



CHRI Report on Slavery

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Why in News

Recently, the **Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)** and **Walk Free** (an international anti-slavery organisation) released a **report on slavery** on the occasion of **World Day Against Trafficking in Persons (30th July)**.

Key Points

- **The Report:**
 - It **assessed the progress made by Commonwealth countries** on the promises made in 2018 **to end modern slavery by 2030** and achieve the **Sustainable Development Goal (Target 8.7) of ending forced labour, human trafficking and child labour.**
 - Commonwealth countries **accounts for about 40% of people living in conditions of modern slavery in the world.**
 - It is estimated that 1 in every 150 people in the Commonwealth countries live in conditions of modern slavery.
 - It found that Commonwealth countries have made little progress **towards their commitment to eradicate modern slavery** and have been **lacking in actions** to eradicate the modern slavery **by 2030.**
 - One-third of the Commonwealth countries had criminalised forced marriage, while 23 had not criminalised commercial sexual exploitation of children.
 - All Commonwealth countries report gaps in victim assistance programs.

- **India Specific Outcome:**
 - **India had fared the worst in terms of coordination. It has no national coordinating body or National Action Plan** in place to deal with modern day slavery.
 - India accounted for **one-third of all child brides** in the world.
 - India, like all other Commonwealth countries in Asia, had not ratified the **International Labour Organisation's 2011 Domestic Workers Convention** or the 2014 **Forced Labour Protocol**.
 - The 2014 Forced Labour Protocol obligates state parties to provide protection and appropriate remedies, including compensation, to victims of forced labour and to sanction the perpetrators of forced labour.
 - It also obligates state parties to develop a national policy and plan of action for the effective and sustained suppression of forced or compulsory labour.

Steps Taken by India

- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - **Article 21** deals with the Right to Life and Personal Liberty.
 - **Article 23** of the Constitution **prohibits** forced labour.
 - **Article 24 prohibits** the employment of children (below the age of fourteen years) in factories, etc.
 - **Article 39** directs the State to secure the health and strength of workers, men and women, and to see the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength.
 - **Article 42** directs the State to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.
- **Legal Provision:**
 - Various sections in **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** such as **366A, 366B, 370 and 374**.
Section 370 and 370A of Indian Penal Code (IPC) provide for comprehensive measures to counter the menace of human trafficking including trafficking of children for exploitation in any form including physical exploitation or any form of sexual exploitation, slavery, servitude, or the forced removal of organs.
 - The **Juvenile Justice Act, 2015** and the **Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000** and also the **Immoral Traffic Act, Prevention of Child Labour Act 1956**, the **Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act 1976**, among others aims to eradicate various forms of slavery.

- **Other Initiatives:**

- India has **ratified the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC)** which among others has a Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.
- India has **ratified the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking** in Women and Children for Prostitution.
- **A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Bangladesh** has been signed on bilateral Cooperation for Prevention of Human Trafficking in Women and Children, Rescue, Recovery, Repatriation and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking was signed in June, 2015.
- **Anti-Trafficking Nodal Cell** was set up in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in 2006 to act as a focal point for communicating various decisions and follow up on action taken by the State Governments to combat the crime of Human Trafficking.
- **Judicial Conferences:** In order to train and sensitize the trial court judicial officers, Judicial conferences on human trafficking are held at the High court level. The aim is to **sensitize the judicial officers** about the various issues concerning human trafficking and to ensure speedy court process.
- To enhance the capacity building of law enforcement agencies and generate awareness among them, various **Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops on 'Combating Trafficking in Human Beings' for Police officers** and for Prosecutors at Regional level, State level and District level have been organized by the government throughout the country.
- Ministry of Home Affairs under a Comprehensive Scheme '**Strengthening Law Enforcement Response in India against Trafficking in Persons**' through Training and Capacity Building, has released fund for **establishment of Anti Human Trafficking Units** for 270 districts of the country.
 - The primary role of an **Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU)** is law enforcement and liaising with other concerned agencies for care & rehabilitation of victims.
 - MHA conducts coordination meetings with the Nodal Officers of Anti Human Trafficking Units nominated in all States/UTs periodically.

Modern Slavery

Modern slavery refers to **situations of exploitation** that a person cannot escape because of threats, violence, coercion, and abuse of power or deception. They may be held in debt bondage on fishing boats, against their will as domestic servants or trapped in brothels.

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)

- It is an independent, non-partisan, **international non-governmental organisation, headquartered in New Delhi**, working for the practical realisation of human rights across the Commonwealth.
- The Commonwealth is a **voluntary association of 54 independent and equal sovereign states**.
 - It is **one of the world's oldest political associations of states**. Its roots go back to the British Empire when some countries were ruled directly or indirectly by Britain. Some of these countries became self-governing while retaining Britain's monarch as Head of State. They formed the British Commonwealth of Nations.
 - **In 1949, the Commonwealth came into being**. Since then, independent countries from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Pacific have joined the Commonwealth.
 - Membership is **based on free and equal voluntary cooperation**. **Rwanda and Mozambique** - have no historical ties to the British Empire.

Source: TH