Human Trafficking

Context

- Recently the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights warned the world that the Covid-19 pandemic would lead to a major increase in human trafficking
- India's Home Ministry has responded to it and written to states and Union territories to expedite the setting up of new anti-human trafficking units to ‘combat and prevent’ human trafficking

What is Human Trafficking

- Human trafficking is the trade of humans for the purpose of forced labour, sexual slavery, or commercial sexual exploitation for the trafficker or others
- This may encompass providing a spouse in the context of forced marriage, or the extraction of organs or tissues, including for surrogacy and ova removal
- It can occur within a country or trans-nationally. It is a crime against the person because of the violation of the victim's rights of movement through coercion and because of their commercial exploitation

Data and Statistics

- According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's (UNODC) report, 90% of the sexual victims are women and girls and 85% of the victims in South Asia regionare exploited for forced labour.
- According to UNODC report 2019 60% of the human trafficking occurs internally in a country
- As per the International Labour Organization's report, about 21 million people were trapped in “modern slavery” in 2019.
- The percentage of people trafficked for sex work is decreasing while it is increasing for organ donation in the recent years.

Root causes

- Poverty: It drive person to become trafficker, it can drive parents to sell children or other family members to traffickers. People in poverty are targeted by traffickers, who offer them a way to earn money.
- Demand for sex worker: Commercialized sex is a lucrative market that allows traffickers to become the only profiter from their victims through an endless cycle of buyers and high prices.
- Lack of legitimate economic opportunities: migrants without work permits, people in rural areas where there are less jobs, certain ethnic groups facing discrimination in job easily fell to trafficking.
- Social factors and cultural practices: In some places, bonded labor is seen as an acceptable way to pay off debt. In other places, selling children to traffickers is the norm, especially for poorer families in rural areas
- Conflict and natural disaster: it can lead to economic instability and lack of human rights, giving traffickers an advantage and making people more vulnerable to human trafficking situations
- Trafficking generates a large profit: According to the ILO, the human trafficking industry generates a profit of $150 billion per year. This is an incentive for them to continue trafficking people.
- Demand for cheap labor. Employees are often initially promised a safe work space and a steady salary, only to later find that they are paid less than minimum wage and worked over time in restaurants, hotels etc.
- Lack of proper legal and institutional measures to protect the people from traffickers.

Constitutional and legal protection against Human trafficking

- Trafficking in Human Beings or Persons is prohibited under the Constitution of India under Article 2
- Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act,1976.
- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses Act (POCSO Act), 2012
- The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 201
- Section 370 and 370A of IPC provide for comprehensive measures to counter the menace of human trafficking
- Sections 372 and 373 of IPC deals with selling and buying of girls for the purpose of prostitution

Challenges in tackling Human trafficking

- Human Trafficking is the third most challenging organised crime in the world after drugs and weapons.
- Evolving nature of trafficking is a challenge due to advancement in technology and more covert ways of trafficking.
- Traffickers are trying innovative ways such as transporting women on tourist visas to Gulf nations to avoid immigration checks.
- Lack of awareness among poor peoples regarding the trafficking, they failed to forsee the real of traffickers in the vail of lending helping hand.
- Strong nexus between politicians and other powerful people.
- Inadequate understanding and implementation of laws, human trafficking does not even figure in the top five priorities of the police.
- Most of the time when they are trafficked by they are not aware that they are being trafficked till they reach the final point

Steps taken by India to tackle human trafficking

- India has ratified the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime which aims to prevent human trafficking
- India has also ratified SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Childre for Prostitution
- Anti-Trafficking Nodal Cell was set up in the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2006 to act as a focal point for tackling human trafficking
- Ministry of home affairs has established Anti Human Trafficking Units in 270 districts of the country.

Way Forward

- Capacity building of law enforcement agencies and generate awareness among them to curb the human trafficking.
- Coordination between the police, civil society organizations and NGOs in tackling the menace of trafficking.
- Strengthening the system of intelligence collection on trafficking so that data can be collected efficiently and timely.
- Upgrade the existing Anti Human Trafficking Unit through capacity building and adequate funding so that they can function effectively.
- Making exclusive law with very stringent punishment for the culprit of human trafficking.
- Signing pact with neighbouring countries such as Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar etc. to tackle the trafficking as human trafficking is transnational crime.