abstract:

Examining the situation of women's and children's trafficking in Bangladesh, exploring its causes, difficulties, and ramifications, is the main goal of this study. One of the most serious and pervasive human rights abuses, especially for women and children, is still trafficking. This research aims to investigate the complex processes involved in the trafficking of humans, the relationships and networks between traffickers, the underlying factors that contribute to this crime, and its varied effects on Bangladeshi society. A number of conceptual questions are also clarified by the material here, including the causes of human trafficking & the country's reaction to it. It explores the underlying causes and societal repercussions of this crime while critically analyzing the comprehensive legal frameworks put in place in Bangladesh to prevent the trafficking of women and children. Trafficking frequently has forced labour, illegal exploiting women, or other coercive abuses as its ultimate goal. In order to address instances of physical and sexual abuse, it was noted that many victims had filed disputes regarding traffickers and their co-conspirators, demanding legal action from law enforcement. Since poverty has been found to be a major contributing factor to human trafficking, implementing programs to reduce poverty is essential to ending this crime. Significant developments in this direction include initiatives to increase economic prospects for vulnerable groups, increase awareness, develop capacities, and guarantee that prospective sufferers are able to utilise the system of criminal justice. Fighting this global organised crime requires giving the execution of current laws top priority. Along with outlining methods for the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of trafficking into society at large, this paper makes proposals for preventing the trafficking of women and children in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Trafficking, Women, Children, Bangladesh, Legislation, Challenges, Outcomes.

Letter of Transmittal.....	(I)
Letter Approval.....	(II)
Declaration.....	(III)
Certification.....	(IV)
Dedication.....	(V)
Acknowledgment.....	(VI)
Abstract.....	(VII)
Keywords.....	(VII)

INDEX

SL.	TITLE	PAGE NO.
CHAPTER I: UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF WOMEN AND CHILD TRAFFICKING		
1.1	Exploration	1-3
1.2	Statement of problem	4-5
1.3	Objectives of Study	6
1.4	Research Question	7
1.5	Research Methodology	8
1.6	Literature Review	9-12

1.7	Types of Data	13
1.8	Sources of Data	14
1.9	Limitation of Study	15-16
1.10	Expected outcome	17
CHAPTER II: EVOLUTIONARY TIMELINE		
2.1	Evolution	18-21
2.2	Trafficking Targets	22-23
2.3	The Actors Behind Human Trafficking	24-25
2.4	Species of Women and Children Trafficking	26-29
CHAPTER III: BLUEPRINT		
3.1	Huning Phase	31-32
3.2	Transit Phase	32-34
3.3	Final Phase	34-35
3.4	Push & Pull Elements	36-39
3.5	Interconnection of Push and Pull Factors	40
3.6	Trafficking Statistics in Bangladesh	41-45
CHAPTER IV: STATUTORY MEASURES TO CURB WOMEN AND CHILDREN TRAFFICKING IN BANGLADESH		
4.1	National Legal Safeguards	46-52
4.2	International Legal Safeguards	53-55

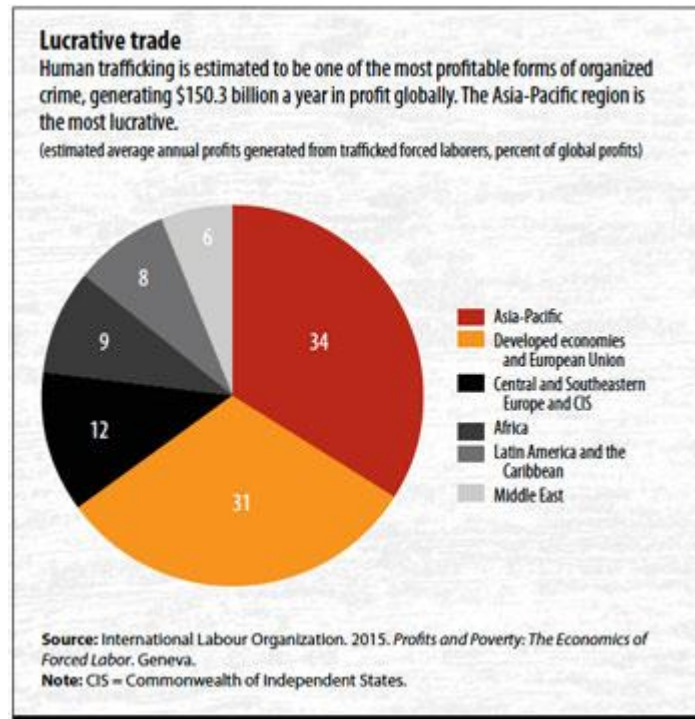
4.3	Statutory Framework for Enforcement Bodies	56-58
CHAPTER V: VULNERABILITIES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION		
5.1	Weaknesses to be addressed	59-62
5.2	Strategic Proposals	63-65
5.2	Concluding Insights	66-67
<u>References:</u> 68-70		

CHAPTER I

UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF WOMEN AND CHILD TRAFFICKING

1.1 Exploration:

The trafficking of humans, especially women and children, constitutes a grave violation of fundamental human rights and a pervasive global criminal operation. In the Republic of Bangladesh, such a problem has arisen as a significant challenge, intricately linked to socio-economic disparities, institutional weaknesses, and inadequate preventive strategies. Women and children being significantly more frequently subjected to forced labour, sexual exploitation, child marriage, organ trafficking, and other types of abuse. Despite the establishment of many legislative instruments and the endorsement of international treaties, the persistent increase in trafficking occurrences underscores the insufficiency of existing solutions. Economic distress, restricted educational access, unemployment, and established cultural norms exacerbate the issue, rendering specific populations especially susceptible to exploitation. This study conducts a thorough analysis of legal structures, the challenges impeding anti-trafficking efforts, and the efficacy of existing interventions, with the objective of recommending practical solutions to this pressing issue. This study aims to elucidate the complex dynamics of trafficking in Bangladesh, focusing on legal deficiencies, institutional obstacles, and sociocultural issues, while providing strategic recommendations to strengthen the protection of vulnerable groups.



(CABALLERO-ANTHONY, 2018)

Bangladesh is more vulnerable to this illegal activity because of its large population, economic difficulties, crises, and resource scarcity. These circumstances make it possible for traffickers to use false pretences to coerce women and children into leaving their country of origin. In places like India, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and beyond, victims frequently experience forced domestic slavery, sexual assault, and prostitution after leaving. Fraudulent relationships created through internet platforms, kidnappings, or false love engagements are the source of many cases. Traffickers usually use false promises of work or opportunity to entice victims. For example, a young man may seem to be affectionate in order to win a woman's trust and persuade her of a future together, only to sell her for money. The government's ability to shield women and children from these illegal businesses is further limited by flaws in the legislative and law enforcement systems. One horrible and pervasive type of organised crime that is still growing at an alarming rate is the slavery and trafficking involving women and children. Its implementation is made possible by a variety of procedures and complex multinational supply chains, and its

yearly worldwide industry turnover is estimated to be \$40 billion. This violation affects countries regardless of their political or economic standing and goes beyond the lines of wealth or poverty. Additional legislative frameworks aiming at reducing this crime have been implemented as a result of the United Nations' 2000 introduction of an anti-trafficking agreement, which has been adopted by 178 nations in response to this expanding threat. However, there has been a worrying increase in both internal and cross-border trafficking. In addition to depriving people of their fundamental rights, this infringement forces them to flee their country of origin, leaving them open to abuse. Traffickers continue to primarily target women in particular. Around 50 percent in adult women and 20% of female kids are victims of this atrocity, according to a United Nations research on drugs and crime. People who have been trafficked are frequently used for forced marriages, forced labour, prostitution, begging, and other types of exploitation, such as harvesting organs. Bangladesh, which became an independent country in 1971 after East Pakistan broke away from West Pakistan, makes the matter historically significant. Non-Bengali Pakistanis of Indian descent sought repatriation to West Pakistan during the Liberation War, temporarily settling in 66 camps spread around Bangladesh. Due to the delays in their relocation, there was an increase in unauthorised border crossings, making many women and children regularly vulnerable to trafficking. (Ara Fardaus, 2021)

1.2: Statement of Problem:

Because of their startling frequency and complex shape, the illicit trade of women and children here has grown into a significant socio-legal and humanitarian concern. Regulations have been passed, multilateral agreements have been ratified, and other state and not-for-profit efforts have not stopped this scourge. The groups with the greatest risk continue to be women and children, who are frequently the victims of extraction of organs, forced labour, marriage between children, sex slavery, forced labour, and numerous other severe types of abuse.

Numerous systemic and overall issues exacerbate this problem. Victims are easily used by criminals due to issues such as joblessness, lack of schooling, and financial distress. The problem is made worse by weak enforcement procedures, poor agency collaboration, and a lack of effective victim safeguards. National and local efforts to fight trafficking face extra obstacles from overseas smuggling which is made possible by organised crime structures and permeable boundaries. The dire need over an extensive remedy is highlighted by the insufficiency of current laws and regulations and the inefficiency of organisational structures to tackle the underlying causes and effects of human trafficking. In order to battle this widespread crime and protect the liberties and worth of women and children in Bangladesh, this research aims to analyse the legislative measures, investigate the obstacles preventing their proper execution, and evaluate the results of strategies. Important problems to be solved are as follows:

- ❖ **Enforcement Deficiencies:** Insufficient application of anti-trafficking legislation and inadequate surveillance of trafficking operations.
- ❖ **Victim Rehabilitation Challenges:** Scarce provisions for reintegration, justice access, and psychological recovery for victims.
- ❖ **Economic and Social Inequalities:** Financial instability, unemployment, and educational deprivation fostering susceptibility to exploitation.
- ❖ **Interagency Inefficiency:** Lack of effective collaboration among border authorities, enforcement agencies, and support organizations.
- ❖ **Transnational Trafficking Dynamics:** Weak border controls and complex criminal networks enabling cross-border exploitation.

- ❖ **Cultural Barriers and Gender Bias:** Deeply rooted societal prejudices perpetuating gender-based abuse and victimization.
- ❖ **Educational and Awareness Deficits:** Limited public awareness and insufficient preventive education regarding trafficking risks.
- ❖ **Legislative Shortcomings:** Gaps in legal provisions addressing modern and evolving forms of trafficking.
- ❖ **Data and Research Limitations:** Absence of accurate data and in-depth analysis to guide effective policymaking.
- ❖ **Corruption and Institutional Complicity:** Malfeasance within enforcement bodies enabling traffickers to evade accountability.

To formulate targeted solutions, it is crucial to analyze the cultural and societal elements that heighten the vulnerability of women and children to trafficking. A thorough understanding of Bangladesh's trafficking legislation is imperative for evaluating the present scenario and guiding the formulation of policies and advocacy initiatives to combat this severe breach of human rights. This study aims to offer a holistic legal analysis of the illicit trafficking of women and children in Bangladesh, contributing to the creation of more effective strategies for prevention, protection, and prosecution.

1.3: Objectives of Study:

The primary objective of this research is to provide a comprehensive legal analysis of trafficking of women and children in Bangladesh. Among the particular objectives are:

- ✓ **Consider the Vulnerabilities:** To determine the economic, social, and cultural elements that make women and children vulnerable to human trafficking.
- ✓ **Examine Legal Frameworks:** To evaluate the effectiveness and application of Bangladesh's national and international anti-trafficking legislation.
- ✓ **Assessing the Difficulties of Enforcement:** To look into the obstacles that law enforcement organisations have while trying to stop human trafficking and bring criminals to justice.
- ✓ **Evaluate the Mechanisms for Victim Support:** To assess the efficacy and accessibility of victim justice, reintegration, and rehabilitation programs.
- ✓ **Examine cross-border relationships:** To examine how regional elements and multinational networks contribute to trafficking.
- ✓ **Provide Policy Suggestions:** To create workable plans for enhancing protection, prevention, and legislative responses to human trafficking.
- ✓ **Increase Knowledge:** To increase public awareness of the dangers of human trafficking and the need of community-based preventive initiatives.
- ✓ **Participate in Scholarly Conversations:** To add to the body of knowledge on human trafficking by conducting a thorough socio-legal study within the Bangladeshi setting.

To sum up, the goals of this research are to provide a thorough grasp of the socio-legal aspects of women's and children's trafficking in Bangladesh. The research aims to close current gaps in policy and practice by addressing the underlying reasons, examining legislative frameworks, and evaluating enforcement problems. It also seeks to raise public awareness and contribute to scholarly conversation by offering workable alternatives for prosecution, prevention, and protection. In the end, these goals seek to assist in the development of stronger systems to successfully counteract this serious human rights violation.

1.4 Research Question:

These inquiries will direct the investigation in tackling the recognized problems and accomplishing the study's goals-

1. How effective are Bangladesh's legal frameworks and institutional mechanisms in combating the trafficking of women and children?
2. What structural problems and socioeconomic variables influence the frequency of human trafficking in Bangladesh?
3. What strategies do traffickers use, and what obstacles exist for the implementation of anti-trafficking policies?
4. To what extent do current programs for victim care, recuperation, and readmission into society meet the needs of victims?
5. How can regional cooperation, international practices, and awareness programs be improved to address trafficking effectively?

1.5 Research Methodology:

A descriptive technique enhanced with qualitative insights is used in this investigation. To collect comprehensive information for this study, primary as well as secondary sources were used. Through careful examination of key documents, investigative examinations, and targeted research projects in line with the goals of the research, the initial information has been obtained. Academic books, magazines, government documents, peer-reviewed journals, legislative papers, electronic archives, and specialised publications are all examples of supplementary information. Through a variety of methodological techniques, more data has been extracted from newspapers, academic publications, and internet sites. These various sources of information are included in the study, "TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN BANGLADESH: LEGISLATION, CHALLENGES AND OUTCOMES," to guarantee a thorough and multifaceted analysis.

1.6 Literature review:

Because of its complexity and serious human rights ramifications, the illegal trafficking of women and children continues to be a crucial area of study in both regional and international contexts. The socioeconomic factors—such as unemployment, poverty, and illiteracy—are highlighted in the research as the main causes of susceptibility. Research has also looked at the systemic issues that support trafficking networks, such as inadequate leadership, institutional corruption, and insufficient law enforcement. Although Bangladesh has been recognized as a nation that both originates and transits human trafficking, there is still a dearth of specialized literature on its distinct socio-legal setting. Although international frameworks like the Palermo Protocol provide fundamental instruments for fighting human trafficking, there has been criticism of its localized application. Researchers have also looked on the growing use of information technology by traffickers, exploitation via forced labor and sexual slavery, and cross-border trafficking.

This study expands on earlier research by examining Bangladesh's legal frameworks, analyzing compliance and safeguarding victim issues, and evaluating the effectiveness of current anti-trafficking initiatives. It aims to fill in the gaps in the research and provide practical advice on how to fight this widespread crime.

According to **Nasrin Khandaker's** study, "**Study Concerning Girls, Women, and Children Trafficking in Bangladesh**" human trafficking constitutes a severe violation of human rights. Victims, often women and children, are forced to work in hazardous conditions, suffering significant physical and mental harm. Trafficking is commonly linked to the sex industry, where victims face exploitation and heightened risks of contracting diseases like HIV/AIDS. Beyond sexual exploitation, many victims are trafficked for forced labor in domestic and industrial sectors, enduring grueling work under inhumane conditions. Children are particularly vulnerable, exploited for cheap labor, begging, or even organ trafficking. Khandaker highlights the organized and transnational nature of trafficking networks in Bangladesh. These networks exploit porous borders, systemic corruption, and socio-economic vulnerabilities such as poverty,

gender inequality, and lack of education. Victims are often deceived with false promises of employment, marriage, or a better life, only to find themselves trapped in cycles of abuse. Jessore, a key trafficking hub near the Indian border, serves as a transit point for smuggling victims to India, the Middle East, and beyond. To understand trafficking operations better, researchers from the Organization for Research and Policy (ORP) interviewed jailed traffickers in Jessore. These interviews revealed traffickers' methods, including targeting marginalized individuals, using deceptive recruitment tactics, and exploiting gaps in law enforcement. The study also uncovered the complex trafficking routes and the complicity of corrupt officials, making it harder to combat the crime. Khandaker's findings underscore the urgent need for stronger legal frameworks, regional cooperation, and public awareness. Tackling root causes like poverty and unemployment, improving education, and promoting gender equality are essential steps. Enhanced law enforcement, anti-corruption measures, and better support for survivors can significantly disrupt trafficking networks. This research calls for coordinated efforts from the government, civil society, and international stakeholders to combat trafficking and protect vulnerable populations effectively.

The need of comprehensive support networks for trafficking survivors is emphasised by **Sabiha Yeasmin Rosy** in her research study, "**Bangladeshi Women Trafficking Survivors' Situation in Family and Society: NGO Response towards their Reintegration**" She stresses that the first stages in their rehabilitation should be to provide them education, counselling, and a place to stay. Reintegration is a difficult time in survivors' life because of the psychological trauma and social shame they experience, hence the research focusses especially on this topic. Because mental healing takes time, Rosy points out that many survivors are afraid of being rejected when they return to their families or communities. One important organisation in tackling these issues is the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA). Shelter houses are offered by BNWLA, where survivors may get treatment and counselling to help with their psychological recovery. The group also makes a concerted effort to help survivors get back into their communities and families. However, Rosy notes that these attempts are often thwarted by social stigma and prejudice, as survivors must contend with being labelled and shunned, making reintegration a difficult task. Rosy emphasises the need of educating the public in order to fight

societal stigma and provide supportive spaces for survivors. Additionally essential to empowering survivors, allowing them to attain financial independence, and decreasing their susceptibility to re-trafficking are educational options and vocational training. In her view, cooperation between NGOs, families, communities, and the general public is necessary for effective reintegration. Rosy's study, in summary, emphasises the complex issues of rehabilitation and the need of comprehensive solutions that include community involvement, empowerment programs, and psychological rehabilitation. By taking care of these problems, survivors may return to society without being exploited or stigmatised and recreate their lives with decency. Rosy (2016)

Mahamud Khalid's research, "Understanding the Complexities of Human Trafficking in Bangladesh: A Multifaceted Organised Crime" indicates that one of the country's most severely impacted by the trafficking of women and children is Bangladesh. The U.S. Department of State's 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report ranked Bangladesh as a Tier 2 nation, indicating that its efforts to fight trafficking are still inadequate. A number of factors, including poverty, corruption, and structural shortcomings, put vulnerable people at danger, particularly women and children. As a main reason, poverty provides an ideal environment for traffickers to take advantage of desperate people. Targeting low-income groups disproportionately is emphasized by the International Labor Organization. Despite the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012, being passed in Bangladesh, its efficacy is hampered by poor implementation, corruption, and a lack of funding. Khalid also highlights how victims have severe mental, physical, social, and economic effects in addition to shame, exclusion, and restricted access to justice. Particularly in areas like Cox's Bazar, where vulnerable groups like refugees are targeted, the issue is further made worse by weak borders and organised trafficking networks, which often include dishonest authorities. Khalid promotes bolstering anti-corruption policies, boosting socioeconomic prospects, bolstering law enforcement, and encouraging regional and global cooperation as ways to tackle this problem. Stopping human trafficking and guaranteeing equality and respect for everyone requires a comprehensive strategy that addresses underlying causes and puts victim assistance first.

Ferdaus Ara examines the causes of human trafficking in Bangladesh in her paper "**Trafficking of Women and Children in Bangladesh: Laws and Strategies for Prevention**" Cultural, social, and economic systems have been the main facilitators of the trafficking of women and children to Pakistan, India, and the Arab world since the 1950s. Due to poverty, gender inequality, and ignorance, women and children are at risk of being used by human traffickers.

The problem is made worse by Bangladesh's open doors with India and Myanmar, which allow traffickers to operate with ease because of inadequate border procedures and shoddy paperwork. Furthermore, new dangers have emerged as a result of social media and technological abuse. A recent arrest of a trafficker who lured women on social media shows that traffickers increasingly use these channels to trick victims with phoney connections or job promises. Ara emphasises that the issue is made worse by inadequate border supervision, bad policy execution, and weak institutional frameworks. Targeted awareness efforts, more stringent border controls, technical surveillance, and more robust legislative procedures are all necessary to combat human trafficking. To counter this escalating threat, cooperation between authorities, security forces, community groups, and foreign partners is essential. Ara concludes by highlighting the need of a comprehensive strategy to combat human trafficking in Bangladesh, emphasising victim protection, enforcement, and prevention in order to defend women's and children's safety and dignity.

1.7 Types of Data:

Since this study uses both a qualitative and statistical technique, it mostly depends on qualitative data. The gathered information places a strong emphasis on using contextual and in-depth insights to comprehend the intricate dynamics of human trafficking. In order to offer a thorough investigation of the topic, qualitative data has been given priority throughout additionally the analysis and report writing stages.

A variety of qualitative techniques, such as document analysis, focus groups, and in-depth interviews, were used to collect data. Reviewing pertinent legislation, publications, research papers, and governmental documents was part of the document analysis process in order to glean insightful information. To learn about stakeholders' viewpoints on the matter, focus groups were held with legislators, social workers, and attorneys, among others. Detailed narratives and first-hand testimonies were provided via extensive conversations involving sufferers, specialists, and practitioners, which illuminated the systemic issues and lived experiences related to human trafficking.

To guarantee that the study captures a multifaceted view of the legal frameworks, difficulties, and results concerning trafficking in women and children in Bangladesh, these qualitative methodologies have been used.

1.8 Sources of Data:

To guarantee a thorough and multifaceted analysis, the present research uses primary as well as secondary information sources. A variety of qualitative techniques, including as case studies, in-person assessments, structured interviews, and discussions with key informants who have specific expertise and experience in the field, will be used to gather primary data. These methods are intended to provide personal knowledge of the problem of child and women trafficking in Bangladesh. Secondary data, on the other hand, will come from a wide variety of reliable and reputable sources. These include of professional books, peer-reviewed journals, scientific dissertations, government publications, official reports, statistical databases, credible websites, and pieces from well-known periodicals and newspapers. The study will also be contextualised and supported by important references to previous research papers, policy manuals, and international publications on human trafficking.

By providing both empirical support and theoretical viewpoints to successfully meet the study goals, the combination of various data sources guarantees a balanced approach. An in-depth analysis of Bangladesh's human trafficking laws, difficulties, and results is made possible by this combined dependence on both secondary and primary information.

1.9 Limitations of the Study:

It is important to recognize that this research has a number of limitations, even if it provides important insights into the legal analysis of women's and children's trafficking in Bangladesh. The research's qualitative approach restricts how broadly the results may be applied. The study's conclusions may not apply to other areas with different sociocultural dynamics since it is focused on a particular setting, and the findings might not accurately represent the range of experiences seen across the country. Furthermore, there is a chance of bias due to the strong dependence on qualitative techniques like focus groups, document analysis, and interviews. The interpretation and objectivity of the results may be limited by the subjectivity present in various data sources, which are influenced by the individual experiences, opinions, and interests of the participants.

Furthermore, a comprehensive investigation of every facet of the trafficking problem was impeded by time and financial limitations. Because of this, certain crucial papers and materials may not be deemed included, and some stakeholders or points of view might not have been sufficiently represented. Since human trafficking is a hidden and dynamic phenomenon, it may be difficult to get reliable and current information. When a result is reached, the results may become less applicable when trafficking practices and legal frameworks change. The results may have been somewhat influenced by the researcher's own opinions and interpretations, despite measures to guarantee thorough data collection and reduce bias. Achieving total impartiality is a difficulty inherent in this kind of research, even while transparency and reflexivity are prioritized.

Furthermore, not all potential factors that might influence trafficking are included in the research, such as rising technology or worldwide trends, which could provide more information. The research's breadth and generalizability are limited by this constraint. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the study adds significantly to the legal knowledge regarding human trafficking in the country and establishes the framework for further investigation and the creation of policies in this crucial field.

1.10 Expected Outcome:

Examining Bangladesh's system of justice and regulation methods rigorously in light of child and women trafficking being the main goal of this study. The research will provide light on the shortcomings in trafficker criminal prosecution, victim assistance facilities, and enforcement procedures by examining the administrative flaws within the judicial system. The study will uncover systemic issues that impede the successful execution of anti-trafficking initiatives via this analysis. In order to rectify these shortcomings, the research will provide thorough suggestions meant to advance policy changes, improve institutional capacity, and fortify legal requirements. These suggestions aim to increase responsibility among traffickers, strengthen victim protection procedures, and boost law enforcement effectiveness. The results are expected to help create stronger countermeasures against human trafficking in Bangladesh, including mitigation, indictment, and safeguarding measures.

This research will also look at the institutional weaknesses and sociocultural elements that make it easier for women and children to be exploited, providing a more complex understanding of the underlying causes of human trafficking. By recognising these fundamental problems, the study seeks to guide focused actions that deal with the circumstances that make certain groups more vulnerable to human trafficking. Policymakers, civil society organisations, and international organisations involved in advancing human rights and exploitation eradication will find great value in the expected results of this study. The results are anticipated to motivate advocacy initiatives and aid in the development of policies based on research that not only strengthen existing laws but also promote long-term, sustainable solutions. By guaranteeing victims' justice and encouraging more robust international cooperation to fight human trafficking in that nation and elsewhere, the research ultimately seeks to support the worldwide anti-trafficking movement.

CHAPTER II

EVOLUTIONARY TIMELINE

2.1 Evolution:

The tale of child and women's trafficking across Bangladesh is lengthy and convoluted, and it is closely related to the geopolitical and economic state of the nation. This problem, although still poses a big obstacle, evolved throughout the years being something that goes unnoticed to a major worldwide crisis. Enslavement and abuse of humans were common throughout the era of colonialism, which is where trafficking in the area first began. Even though enslavement was officially outlawed, its lasting impact has endured in the shape of human trafficking, what is still a major problem in the country today. Bengal served as a major centre for the intercontinental slave trade in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The colonial economy relied heavily on human trafficking, with people being transported from places as diverse as the continent of Africa, the region of Arabia, Malaysia, the People's Republic Arakan, and Nepal. A mechanism major exploitation was established as a result of the colonial powers', notably the British, heavy reliance on this labour for a variety of economic endeavours, including as building and agriculture. The abuse of humans via bonded labour and indentured servitude persisted long after the official slave trade ended, demonstrating that the purchase of slaves was not exclusive to the colonial period. The contemporary period of human trafficking began with this shift from explicit enslavement to more clandestine forms of exploitation. (BIPPS, 2022)

Women's trafficking gained notoriety in the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly when it came to sexual exploitation. In order to serve British troops and foreigners, British colonial authorities set up brothels in places like the city of Kanpur Jabbalpur, West Bengal, and Bombay. These brothels were a part of a wider network that included the trafficking of women into sexual servitude from all across the Asian continent, including Bengal. These areas gained notoriety as important destinations for women who were trafficked, and they remain key hubs in the trafficking pathways that still exist today. The methodical structure of the trade was further highlighted in a 1927 League of Nations investigation that identified a trafficking route that ran from Eastern areas to Mumbai via Egypt. The historical foundations of trafficking in Bangladesh include the colonial heritage as well as the practice of subcontinental monarchs keeping women for amusement, pleasure, or as concubines. These include Muslim and Hindu aristocracy were deeply ingrained in this practice, which further ingrained the commercialization of women in the social mores of the day. Professional sex and the mistreatment of women were common, notably in East Bengal in the nineteenth century, when the sex trade thrived in riverfront cities like Dhaka and Narayanganj. The idea that women are resources to be used for profit was maintained by these customs, opening the door for contemporary human trafficking methods. Bangladesh inherited a complicated network of past, community, and fiscal problems when it gained independence in 1971. Among them are the lingering effects of slavery and human trafficking, which persisted in flourishing in the years after independence. The socioeconomic environment of Bangladesh, which is marked by pervasive poverty, unemployment, and a dearth of educational possibilities, made it easy for human traffickers to target weaker members of society. Trafficked people, especially women and children, found the nation to be a tempting destination and transit point due to its geopolitical position, permeable borders, and lax enforcement of the law.

The world's perceptions on human trafficking changed in the years after World War II. International acknowledgement of human trafficking as a grave human rights violation resulted from the growth of human rights movements. A determined attempt to address human trafficking on a worldwide level was reflected in the establishment of international frameworks, such as the Palermo Protocol, which was signed in 2000. In keeping with worldwide efforts, Bangladesh passed a number of laws to combat human trafficking; yet, because of institutional corruption, a lack of funding, and the sheer magnitude of the issue, these laws have often been poorly implemented. The trafficking of women and children from Bangladesh has increased since the 1950s, especially to India, the Middle East, and Pakistan. The growing financial abuse of women in sexual slavery and the need for women for horse races, especially in the region of the Middle East, have been major contributors to the growth of human trafficking. These tactics have become more complex over time, with traffickers using a variety of strategies to transport women and children away from Bangladesh, such as phoney employment promises, coercion, and kidnappings. As international criminal networks took use of contemporary technological and interpersonal systems to aid in the trafficking process, the problem of human trafficking escalated to concerning levels in the twenty-first century. This has made it possible for traffickers to create more intricate and secret channels for moving people across international boundaries. Because organised crime has become more prevalent both domestically and globally, it is increasingly difficult to destroy trafficking networks. The issue still exists and is becoming worse in spite of the government of Bangladesh's attempts to combat human trafficking via legislative changes.

Bangladesh continues to be one of the major countries from which abducted women and children are transported, with many of them becoming victims of forced labour, domestic slavery, and sexual exploitation in other nations, especially in Pakistan, India, and the countries of the Middle

East. Many local, national, and global organisations are involved in the trafficking networks, which are often well-established. Additionally, the rebuilding of trafficked individuals into society is still hampered by inadequate victim care and rehabilitation programs, placing many survivors at risk of exploitation and re-trafficking.

In summary, Bangladesh's history of human trafficking is a multifaceted saga spanning many centuries, intricately linked to the nation's colonial past, socioeconomic hardships, and ongoing violence against women and children. The history of Bangladesh shows how deeply ingrained this problem is, from the impact of slavery to contemporary trafficking networks. Notwithstanding national and international efforts to stop human trafficking, the issue persists and presents serious obstacles to the nation's social, legal, and economic structures. To successfully fight trafficking in Bangladesh, a comprehensive and multifaceted strategy is needed, with an emphasis on victim care, legislative changes, and regional collaboration.

2.2 Trafficking Targets:

Traffickers' main targets are varied and mostly include weak and marginalised segments of society. These include children from low-income families, young girls, single mothers, domestic employees, women who have been dumped by their spouses, displaced people, squatters, women who work in the garment industry, and teens. Suburban street children are especially at risk and are often the targets of laid out child trafficking gangs. Despite making up a lesser share of the overall trafficking volume, males are also targeted, usually via schemes for exploitative labour migration. This broad targeting is a reflection of the traffickers' intentional concentration on those who have little money and social protection, making them ideal targets for abuse.

(UNODC, 2019)



No.	Woman	Children
1	Widow	Orphan
2	Divorced	Broken Family
3	Deprived of social recognition	Deprived of social recognition
4	Not beautiful	Absconding from home
5	Suppressed by husband	Tortured by step parents

(Bank, 2002)

2.3 The Actors Behind Human Trafficking:

Human trafficking is a sinister enterprise that thrives on a multifaceted hierarchy, ranging from small-scale, unstructured relationships to highly organized, transnational networks that function with unnerving professionalism. These operations exist at different scales and levels of complexity, as described below:

At one end of the spectrum are informal, familial alliances that extend across geographic and cultural borders. These systems often arise within close-knit clans, kinship groups, or shared ethnic communities, where trust and familiarity become tools of exploitation. These loosely organized circles frequently consist of individuals who leverage personal and familial bonds to lure women into the dark underworld of prostitution networks or illicit brothel economies. In such cases, migrants, particularly those with connections to their home communities, manipulate their relationships to recruit vulnerable women. The movement of these victims is often piecemeal—a small number transported strategically across borders or regions as dictated by demand.

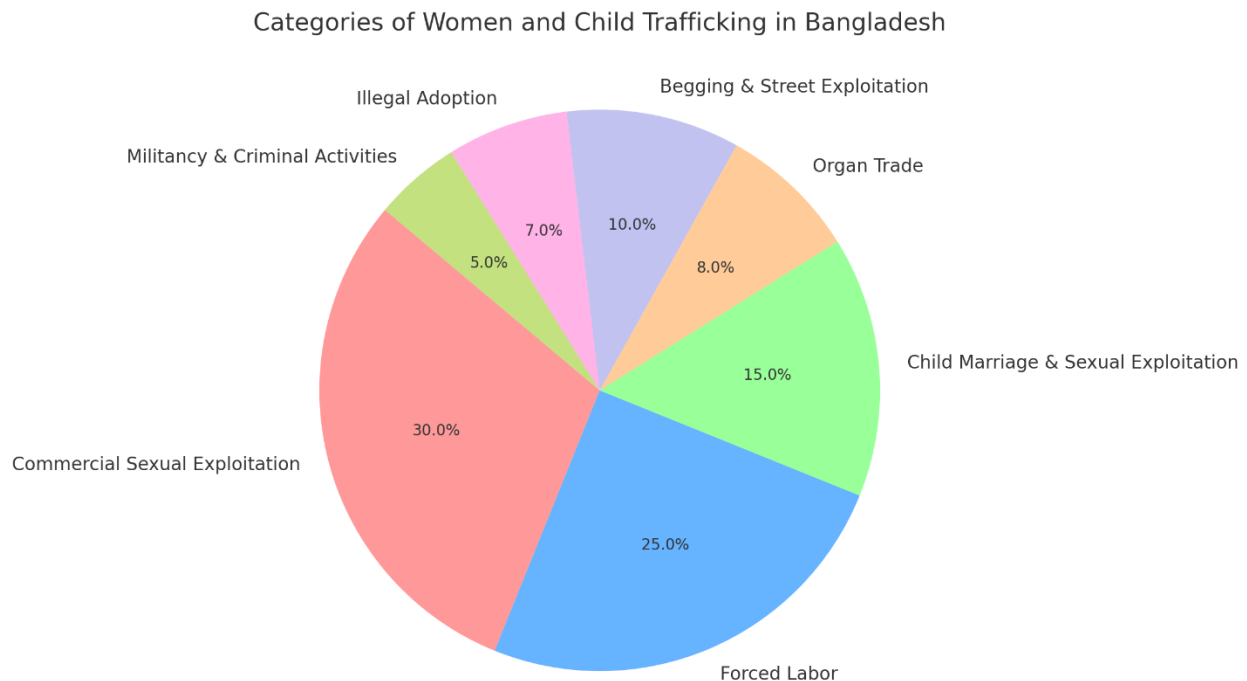
In stark contrast, there exist rigidly structured, multinational criminal syndicates that dominate every aspect of the trafficking process with precision and brutality. These large organizations function like a corporate enterprise, establishing distinct divisions and operational units disguised as legitimate businesses. For instance, they maintain fabricated offices such as “employment bureaus,” “document procurement centers,” “transport logistics hubs,” and “victim oversight departments.” Their operations exude an air of disturbing efficiency, and victims are dehumanized, reduced to mere merchandise or commodities to be exchanged or sold for profit. Drawing haunting parallels to the barbaric slave trades of earlier centuries, these traffickers often impose extreme violence and psychological torment to assert control and maintain compliance.

Furthermore, another layer of trafficking involves criminal distribution networks—a link between traffickers and local exploiters in different regions. These intermediaries are akin to “wholesalers” or “suppliers,” responsible for acquiring victims in one location and selling them to smaller, localized groups in other cities or countries. On arrival, victims are handed over to “retailers,” who manage and supervise neighborhood prostitution markets or illicit sex economies. This model mirrors a supply chain, where individuals are continually cycled through

exploitative systems. Victims may remain trapped within the same network indefinitely or be resold—over and over again—to new brothels, criminal groups, or entirely different markets in distant cities and foreign nations.

The meticulous orchestration of these trafficking rings reveals an industry fueled by greed and systemic cruelty. Whether through intimate family-based deception or large-scale corporate-like criminality, every tier of human trafficking reflects a deeply entrenched disregard for human dignity. The traffickers, treating victims as exploitable assets, blur the boundaries between organized business efficiency and the inhumanity of modern-day slavery.

2.4 Species of Women and Children Trafficking:



1) Commercial Sexual Exploitation Trafficking:

This kind of trafficking, which includes coercing women and children into the sex trade, is the most common in Bangladesh.

1. **Prostitution and Brothels:** Within Bangladesh and across borders to neighbouring countries including India, Pakistan, and Middle Eastern countries, women and girls, often underage, are trafficked into brothels. Traffickers use false promises of marriage, work, or better lifestyles to entice victims, who are then forced into sexual slavery.

2. **Street Prostitution and Hotels:** A large number of victims of human trafficking are compelled to labour in secret or uncontrolled locations, such hotels, private homes, or the streets. Children are often more susceptible to this kind of exploitation, particularly females.
3. **Online exploitation:** As technology advances, victims are increasingly trafficked for cybersex and other online sexual exploitation, where the material is disseminated throughout the world.

2) **Forced Labour Trafficking:**

Traffickers' subject women and children to cruel working conditions in a variety of businesses.

- 1) **Domestic Work:** Women and girls are trafficked to work as domestic assistants in homes both domestically and overseas, especially those from low-income families. Numerous people experience assault, abuse, and unemployment.
- 2) **Informal Labour in the textile Sector:** One of Bangladesh's biggest sectors, the textile sector often uses trafficked people for low-wage or unpaid labour. Trafficked people are also exploited by unofficial industries such tiny factories, building sites, and brick kilns.
- 3) **Agriculture and Fisheries:** Children are sometimes compelled to labour in fishing villages, where they put up with long hours and dangerous working conditions. In rural agriculture, women may also be exploited.

Forced labour is a common practice among women and children who are trafficked to the Middle East, Southeast Asia, or Europe under false pretences of work. Recruiting firms often serve as middlemen, tricking victims with fictitious contracts.

3. **Child marriage and sexual exploitation trafficking:**

Traffickers take advantage of the cultural and economic problem of underage marriage in Bangladesh.

- 1) **Dowry and Financial Hardship:** In an attempt to alleviate their financial difficulties, impoverished families are tricked into marrying off their minor daughters to traffickers or foreign males. These females are often enslaved and sexually exploited.

- 2) **False Marriages:** Traffickers may marry young girls under false pretences, only to sell them into forced labour or prostitution after the marriage. This is especially prevalent internationally, since the victims are sent to other nations to be exploited.

4. **Organ Trafficking:**

In Bangladesh, organ trafficking is a new but extremely dangerous kind of trafficking.

Traffickers offer substantial amounts of money in return for organ donations from vulnerable people, often women and children from rural and underdeveloped areas. Many victims undergo risky, unlawful operations, and victims may not fully comprehend the repercussions.

In order to sell their organs—such as kidneys—in illicit marketplaces overseas, children are often trafficked for organ harvesting. This is a very risky technique that often leaves victims with permanent health issues or even death.

5. **Trafficking for Street Exploitation and Begging:**

Children and women are often trafficked to use as instruments for networks of organised begging.

- 1) **Street Begging:** Children are trafficked and made to beg on the streets, especially those who are disabled or injured. Sometimes, traffickers purposefully harm or maim youngsters in order to gain sympathy and boost their profits.
- 2) **Exploitation in Public Places:** Women may also be used to collect money for traffickers in public places like marketplaces, where they are continuously watched and mistreated.

6. **Illicit Adoption Trafficking:**

This kind of trafficking often takes advantage of low-income families and targets newborns and young children. Traffickers use the promise of better lifestyles or educational possibilities to persuade families to give up their children. These children are sold to childless couples or illegally adopted by people, sometimes across international lines, where they may be subjected to further cruelty or exploitation.

7. Trafficking in Criminal Activities and Militancy:

To be employed in militant operations or organised crime, some women and children are trafficked.

❖ **Child Soldiers and Militancy:** Criminal gangs and extremist organisations enlist children, especially boys, under duress and use them as labourers, informants, or child soldiers.

Women and children may also be trafficked to serve as couriers in the cross-border smuggling of firearms, narcotics, and other illicit products.

The trafficking of women and children in Bangladesh involves a variety of exploitative tactics that deprive victims of their freedom, safety, and dignity. In order to commit crimes like forced labor, child marriage, sexual exploitation, or organ trafficking, traffickers take advantage of institutional flaws, societal injustices, and economic need. The core causes of human trafficking must be addressed, laws must be strengthened, border security must be improved, and vulnerable populations must be made more aware.

CHAPTER III

BLUEPRINT

Trafficking is a worldwide, complicated and distinct criminal phenomenon that includes numerous components as specified in the UN definitions that are described later. Before moving on to analyse the legal definitions, it is vital to comprehend the real structure and component elements of overall crime itself in particular to grasp the nature of it and to build effective counter-measures. When defining the trafficking cycle three distinct phases are often highlighted, the recruiting phase, the transit stage and the intended location phase. It needs to be stated that in fact these stages are partly overlapping, and contemporaneous. Also, one particular trafficking instance may have multiple transit and destination stages, since victims are regularly re-trafficked. Conversely, certain situations may have no transit phase altogether.

The following explains the core causes of trafficking, with special attention on gender equality, in recognition of the reality that the trafficking crime predominantly impacts female victims. Moreover, the three stages of the trafficking process, i.e. the recruiting, transportation and target phases are discussed in greater depth:



3.1 Hunting Phase:

In order to include prospective victims into their trafficking networks, traffickers methodically find and trap them during this first step. The word "recruitment" refers to a wide variety of exploitative practices, such as coercion, kidnapping, deception, and manipulation, all of which are intended to get people for forced labor, sexual exploitation, or other types of maltreatment. From tiny, individual recruiters to highly structured trafficking syndicates, traffickers use a wide range of tactics that differ depending on their organizational hierarchies.

In order to get susceptible people, traffickers often take use of unofficial social networks, including friends, family, and community ties. For example, promises of work, education, marriage, or international travel are often used to target women and children. Advertisements that provide alluring opportunities—like study abroad opportunities, planned marriages, or jobs abroad—are often utilised to draw in gullible victims. Additionally, hiring via organisations that seem to be legitimate—like travel firms, job placement agencies, or educational consultancies—gives traffickers' activities a false sense of legitimacy.

Four main strategies are used to entice women and children into human trafficking:

- ❖ **Abduction and Sale:** One of the harshest and most obvious forms of recruiting is still complete compulsion by abduction. Anecdotal information indicates that it occurs in some rural or border areas, although it is less common in Bangladesh than in other parts of Asia. The outright selling of people, often minors, to traffickers by those in charge of them is a kind of kidnapping. This may include guardians, family members, or administrators of orphanages who take advantage of the victims' dependence in order to make money.
- ❖ **False Promises of Marriage or Employment:** Traffickers often trick victims by making fictitious claims of planned weddings or respectable job possibilities. People are lured with the idea of getting married and moving overseas, or they are deceived into thinking they would work in respectable occupations like offices, restaurants, or domestic service. These assurances often conceal the brutal reality of exploitation that awaits them at the country of travel.

- ❖ **False Claims of Employment in the Entertainment or Performing Arts:** Some victims are tricked into believing they would be able to pursue jobs in the performing arts, entertainment, or modelling sectors. These lies entice people with promises of wealth and fame, only to ensnare them in exploitative situations like forced prostitution or subpar working conditions.
- ❖ **False Voluntary Agreements:** Although victims are fully aware that they are participating in exploitative activities, they may sometimes seem to agree to trafficking arrangements. They do not, however, realise how much abuse, control, and debt they will encounter. These people are unable to fight or flee their situation because they are the targets of severe manipulation, physical harm, and psychological pressure.

Understanding the dynamics of victimization still depends on the key question of consent: were people coerced, tricked, or misled into becoming victims of human trafficking? Traffickers use the victims' ignorance, trust, or financial need to influence their choices and hide the real motivations behind them. Systemic poverty, ignorance, and sociocultural norms that often make women and children more susceptible to exploitation in Bangladesh further help this recruiting process.

3.2 Transit Phase:

One of the most important stages of human trafficking is the transit stage, during which victims are transferred from one place to another, often under duplicitous and coercive conditions. In the aftermath of the recruiting phase, victims experience a sequence of transfers and relocations, including harbouring, domestic transit, and eventual welcome at intermediate or ultimate sites. The purpose of this stage is to isolate victims and give traffickers more power by severing their connections to their families, communities, and familiar environments.

Victims of extreme human rights abuses, such as physical assault, psychological suffering, and denial of basic necessities, often occur during transit. These abuses may not be widespread, but they are still typical components of the trafficking process. Because traffickers prey on victims' vulnerabilities while in transit, the voyage often exposes victims to further criminal actions, such as exploitation for forced labour, sexual slavery, and even organ trafficking. In order to further

their illegal goals, traffickers often misuse immigration laws. People who are victims—especially those who are not acquainted with overseas travel or legal procedures—are often misled about the need for legal documents like passports or visas. Numerous victims are misled that they do not need travel papers or are assured that they will be issued later. When victims are in possession of legitimate passports, traffickers usually seize them as a control and leverage tactic to guarantee compliance and deter escape. Victims are placed in a vulnerable legal position and their reliance on their traffickers is strengthened by this intentional confiscation.

Crucial members of the trafficking network are the people assigned to transport victims, who are often referred to as "transporters." These middlemen work inside a well-functioning system and often take advantage of legal gaps and weak anti-trafficking legislation in different countries. Law enforcement's structural flaws, such as poor surveillance, a lack of cross-border collaboration, and corruption, enable their operations. During this stage, law enforcement officials must be very vigilant in order to catch traffickers and locate possible victims. Transit-related information has to be carefully examined to identify anomalies, such as unreported travel, forged documentation, or questionable travel trends. Inaction during this crucial time frame enables traffickers to keep their victims under control and continue to take advantage of them.

Particularly at risk are victims who are in unusual or illegal situations. It is less likely that they will seek protection from law enforcement or government institutions because of their uncertain legal status, which is often arranged by traffickers. They continue to be exploited because of this lack of trust, which is a result of their fear of criminal charges, deportation, or revenge. Due to their lack of documentation or apparent involvement in illegal migration, women who are transported across borders, for example, could be reluctant to report abuse.

It is crucial to recognise that not every victim is seized by force. Prompted by promises of a brighter future, social pressures, or financial difficulties, some women voluntarily leave their families. Traffickers, however, often take advantage of this voluntary movement by disguising their illegal goals with false promises of marriage, work, or educated children. Consequently, even though these people had the freedom to move in the first place, they end themselves imprisoned in exploitative circumstances. It would be a major misjudgment to assume that all illegal migrants are participating in human trafficking, as many are really innocent victims of a complex and cruel system.

Conclusively, the transit step is a crucial part of the trafficking process, characterised by exploitation, coercion, and deceit. For law enforcement, border control organisations, and international organisations to effectively intervene during this period, trafficking networks must be dismantled and vulnerable persons must be protected. Strengthened oversight, legislative changes, and victim-centered strategies are necessary to address the intricacies of the transportation phase and protect the rights of vulnerable women and children.

3.3 Final Phase:

The targeted victim exploitation that drives the traffickers is realised during the Final Phase, which signifies the completion of the trafficking process. At this point, people are severely victimised and often kept in circumstances that are similar to slavery in the current day.

Victims—especially women and children—are compelled to work in the commercial sex industry or are exploited in industries including sweatshops, manufacturing, domestic slavery, and agriculture. These people are deprived of their fundamental human rights and forced to labour long hours in cruel, demeaning, and abusive conditions. The misery of victims of forced labour is sometimes exacerbated by extra victimisation, such as physical and sexual assault.

Trafficked people are accepted into their target nations via three main ways, each of which takes advantage of flaws in border security and immigration laws:

1) False or Stolen Documents:

Identity documents that have been stolen or altered are used to carry victims across borders. They might be carried on foot via dangerous and unauthorised ways, in cargo containers, boats, marches, ferries, or concealed compartments of automobiles. By using these techniques, traffickers are able to effectively transport victims to their desired locations while avoiding detection at border checks.

2) Falsified Records:

This technique entails entering a target nation using completely fabricated papers. These consist of falsified documents that mislead the traveler's identity and intent, counterfeit IDs, or fake passports. These passports are often used by traffickers to get around immigration procedures and make victims seem like authorised tourists.

3) Using Real Documents Fraudulently:

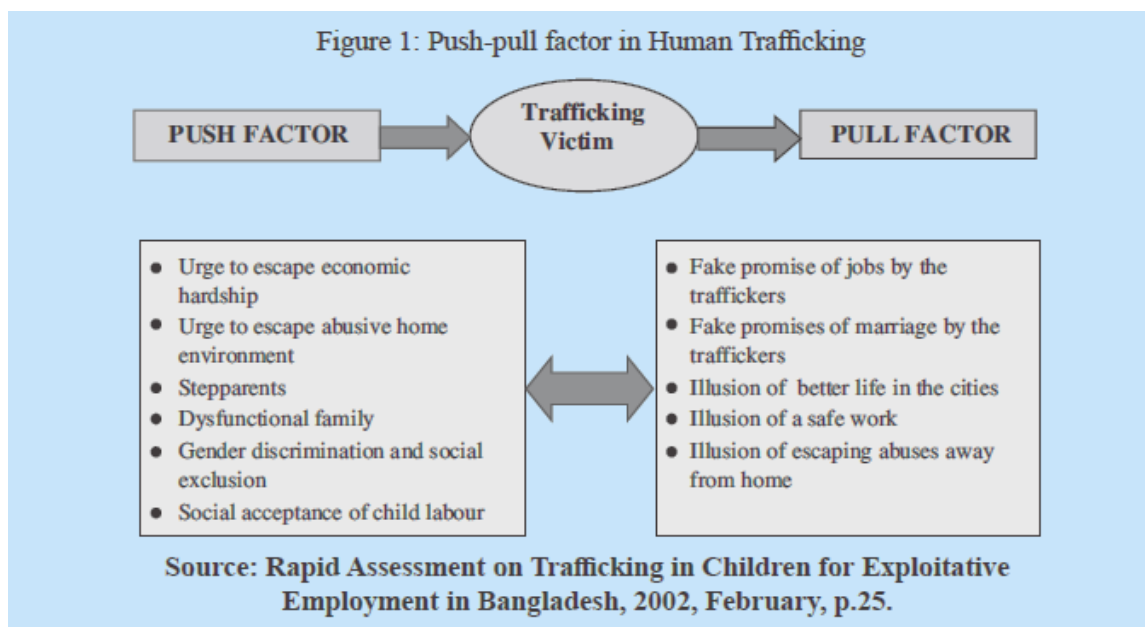
In this case, legitimate papers are falsified or mishandled in order to allow illegal admission. For example, traffickers use false pretences to get valid passports or visas, such as spousal, student, or tourist visas. During immigration screening, victims may be told to purposefully lie about their trip intentions, stating that they are entering for legitimate purposes like tourism, school, marriage, or work. They are deprived of their freedom and compelled to live in exploitative circumstances once they arrive in the target nation.

At this point, the trafficker uses border control and immigration processes to further their goals. Victims are often unaware that they are about to be exploited or are forced to cooperate by desperation, threats, or false promises. Once they reach their destination, they are abused physically, emotionally, and psychologically, cut off from support networks, and denied legal safeguards.

The Final Phase emphasises how human trafficking operations are deliberate and methodical, progressively erasing victims' identities, autonomy, and dignity. To stop traffickers from taking advantage of legal gaps in immigration systems, this phase calls for better border control procedures, enhanced fraud detection, and strong international collaboration.

3.4 Push & Pull Elements:

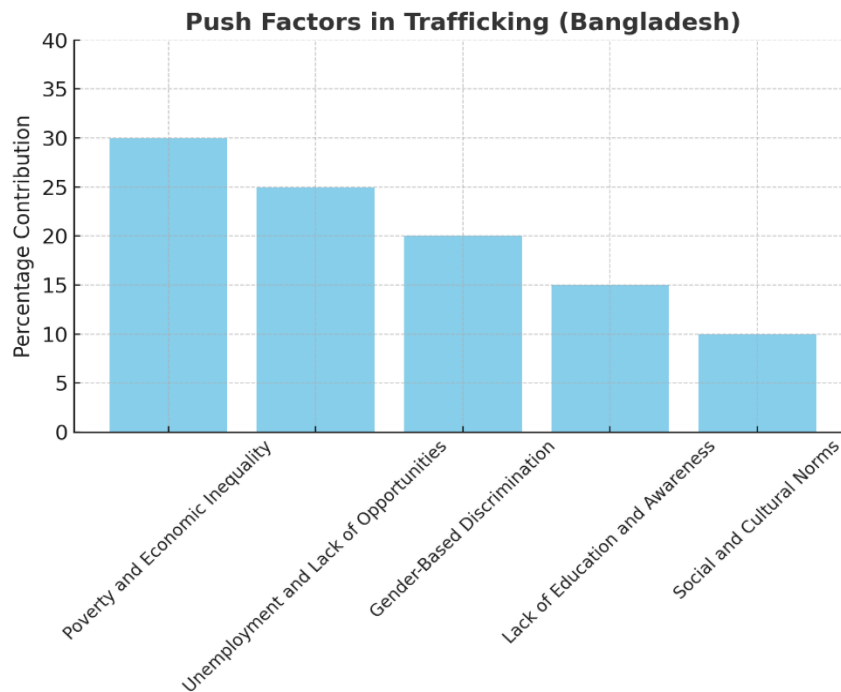
To comprehensively understand the complex dynamics of human trafficking, especially the trafficking of women and children in Bangladesh, the application of the "Push and Pull" framework is critical. Trafficking is not merely a crime of opportunity but a systematic result of various socio-economic and political forces that compel individuals to migrate or leave their homes, only to fall prey to exploitation. The 'Push and Pull' concept offers an insightful lens into the factors that propel individuals into vulnerability and those that attract them toward abusive conditions, often leading to their victimization.



(Ahsan, 2022)

Push Elements:

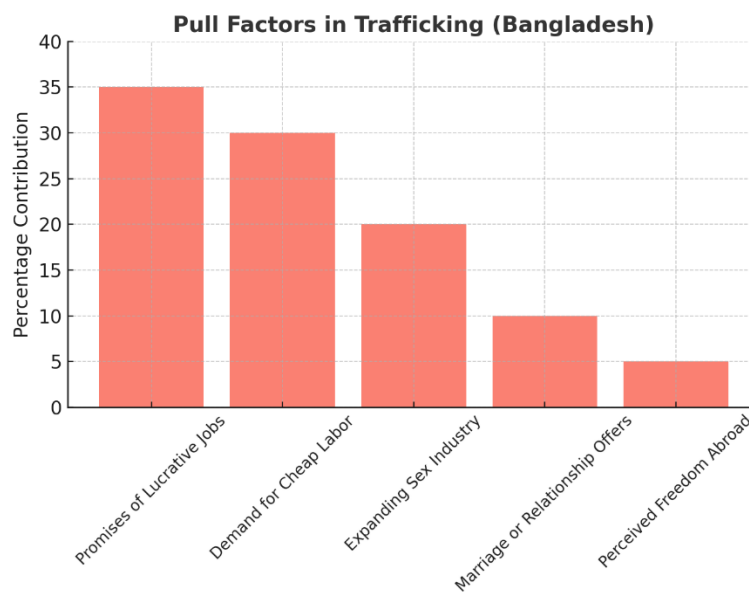
Push elements are the conditions within a source country that force individuals to leave their homes due to systemic hardships, limited opportunities, and socio-political instability. In the context of Bangladesh, these factors include widespread poverty, extreme economic inequality, unemployment, and a lack of accessible education, particularly for women and children. The prevailing lack of economic opportunity creates an environment where many individuals, particularly women and marginalized children, are left with few alternatives but to search for opportunities elsewhere, often without a clear understanding of the risks involved.



Additionally, societal and cultural discrimination, deeply embedded in Bangladesh's social fabric, exacerbates the vulnerability of women and children. Gender-based violence, early marriage, and a lack of empowerment for women are pervasive challenges that drive many to seek alternatives outside the country. Furthermore, the absence of social safety nets and the inadequate support systems for victims of abuse make it difficult for those affected by such circumstances to break free from the cycle of vulnerability. These pervasive push factors combine to create a ready pool of individuals ripe for exploitation by traffickers, who prey upon their desperation and lack of awareness.

Pull Elements:

In contrast, pull factors are the deceptive attractions that traffickers use to lure victims into the cycle of exploitation. These factors typically involve the false promises of a better life, economic prosperity, or personal freedom, which are often framed as opportunities for upward mobility in wealthier countries. Traffickers exploit the aspirational desires of women and children, offering fabricated opportunities for employment, education, or marriage abroad. Countries such as India, the Middle East, and Western nations present themselves as havens for economic prosperity and personal freedom, offering lucrative jobs or social opportunities, which are often manipulated by traffickers to draw victims into their schemes.



However, once the victims are ensnared in these deceitful promises, they quickly realize the grim reality of their situation. The demand for cheap labor in various sectors, including domestic work, construction, and sex industries, drives the trafficking networks. Traffickers capitalize on the persistent demand for low-cost labor and sexual exploitation in these destination countries, creating a market for their illicit services. These pull factors serve as the bait that traffickers use to manipulate the aspirations and hopes of vulnerable individuals, only to trap them in abusive conditions once they arrive at their destination.

3.5 Interconnection of Push and Pull Factors:

The interaction between push and pull factors forms a devastating cycle of exploitation. The socio-economic despair and gender inequality in Bangladesh push individuals to seek opportunities in foreign lands. Yet, the deceptive pull factors created by traffickers lead them to exploitative conditions in countries where they are promised better lives but are instead subjected to physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. This interconnection creates a complex ecosystem where individuals are both pushed by their circumstances and pulled by the promises of traffickers, resulting in a situation where the victims are often powerless to escape the cycle of abuse.

Traffickers, driven by financial greed, operate within this framework by exploiting both the desperation of those pushed by poverty and social inequality and the economic opportunities presented by pull factors in destination countries. Organized criminal syndicates thrive in this environment, capitalizing on the intersection of these factors to maximize profits by exploiting human lives. These criminal networks control the trafficking process, from recruitment and transportation to the exploitation of victims, generating substantial profits at the expense of human dignity.

3.6 Trafficking Statistics in Bangladesh:

The majority of trafficked women and children in Bangladesh are used for forced labour and sexual exploitation. The government of Bangladesh said that 443 minors were among the 1,111 victims that were identified in 2020. It is 160. However, between 2018 and 2020, the authorities apprehended and imprisoned 235 traffickers. A minimum of three years in prison was imposed on these traffickers, and several of them were given life sentences. According to UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women), research shows that about 300,000 Bangladeshi children have been trafficked to Indian brothels. It's 162. Only 4,700 of the 13,220 children who were taken out of Bangladesh for human trafficking in prior years were successfully retrieved, according to the report. A total of 123 Approximately 4,500 women and babies are reportedly transported to Pakistan annually for trafficking-related purposes. (Ullah 2024)

In a similar spirit, a 2023 research by Nasrin Khandaker also shows that 13,220 juveniles were expelled from Bangladesh during the previous five years. In India, however, there are an estimated 300,000 young Bangladeshis working in brothels.¹⁶⁶ Approximately 200,000 Bangladeshi children are employed in Pakistani brothels, and 4,500 women and children were trafficked into Pakistan. (Khandaker, 2023)

Period	No of Victims Trafficked			No of Persons Arrested	No of Persons Convicted
	Male	Female	Child		
2013	916	319	118	233	
2014	2316	354	236	807	13
2015	1218	327	188	1540	4
2016	365	283	122	1361	3
2017	382	259	129	1594	1
2018 up to June	118	96	42	571	
Total	5367	1138	535	6106	25

Source: Bangladesh Police

(World Day Against Trafficking in Persons: Bangladesh failing to take strong measures against human trafficking, 2018)

The graphic gives a detailed picture of the patterns of human trafficking in Bangladesh between 2013 and June 2018. It illustrates the number of people arrested and convicted in the same years and divides trafficking victims into three categories: men, females, and children. A close look into the data shows that women and children are among the most vulnerable groups, with high rates of trafficking that vary during the period of time that has been documented.

Although the number of female victims is less than that of male victims, human trafficking is still very common. 319 women were trafficked in 2013, while 354 instances were recorded in 2014, the highest number to date. This rise indicates vulnerabilities made worse by socioeconomic conditions and highlights a crucial moment in the nation's trafficking epidemic.

Even though the numbers started to drop starting in 2015 (327 in 2015, 283 in 2016, and 259 in 2017), the problem remained and women were still being targeted. The number of female victims fell precipitously to 96 by 2018 (till June), which might be a sign of either a real increase in anti-trafficking efforts or a potential underreporting of instances.

In Bangladesh, child trafficking too represents an alarming reality. A surge in child trafficking occurred in 2014, when the number of trafficked children almost quadrupled to 236 from 118 in 2013. Due to a confluence of organised crime networks, poverty, and socioeconomic fragility, children were especially vulnerable during this rise. Even while the numbers started to drop in the following years—188 in 2015, 122 in 2016, and 129 in 2017—they are still alarmingly high considering the severe abuse and exploitation that young victims endure. Similar to the pattern seen among women, the number of trafficked children decreased dramatically to 42 in 2018 (up to June). This steep drop might indicate better intervention techniques or a diminished ability to report and gather data.

The graph illustrates the seriousness of human trafficking, but it also highlights serious flaws in Bangladesh's legal and law enforcement structures. According to the statistics, conviction rates are still very low even if there are a lot of arrests made year. For example, just four convictions were obtained in 2015 despite 1,540 people being detained by police in relation to trafficking cases. Other years, like 2014, show a similar discrepancy, with 807 arrests leading to only 13 convictions. The inability to convert arrests into convictions reveals a serious weakness in the legal system, even in years when arrests were noticeably high. Although 6,106 people were arrested throughout the five and a half-year period, just 25 of them were found guilty. This suggests difficulties with gathering evidence, conducting investigations, and pursuing legal action, all of which work against attempts to hold traffickers responsible. The information presents a worrisome picture of the nation's structural weaknesses. Due to socioeconomic issues in Bangladesh, including pervasive poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy, women and children are still being trafficked. Trafficking thrives in an atmosphere that is fuelled by push elements like economic misery and pull ones like false promises of improved living circumstances or work. Children suffer a similar fate, often being trafficked for cheap labour, domestic slavery, or exploitation in the growing sex industry, while women are frequently enticed into false

employment promises, pushed into forced marriages, or locked in exploitative labour and sexual servitude.

Although there is some optimism due to the drop in trafficking cases recorded by 2018, Bangladesh's judicial and enforcement institutions urgently need to be reformed given the consistently low conviction rates. To solve the problem, it is still imperative to build strong legislative frameworks, ensure effective prosecution, and strengthen investigative processes. Furthermore, in order to end the trafficking cycle, specific regulatory measures, improved protection systems, and socioeconomic interventions are required due to the structural vulnerabilities of women and children. In the end, the graph emphasises that while there may have been advancements in certain sectors, Bangladesh's fight against human trafficking is still ongoing. Since women and children are the most vulnerable, they continue to suffer the most from this crisis, which calls for ongoing national and international initiatives.

"The Human Trafficking Deterrence and Suppression Act, 2012," a blatant anti-trafficking legislation, was approved by the Bangladeshi government, leading to an increase in investigations and convictions. The illegal recruitment of labour migrants is not expressly prohibited by this Act, but it does require businesses to be aware that the individuals they hire may be subjected to forced labour. In general, this Act forbids and penalises human trafficking in all its manifestations. The recommended punishments for labour trafficking violations include a minimum fine of \$600 and 5–12 years in prison. The suggested sentences for sexual trafficking violations are death and five to twelve years in jail. These punishments are equivalent to and just as severe as those for other heinous crimes, such as rape. The Repression of Women and Children Act of 2000, which was amended in 2003, forbade the unlawful trafficking of women and children for the purposes of forced labour or sex slavery; this new legislation replaces it.

Period	No. of victims trafficked			No. of persons arrested	No. of persons convicted
	Male	Female	Child		
2013	916	319	118	233	13
2014	2316	354	236	807	4
2015	1218	327	188	1540	3
2016	365	283	122	13	1
2017	382	259	129	1594	1
2018 Up to June	118	96	42	517	
Total	5367	1138	535	6106	25

(Chowdhury, 2019)

CHAPTER IV
STATUTORY MEASURES TO CURB WOMEN AND CHILDREN
TRAFFICKING IN BANGLADESH

4.1 National Legal Safeguards:

4.1.1 The Constitution of Bangladesh:

The Constitution of Bangladesh serves as the supreme law of the land, ensuring the protection, dignity, and fundamental rights of all its citizens, while establishing a legal framework that promotes justice, equality, and fairness. It reflects the commitment of the State to safeguard its inhabitants from exploitation, abuse, and all forms of injustice, including human trafficking, particularly targeting vulnerable groups such as women and children.

At its core, the Constitution mandates that Bangladesh shall be a society governed by the rule of law. This principle ensures that every action of the government and its institutions must comply with the legal norms and guarantees that no individual or entity is above the law. By embedding fundamental human rights as inviolable principles, the Constitution establishes a legal shield to protect individuals from abuse, discrimination, and injustice. It reinforces the values of fairness and equality, prohibiting any form of exploitation, coercion, or discrimination that could infringe upon the rights of individuals, particularly the marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

A particularly significant provision in the context of combating trafficking is Article 28 of the Constitution. This article explicitly empowers the government to undertake special measures for the advancement and protection of women and children. Recognizing the vulnerabilities faced by these groups, Article 28 allows the State to implement laws, policies, and programs that address systemic inequalities and safeguard women and children from exploitation, abuse, and trafficking. The provision not only highlights the prioritization of women's and children's rights but also creates a constitutional obligation for the State to intervene proactively to protect their interests and ensure their well-being. Furthermore, Article 34 of the Constitution explicitly prohibits all forms of forced labor, which is a common consequence of human trafficking. According to this provision, any act of imposing forced labor is deemed illegal, and those violating this provision are subject to criminal prosecution. Forced labor, often a hallmark of human trafficking, traps victims—particularly women and children—into domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, hazardous labor, or other exploitative situations. Article 34 serves as a vital constitutional safeguard to prevent such forms of exploitation and ensure that every individual's right to dignity and freedom is upheld.

In addition to protecting against forced labor, Article 35 of the Constitution strengthens the rights of individuals by prohibiting torture, cruel, or inhumane treatment. It states that no individual, under any circumstances, may be subjected to torture, degrading treatment, or physical or mental abuse. This provision is particularly relevant in the context of human trafficking, where victims are often subjected to extreme violence, abuse, and torture during their exploitation or captivity. Article 35 ensures that such inhumane practices are treated as gross violations of constitutional rights and that those responsible for such acts can be held accountable under the law.

Together, these constitutional provisions—Articles 28, 34, and 35—create a legal foundation for addressing the issue of human trafficking in Bangladesh. They provide the State with the authority to enact measures that specifically target the exploitation of women and children, prohibit forced labor, and prevent torture and inhumane treatment. While the Constitution lays down these fundamental safeguards, the challenge lies in their effective implementation. The State, through its legislative and enforcement mechanisms, is constitutionally bound to uphold these protections and ensure that the rights of vulnerable individuals, particularly women and children, are fully realized in practice.

4.1.2 The Penal Code, 1860:

The Penal Code of 1860, a historic and foundational legal instrument in Bangladesh, does not explicitly address the trafficking and exploitation of women and children as a standalone issue. However, it contains several provisions that can be effectively applied to combat associated offenses, such as enslavement, child abduction, forced labor, illegal confinement, and other forms of exploitation that are intrinsic to trafficking. These provisions are vital tools for penalizing acts that align with the broader definition of human trafficking and associated crimes.

Section 364A of the Penal Code stipulates that anyone who abducts a child under the age of ten with the intent to enslave the victim or subject them to the lust of another individual can be punished with the death penalty or rigorous imprisonment for up to fourteen years. This provision is particularly relevant when minors are abducted for sexual exploitation, labor, or other forms of abuse, which are common patterns observed in trafficking cases.

Similarly, Section 367 addresses abduction and kidnapping with the intent to cause grievous harm, enslavement, or subject the victim to unnatural lust. Offenders under this section may face imprisonment for up to ten years and may also be liable to a fine. This provision serves as an important deterrent to those who intend to exploit women and children for inhumane purposes.

In Section 370, the Penal Code addresses the offenses of exporting, importing, purchasing, or selling individuals for the purpose of slavery. Such acts are punishable by imprisonment for a term that may extend to seven years, accompanied by a fine. Although this section does not specifically mention trafficking, its broad phrasing makes it applicable to various forms of human trade and exploitation, thereby supporting efforts to curb trafficking activities.

Furthermore, Sections 366A and 366B provide legal safeguards specifically aimed at protecting women and young girls from sexual exploitation. Section 366A criminalizes any act of forcing, compelling, or persuading a woman under eighteen years of age to engage in illicit sexual activity with another person. Offenders may face up to ten years of imprisonment along with monetary fines. Complementing this, Section 366B targets cross-border trafficking, stipulating that anyone who imports a female under the age of twenty-one into Bangladesh for the purpose of coercing, enticing, or compelling her to engage in unlawful intercourse shall face imprisonment for up to ten years and be liable to a fine.

Together, these provisions of the Penal Code serve as a critical, albeit limited, legal framework to address various facets of trafficking. While they do not comprehensively target human trafficking as a distinct crime, their applicability to acts such as abduction, forced labor, sexual exploitation, and slavery demonstrates their relevance in addressing such heinous activities. However, these

sections also highlight a significant limitation: the lack of a unified and specific anti-trafficking provision tailored to modern forms of trafficking, particularly those targeting vulnerable women and children. This gap necessitates the development and implementation of more robust and specialized legal measures to effectively combat trafficking in contemporary Bangladesh.

4.1.3 The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012:

Bangladesh took a significant step toward combating human trafficking by enacting its comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation titled “The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012”. This Act addresses various forms of trafficking, including labor and sexual exploitation, and provides stringent legal measures to prohibit such practices, punish offenders, and protect victims. It reflects Bangladesh's commitment to fulfilling its international obligations under instruments such as the United Nations Palermo Protocol. The Act contains robust punitive provisions, ensuring that trafficking-related crimes are met with severe consequences. Section 6 of the legislation prescribes heavy penalties, including lifetime imprisonment or a minimum of five years' imprisonment coupled with a monetary fine of fifty thousand taka for offenses involving human smuggling. Section 7 imposes even harsher punishments when the crime is committed jointly by multiple perpetrators. It states that offenders may face a death sentence, life imprisonment, or a minimum of seven years' incarceration alongside a cash penalty of fifty thousand taka. This section is particularly significant in targeting organized trafficking networks

that often operate in a collaborative manner. Additionally, Section 9 of the Act categorically criminalizes both sexual exploitation and labor trafficking. It stipulates that offenders involved in these forms of trafficking face imprisonment for up to twelve years or a minimum of five years, coupled with a cash fine of fifty thousand taka. Forced or coerced prostitution, another grave offense addressed by the Act, is covered under Section 11. This section mandates a punishment of seven years' imprisonment or at least five years' incarceration along with a monetary penalty of fifty thousand taka.

Recognizing the need for expeditious judicial proceedings in trafficking cases, the Act establishes “The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Tribunal” under Chapter IV. This specialized tribunal is designed to ensure swift trials and justice for victims, holding perpetrators accountable within a shorter timeframe. The creation of such a tribunal underscores the government’s acknowledgment of the complexities of trafficking cases and the need for a targeted legal framework to tackle them efficiently.

In addition to punitive measures, the Act emphasizes victim protection and rehabilitation, reflecting a victim-centric approach. Sections 42, 43, and 46 of the Act collectively introduce a multi-faceted mechanism for ensuring justice, punishing traffickers, and safeguarding victims and their families. These provisions gave rise to three critical regulatory frameworks that further operationalize the Act's objectives: “The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Rules, 2017,” “The Human Trafficking Prevention Fund Rules, 2017,” and the “National Anti-Human-Trafficking Authority Rules, 2017.” These regulations form a cohesive system for enforcing anti-trafficking measures while also providing financial and institutional support for victim rehabilitation and preventive efforts.

The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Rules, 2017 outlines detailed procedures for implementing the Act, ensuring clarity and consistency in legal proceedings. The Human Trafficking Prevention Fund Rules, 2017 establishes a financial mechanism to support victims of trafficking, fund rehabilitation programs, and facilitate awareness initiatives. Additionally, the National Anti-Human-Trafficking Authority Rules, 2017 provides a regulatory framework for coordinating anti-trafficking efforts across various governmental and non-governmental bodies, ensuring a unified response to this pervasive issue. Overall, The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012 stands as a landmark legal instrument in Bangladesh's fight against human trafficking. It combines stringent punishments, specialized judicial mechanisms, and protective measures to deter traffickers and provide justice for victims. By addressing both labor and sex trafficking and introducing systemic reforms, the Act strives to create a safer environment for vulnerable individuals, particularly women and children, who are often the primary targets of trafficking networks.

4.2 International Legal Safeguards:

4.2.1 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women - CEDAW, 1979:

In order to eradicate gender-based discrimination and advance equality for women in all spheres of life, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is a crucial piece of international legislation. In order to prevent the trafficking of women and children, CEDAW is essential since it requires state parties to take proactive steps to end all types of trafficking, including prostitute exploitation. Through the treaty, nations are required to set up strong institutions and legal frameworks that not only stop human trafficking but also help and support victims, especially women and children who are at risk of being exploited.

The emphasis that CEDAW places on tackling the underlying causes of trafficking, such as poverty, illiteracy, and economic injustice, is a crucial part of its strategy. To lessen the conditions that allow trafficking networks to thrive, CEDAW prioritises gender equality and the elimination of these socioeconomic inequalities. In addition, the agreement promotes the development of laws and regulations that provide women and girls protection against human trafficking while guaranteeing survivors' access to the support networks they need.

CEDAW's continuous monitoring and accountability mechanism is among its most important features. Regular reports on state parties' implementation of the convention's provisions are necessary to make sure that governments continue to uphold their commitment to protecting women and children. Through these reporting systems, initiatives to stop human trafficking and deal with its effects may be continuously evaluated and developed. In order to prevent human trafficking and to protect the rights and dignity of women and children across the globe, CEDAW is consequently an essential framework.

4.2.2 Forced Labor Convention, 1930:

A pillar of international law dedicated to eradicating all types of coercive or forced employment is the Forced employment Convention, 1930 (No. 29). In the worldwide battle against human trafficking, especially the trafficking of women and children, this pact is essential. The treaty is crucial in tackling a significant aspect of human trafficking as it requires ratifying nations, including Bangladesh, to take proactive steps to outlaw forced work. It requires signatory governments to outlaw forced labour in their territories and defines it broadly to include any circumstance in which people are forced to work under duress or fear of punishment.

Countries that sign the convention are required to enact laws and practices that essentially prohibit forced labour and guarantee that those who violate it suffer severe legal repercussions. This deters trafficking organisations that utilise violence and coercion to take advantage of women and children. The treaty mandates that states protect and assist victims in addition to dealing with those who engage in forced work. Since victims' recovery is a critical first step in ending the cycle of exploitation, this involves making sure they have access to rehabilitation programs and helping them reintegrate into society.

Furthermore, the Forced work Convention highlights the need of global collaboration in combating trafficking and forced work. By working together, nations may reaffirm their commitment to combating these crimes, sharing information, and supporting one another in upholding the terms of the treaty. The agreement offers a robust framework for safeguarding vulnerable groups, especially women and children, from abuse by endorsing state laws and policies that combat human trafficking. This emphasises the common duty of the international community to stop human trafficking and protect the rights and dignity of every person, regardless of gender or age.

4.2.3 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948:

An important component of the international effort to combat human trafficking, especially the trafficking of women and children, is the 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It provides a global framework for addressing human rights abuses by

establishing a set of core human rights criteria that member countries are expected to respect. Targeting the fundamental problem of human trafficking, Article 4 of the UDHR expressly forbids slavery and servitude. By prohibiting these activities, the UDHR denounces human exploitation and enslavement, which are key components of human trafficking.

The UDHR addresses slavery as well as the psychological and bodily suffering that trafficking victims endure. Many victims of human trafficking endure torture and cruel, inhuman, or humiliating treatment or punishment, which are prohibited under Article 5. The UDHR's commitment to preserving human dignity is further reinforced by this clause, which highlights the need of protection against the serious abuse that often accompanies human trafficking.

The right to life, liberty, and security is emphasised in Article 3 of the UDHR, and this is especially important when discussing human trafficking. In order to stop vulnerable people from being exploited and to guarantee that trafficked people are not the targets of violence, intimidation, or coercion, these rights must be protected. Assuring that people's personal safety and wellbeing are given priority, the right to security is closely related to initiatives to protect them from the abuse that is a part of trafficking networks.

Additionally, Article 23 of the UDHR, which protects the right to work in fair and advantageous circumstances, tackles the problem of forced labour, a prevalent component of human trafficking. The significance of ethical labour practices and the right to work without exploitation or coercion are emphasised in this essay. By upholding this right, the UDHR lays the groundwork for addressing the issue of forced labour in human trafficking and promoting policies that shield workers from being pushed into labour situations that infringe against their basic rights.

With these clauses, the UDHR contributes significantly to international efforts to stop human trafficking by providing a moral and legal foundation for countries to create laws and regulations that stop trafficking, safeguard victims, and punish traffickers responsible. It reinforces the global commitment to defend the inherent dignity and equal rights of all people by influencing national law and promoting international collaboration in the continuing fight against human trafficking.

4.3 Statutory Framework for Enforcement Bodies:

4.3.1 Bangladesh Police:

The Bangladesh Police, who are essential in detecting, looking into, and dealing with human trafficking incidents, are primarily in charge of fighting the trafficking of women and children in Bangladesh. They have to hunt down and capture traffickers, rescue victims, and make sure these cases are handled properly. The police have created specialised units, including the Human Trafficking Crime Unit, which is focused on handling trafficking offences exclusively, to improve their efforts. These teams have the resources and experience needed to carry out thorough investigations and react to trafficking operations more effectively.

A crucial element of the police approach is cooperation. In order to exchange intelligence and take coordinated action against trafficking networks, the Bangladesh Police often collaborate with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), regional, national, and international law enforcement authorities. This collaboration makes it possible to tackle the issue in a more thorough and coordinated manner, guaranteeing the identification and capture of traffickers who operate internationally. Law enforcement officers participate in specialised training programs designed to enhance their capability to identify and respond to human trafficking. These programs make sure that police are adequately equipped to manage delicate situations by concentrating on a number of topics, such as victim identification, the legal system, and investigation methods. By interacting with local communities, the police also actively seek to increase public awareness of human trafficking. The goal of police awareness programs is to inform the public about the dangers of human trafficking as well as how to spot and stop it.

In the end, the Bangladesh Police are dedicated to breaking up trafficking networks by going after both the offenders and the infrastructure that makes trafficking possible. They also put victims' safety and wellbeing first, providing assistance and protection to those who have been rescued from human trafficking circumstances. The Bangladesh Police want to make major progress in combating human trafficking and creating a safer environment for women and children who are at risk by implementing these all-encompassing initiatives.

4.3.2 Rapid Action Battalion (RAB):

The Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) plays a pivotal role in combating the trafficking of women and children in Bangladesh. Established in 2004 as a specialized unit within the Bangladesh Police, RAB is known for its swift and efficient operations in addressing a range of serious crimes, including human trafficking. The unit's approach is proactive, focusing on both prevention and intervention. Over the years, RAB has significantly contributed to the fight against human trafficking by conducting routine raids and rescue operations, through which it has rescued over 3,000 victims between 2016 and 2022. These operations, often carried out with precision, have disrupted trafficking networks across the country, leading to the arrest of hundreds of traffickers. For instance, in 2021 alone, RAB apprehended approximately 500 individuals connected to human trafficking activities.

RAB's efforts extend beyond immediate interventions, as it also works collaboratively with international and regional law enforcement agencies to dismantle cross-border trafficking rings. This cooperation has enhanced the effectiveness of their operations, allowing for a more comprehensive approach to human trafficking, which is often transnational in nature. Furthermore, RAB recognizes the importance of public awareness in preventing trafficking, and actively conducts community outreach programs aimed at educating citizens about the dangers of trafficking, the tactics used by traffickers, and how to report suspicious activities. These initiatives not only serve to inform the public but also foster a sense of shared responsibility in the fight against human trafficking. Through its continued commitment to action, RAB has made a significant impact on reducing trafficking activities in Bangladesh, while also providing crucial support and protection to vulnerable individuals.

4.3.3 Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB):

In order to protect the nation's borders and fight the widespread problem of human trafficking, which includes the trafficking of women and children, the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) is essential. BGB, a vital security unit, is responsible for stopping illegal border crossings, which are often connected to trafficking activities. Regular border patrols and surveillance operations are carried out by BGB to fight these criminal activities and make sure that efforts at illegal people trafficking are stopped. The BGB works with international border security organisations and national regulatory bodies in addition to directly enforcing the border. This collaboration improves coordinated attempts to disrupt cross-border trafficking networks and fortifies information sharing.

In addition to enforcing the law, BGB is actively engaged in community outreach, concentrating on educating the local populace living close to the borders about the risks and indicators of human trafficking. BGB strives to enable communities to identify trafficking operations via educational programs, enabling them to take an active role in combating this crime. Additionally, the BGB helps victims of human trafficking right away by providing emergency support and assisting with their rescue and rehabilitation. The BGB guarantees a thorough approach to victim care by putting victims in touch with the right resources, such as legal, medical, and psychiatric assistance.

By means of these diverse initiatives—from border monitoring to community engagement and victim assistance—Border Guard Bangladesh makes a substantial contribution to the regional and national battle against human trafficking, promoting a more secure atmosphere for women and children in Bangladesh.

CHAPTER V

ANALYZING WEAKNESSES, STRATEGIC PROPOSALS, AND **CONCLUDING INSIGHTS**

5.1 Weaknesses to be addressed:

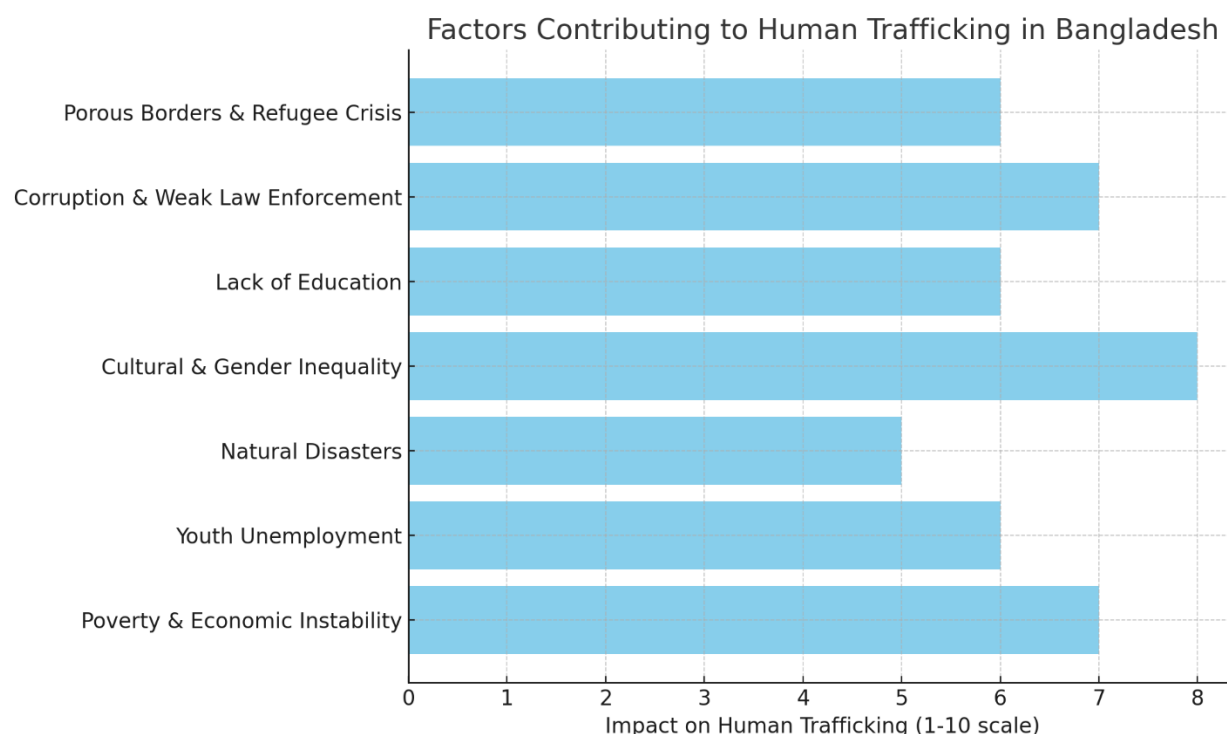
A number of socioeconomic issues in Bangladesh, a large and growing nation, greatly exacerbate the trafficking of women and children. The illicit exchange of people for forced labour, sexual exploitation, and other types of contemporary slavery is referred to as trafficking in this context. Despite attempts to address this problem, a number of variables still increase population susceptibility, making anti-trafficking activities more difficult to implement effectively.

Bangladesh's pervasive poverty and unstable economy are the main causes of the country's human trafficking problem. About 20.5% of people were living below the poverty line as of 2019, which prompted many to look for better economic opportunities. Because of their desperation, people are often easy prey for human traffickers who offer them rich employment prospects or international marriage. As they look for financial stability, women and children are especially vulnerable and may become victims of traffickers who take advantage of their precarious situation. This vulnerability is made worse by a lack of economic opportunities, which leads people to turn to dangerous migratory schemes that are usually planned by traffickers.

The issue is made worse by youth unemployment. Bangladesh's unemployment rate was 5.3% in 2020, and a significant percentage of the unemployed were young folks. Because they are actively looking for job, this group is more vulnerable to exploitation. Traffickers take advantage of their inexperience and their desperate need for work by providing them with possibilities overseas that often result in abuse and exploitation. Promises of a better life entice many people, but they are often ensnared in trafficking circumstances with insufficient documents and legal safeguards.

In Bangladesh, natural calamities including floods, cyclones, and riverbank erosion are common and often force millions of people to relocate. These disasters caused more than 1.5 million

individuals to be displaced in 2020 alone. Particularly susceptible to human trafficking are those who have been uprooted and need permanent home and basic necessities. Traffickers recruit and transport victims by taking advantage of the uncertainty and turmoil that occur during and after major calamities. People who are displaced and in need during emergencies are often the main targets of human trafficking.



Gender imbalance and cultural norms make women and children even more vulnerable to human trafficking. Gender discrimination is pervasive in Bangladesh, where women's and girls' possibilities are often restricted by traditional norms. According to UNICEF, 27% of girls are married before turning 18, and many are denied access to school. Their educational options are often limited by early marriage, which forces them into situations from which they may feel the need to flee. They are easy targets for traffickers who promise a better life overseas because of their fragility and ignorance about human trafficking. Because they are less aware of the dangers and warning signs of human trafficking, women and girls are more vulnerable to being exploited.

Another important factor in reducing the danger of human trafficking is access to education, however Bangladesh has major obstacles in this regard. Despite the nation's progress in increasing access to primary education, obstacles still exist, especially for females and kids from low-income households. Many children are left without the education necessary to find steady job due to high dropout rates, particularly at the secondary school level. Many kids must drop out of school in order to provide for their families, but this often leaves them vulnerable. Lack of knowledge makes people less aware of the risks associated with human trafficking and makes it harder to spot or steer clear of possible exploitation. Bangladesh's attempts to prevent human trafficking are further hampered by systemic weaknesses and corruption in the application of anti-trafficking legislation. Although the Human Trafficking Deterrence and Suppression Act of 2012 established a strong legislative framework to combat human trafficking, its implementation is still lacking. Just 3% of trafficking prosecutions resulted in convictions between 2013 and 2018. Because traffickers often employ money and influence to escape punishment, corruption in the court and law enforcement helps them to elude justice. Because of this lack of accountability and the little chance of punishment, traffickers are encouraged to go on with their activities without worrying about the consequences.

Bangladesh is surrounded by India and Myanmar, two important human trafficking transit countries. Cross-border trafficking is a major problem since these boundaries are permeable and hard to police. The situation has also been made more difficult by the political unrest and refugee problems, especially the flood of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. Due to their lack of finances and unclear legal status, refugees are especially susceptible to trafficking and exploitation. They are vulnerable to abuse as they often become victims of traffickers who make exaggerated claims of safety and opportunity. The resources provided are often inadequate, despite attempts by governmental and non-governmental organisations to aid victims of human trafficking. Due to a lack of shelters, rehabilitation facilities, and legal assistance, many victims find it difficult to get the treatment they need to heal and reintegrate into society. Because victims who get insufficient protection or aid are often re-exploited after being rescued, this lack of care might result in re-

trafficking. Inadequate victim rehabilitation services reinforce the trafficking issue in Bangladesh by feeding the cycle of exploitation.

In conclusion, Bangladesh has made progress against human trafficking, although there are still a lot of issues. Trafficking may flourish in an environment that is characterised by poverty, economic instability, young unemployment, natural catastrophes, gender inequality, educational hurdles, systemic corruption, and permeable borders. To counteract this widespread issue, it is essential to address these underlying problems, strengthen the enforcement of anti-trafficking legislation, and improve victim assistance.

5.2 Strategic Proposals:

A diversified strategy is necessary to combat the trafficking of women and children in Bangladesh. In addition to addressing the underlying issues and weaknesses that allow trafficking, this approach should fortify the nation's social, legal, and institutional structures. The following are tactical recommendations meant to address this serious problem:

1. **Reducing Poverty:** Reducing poverty is essential to lowering trafficking. Microfinance, job training, and income-generating projects are examples of poverty-reduction initiatives that should be implemented and expanded in order to reduce traffickers' financial vulnerabilities and provide alternative alternatives. Providing economic stability to underserved populations may serve as a long-term deterrent.
2. **Targeted Youth job Programs:** Youth exposure to human trafficking may be considerably decreased by creating specialised job initiatives for them. Young people will have realistic career opportunities and be shielded from becoming victims of exploitative networks if skill-building courses, internships, and apprenticeships are offered, particularly in collaboration with the business sector.
3. **Improved Disaster Response and Preparedness:** Conflicts and natural disasters often make vulnerable communities more susceptible to human trafficking. By guaranteeing that displaced people have access to basic services like food, housing, healthcare, and protection from human traffickers in times of emergency, Bangladesh can enhance its readiness for disasters. Vulnerable populations, such as mothers and children, should get extra care.
4. **Developing Community Resilience:** Programs that promote community resilience may be very effective in preventing human trafficking. These efforts promote a feeling of communal responsibility by educating local leaders and communities on how to identify and mitigate trafficking risks, especially during or after catastrophes. These initiatives have to concentrate on giving communities the tools they need to see warning signs and safeguard their most vulnerable citizens.

5. **Expanding Access to Education**: A key tactic in the fight against human trafficking is to guarantee greater access to education, especially for females and kids from low-income households. Financial incentives, free school lunches, and scholarships may lower dropout rates and promote school attendance—two things that are often risk factors for human trafficking. One effective strategy for ending the cycle of vulnerability is education.

6. **Encouraging Gender Equality**: It is essential to launch nationwide programs to promote gender equality and combat damaging cultural norms. Early marriages, a major risk factor for human trafficking, may be avoided by educating communities about the value of postponing marriage, particularly for young girls. Another way to lessen exploitation is to support gender-sensitive employment and education policy.

7. **Improved Law Enforcement Training**: To identify and handle incidents of human trafficking, law enforcement personnel need to have specialised training. International collaboration, investigative methods, and victim protection should be the main topics of training programs. By doing this, law enforcement will be more equipped to deal with trafficking cases and safeguard victims while they hunt down traffickers.

8. **Fortifying Legal Structures**:

To close any legal loopholes, the current anti-trafficking legislation must be thoroughly reviewed and strengthened. Traffickers should face severe penalties under these rules, which should be vigorously enforced. Legislation is regularly updated to ensure that it adapts to new trafficking patterns and gives law enforcement the resources they need to take effective action.

9. **Better Border Management**: Preventing cross-border trafficking requires increased border monitoring. This entails using contemporary technology, including biometric identification, to trace people crossing borders and stepping up border patrols in high-risk locations. International trafficking networks may be severely disrupted by improved border control.

10. **International Cooperation**: Since human trafficking is a global problem, international cooperation is necessary. To improve cross-border collaboration, Bangladesh should collaborate closely with its neighbours and international organisations. Harmonised legal frameworks, cooperative investigations, and information exchange may all aid in closing the gaps that traffickers take advantage of in order to transport victims over international boundaries.

11. **Increasing Victim Support Services:** The rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking depends on providing them with all-encompassing assistance. Increasing the availability of shelters, healthcare, mental health services, and legal assistance may provide victims the tools they need to start over. It is crucial to guarantee that all victims, irrespective of their location or position, have access to these services.

12. **Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs:** Reintegrating into society may be challenging for victims of human trafficking. Education, career training, and community support networks should be the main focusses of successful rehabilitation programs in order to assist survivors in becoming self-sufficient and lower their risk of re-victimization. For these initiatives to be successful in the long run, local communities should be involved.

13. **Campaigns for National Awareness:**

It is essential to educate the public about the dangers of human trafficking and how to spot questionable behaviour. Both urban and rural people should be the focus of media efforts, particularly in regions where human trafficking is most common. Communities may take action against human trafficking if they are given clear instructions on how to report occurrences.

14. **Community Watch Programs:** Local anti-trafficking efforts may be reinforced by establishing community watch programs. Volunteers may get training on how to spot signs of human trafficking and alert authorities to questionable activity. These neighbourhood initiatives may help build a robust, watchful community network that backs anti-trafficking initiatives.

15. **Constant Monitoring and assessment:** Constant monitoring and assessment are necessary to guarantee the efficacy of anti-trafficking programs. By using data-driven strategies, authorities will be able to monitor developments, spot obstacles, and make the required corrections to enhance results. Frequent evaluations can guarantee that treatments are effective and relevant.

A thorough and well-coordinated approach to these crucial areas will help Bangladesh drastically lower the incidence of human trafficking. In addition to breaking up trafficking networks, these recommendations seek to build a safer, more equitable society that respects the rights and dignity of everyone, particularly women and children.

5.3 Concluding Insights:

A major component of this shadowy network is Bangladesh, where people trafficking—a serious violation of human rights—succeeds as a lucrative international black market economy. Deeply ingrained social perceptions of women, pervasive poverty, illiteracy, public servant corruption, and insufficient law enforcement all contribute to the crime. These elements, together with the rising number of trafficking cases, foster an atmosphere in which traffickers may act mostly unpunished. Lack of evidence and appropriate allegations is a major problem that prevents many cases from being addressed in the Anti-Trafficking Tribunals. This inability to get convictions causes victims and witnesses to lose trust in the legal system, which deters them from coming forward.

Bangladesh's present legal system is inadequate to effectively prevent human trafficking. It is necessary to raise awareness in society about the ways that traffickers take advantage of vulnerable people, particularly among those who are not usually their target. A multi-stakeholder strategy encompassing the government, law enforcement, civil society, and international organisations is necessary to solve this complicated problem. To reduce the danger of human trafficking and guarantee victim protection, cooperation is essential on both a regional and international scale.

The issue of human trafficking, particularly when it comes to women and children, is intricately linked to socioeconomic vulnerabilities like poverty, gender inequity, and illiteracy, which are made worse by lax law enforcement and permeable borders. The continuation of trafficking despite continuous attempts suggests that more effective and coordinated tactics are needed. Reducing trafficking requires addressing the underlying causes, strengthening institutional and legal frameworks, and developing focused economic and educational programs. For instance, enhancing gender equality, generating employment opportunities, and enhancing disaster readiness might lessen the vulnerabilities that traffickers take advantage of.

To guarantee that traffickers are held accountable and victims are given justice, effective law enforcement must be strengthened via anti-corruption initiatives, training courses, and legislative changes. Furthermore, for survivors to recover and reintegrate, extensive victim support services and rehabilitation programs are required. To combat cross-border trafficking, stronger border restrictions and strong international cooperation are essential. Community-based awareness, which may develop a watchful and knowledgeable public ready to identify and stop trafficking operations, is equally crucial.

In conclusion, a proactive, multipronged strategy is needed to fight human trafficking in Bangladesh. International collaboration and grassroots community initiatives must be combined with prompt legal proceedings, robust victim support networks, and all-encompassing law enforcement. Bangladesh may make great strides in putting a stop to human trafficking if it fixes the weaknesses that traffickers take advantage of and applies the suggested tactics. This is not only required by law and morality, but it is also essential for maintaining human rights and sustainable development. Bangladesh may strive towards establishing a society free from abuse and exploitation by combining the efforts of all parties involved.

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