



Protocol to Prevent Human Trafficking: SCO

Why in News

Recently, the [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation \(SCO\)](#), in its 19th meet (of Prosecutors General) held in New Delhi, adopted a **protocol to strengthen cooperation in preventing and combating growing menace of human trafficking**, especially women and children.

- The **current chair of SCO is Tajikistan**.

SCO

- It was **founded at a summit in Shanghai in 2001** by the presidents of **Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan**.
- Presently, it comprises **eight member states** namely India, Kazakhstan, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
 - India was made an observer at the SCO in 2005.
 - **India** and Pakistan became its **permanent members in 2017**.
 - Recently, Iran's bid to become a full member of the SCO has been approved.
- It is headquartered in **Beijing, China**.
- **RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure)** is a permanent organ of the SCO, headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- The **summit is held annually** and chairmanship goes to the member states for a year on rotation basis.

Key Points

- **Human Trafficking:**
 - Human trafficking involves recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, for the purpose of exploitation.
 - Exploitation include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs.
- **About the Protocol:**
 - Calls for **continuation of exchange of national legislation** to combat the menace of trafficking in persons.
 - Seeks to provide **protection and assistance to victims** of trafficking within their competence.
 - Calls for **developing cooperation between the educational organisations of the SCO member states** in the field of advanced training of prosecutors, whose competence include combating trafficking in persons especially, women and children.
- **Relevant Laws in India:**
 - **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956** is the premier legislation to deal with this issue.

- **Article 23 and 24** (Right Against Exploitation) of the Constitution of India.
- **25 sections in IPC** such as 366A, 366B, 370 and 374.
- The **Juvenile Justice Act** and the **Information Technology (IT) Act** and also the **Prevention of Child Labour Act**, the **Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act**, among others.
- **India's Efforts in Combating Human Trafficking:**
 - In July 2021, the Ministry of Women and Child Development released **Draft anti-trafficking Bill**, the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2021.
 - India has ratified the **United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime (the Palermo Convention)** which among others has a Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.
 - India has ratified the **SAARC Convention** on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.
 - **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 Colloquium:** In order to train and sensitize the trial court judicial officers, Judicial Colloquium on human trafficking are held at the High court level.
 - 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 **Ujjawala scheme was launched in 2007** to put an end to the trafficking of children and women. The objective of the scheme is to prevent, rescue, rehabilitate, reintegrate, and repatriate victims trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation.
 - Various initiatives such as "**SwadharGreh Scheme**", "**Sakhi**", "**Universalization of Women Helpline**", provide for a supportive institutional framework and mechanism for addressing concerns of women affected by violence.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING in INDIA

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Involves recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion/deception, for the purpose of exploitation.

NCRB 2018:

5264

Cases reported

64%

Females

48%

Below 18



MOST SUSCEPTIBLE

To fall victim to such malpractices are the economically disadvantaged, and people belonging to the SC, ST, AND OBC CATEGORIES



CAUSES

Poverty, social or cultural practice, and migration, porous nature of borders, corrupt Government officials, the involvement of international organised criminal groups or networks etc.



AFTER EFFECTS

Mental and Physical ailments such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, HIV, AIDS, STDS, TB



RELEVANT LAWS

- Article 23 and 24 of the Constitution of India.
- Sections in IPC such as 366A, 366B, 370 and 374.
- The Juvenile Justice Act
- Information Technology (IT) Act
- Immoral Traffic Act
- Prevention of Child Labour Act
- Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act

CHALLENGES



- Inadequate understanding & bad implementation of laws
- No regulation of social media
- Inadequate data

Source: PIB

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