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**POLICY GAPS AND LEGAL REMEDIES: STRENGTHENING  
ANTI-TRAFFICKING MEASURES AT THE INDO-  
BANGLADESH BORDER**

**Bickey Prasad<sup>1</sup> & Dr. Pranita Choudhury<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, RSLA (Department of Law), The Assam Royal Global University, Guwahati, Assam, India.

Email: [bickeyp@gmail.com](mailto:bickeyp@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, RSLA (Department of Law), The Assam Royal Global University, Guwahati, Assam, India.

Email: [Pchoudhury808@gmail.com](mailto:Pchoudhury808@gmail.com)

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**Keywords**

*Human Trafficking, Indo-Bangladesh Border, Policy Gaps, Legal Remedies, Comparative Analysis, Anti-Trafficking Measures.*

**Abstract**

Human trafficking continues to pose a rampant issue at the Indo-Bangladesh border, as porous boundaries, socio-economic vulnerabilities, and weak enforcement result in a flourishing illegal trade in human beings. Yet despite concerted efforts by both India and Bangladesh, severe policy lacunae and execution failures remain that allow traffickers to take advantage of legal loopholes for their lack of prosecution. This article offers a critical review of the current anti-trafficking regimes in both countries, and it identifies shortcomings in law enforcement, victim identification, transnational collaboration, and victim-centred protection strategies. The article, relying on comparative case studies of good anti-trafficking measures in the US and Germany, highlights the need to introduce complete legal solutions and best practices for the context of Indo-Bangladesh. The findings show that the higher developed countries have introduced high-end surveillance systems and holistic victim assistance mechanisms, along with interfacing with the inter-agency



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	<p>coordination, while the Indo-Bangladesh region still faces the challenge of fragmented and less resource-rich policies. Specific recommendations within the article are as follows: legislative reforms, collaboration in bilateral cooperation, community advocacy, and enhancing law enforcement agency capacity. Finally, these policy gaps must be filled for prevention, protection, and prosecution of human trafficking to be successful in combating one of South Asia's most vulnerable frontiers. Results add to the evidence for policymakers, law enforcement officials, and the broader civil society organisations who wish to strengthen the anti-trafficking and human rights provisions on the Indo-Bangladesh border.</p>
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*“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”*  
— Martin Luther King Jr.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking continues to be among the most pernicious and far-reaching categories of transnational crime, eroding human rights, social order and the rule of law on a worldwide scale. Nowhere is this more true than on the Indo-Bangladesh border, which is a stretch of road running more than 4,000 km and characterised by porous borders, dense populations and deeply rooted socio-economic vulnerabilities. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has repeatedly identified South Asia as a significant source, transit and destination for human trafficking victims, with the Indo-Bangladesh corridor being singled out for its extent and sophistication (UNODC, 2023). Thousands of men, women, and children are trafficked across this border every year, for purposes ranging from forced labour and sexual exploitation to organ trafficking and child marriage (U.S. Department of State, 2023). Many factors contribute to trafficking in this area. Poverty and unemployment, along with gender discrimination and the prospect of better possibilities beyond the border, leave vulnerable people vulnerable to traffickers. But while there are important local systems in place to prevent trafficking, even the enforcement of those laws is limited. Moreover, the common occurrence of natural conditions like floods and cyclones displaces the people, elevating their vulnerability to exploitation (International Labour Organisation, 2022). Traffickers take advantage of lax law, corruption, the scale and location of the border, and the difficulty in finding and prosecuting traffickers. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956 and the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act 2012 in Bangladesh, among others, are laws; however, they are rarely enforced, and conviction rates are poor (Human Rights Watch, 2021). International border anti-trafficking measures must be effective. Thus, it is necessary to defend those who are vulnerable, as well as observe the universal human rights laws. The task is not just to catch traffickers, but to create a system that is integrated—prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership—based on the four pillars recommended by the United Nations (UNODC, 2023). Lack of proper victim identification mechanisms, limited international cooperation, and a disregard for victim-centeredness still make for large obstacles against these organisations. Now more than ever, it is urgent to have integrated, concerted and sustainable approaches to both criminal and socio-economic aspects. This article is



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meant to give a critical analysis of anti-trafficking policies at the Indo-Bangladesh border, pinpoint recurring policy inadequacies and review legal avenues forward. This article also adopts a comparative analysis of two developed countries—the United States and Germany, both noted for their strict legislative provisions and cutting-edge methods of combating human trafficking, in recognition of the fact that these problems are not limited to South Asia. In the U.S., the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and federal, state, and local agencies have solid prevention, prosecution, and victim support mechanisms in place (U.S. Department of State, 2023). Germany, working with the European Union system, has developed a strong legal framework as well as multi-agency approaches that focus on the protection of victims, partnerships with other countries, and advanced technical resources (European Commission, 2022). It identifies both the strengths and weaknesses of anti-trafficking policy in these mature countries and brings to light lessons for both India and Bangladesh. It also considers how best practices in the law, inter-agency cooperation, victim advocacy on the domestic front, and technology monitoring can be aligned to the peculiar socio-political dimensions of the Indo-Bangladesh border. It provides specific recommendations for legislative reform, increased bilateral coordination, community engagement, and skills development for law enforcement and support agencies. To conclude, the objective of this study is to stimulate policymakers, lawyers, and civil society professionals in making explicit, informed, and constructive policy decisions that will bridge the gap between the present and future law and will further promote a more robust legal response to the problem of human trafficking at one of the most vulnerable corners of the globe. By virtue of its comparative analysis and evidence-based recommendations, it seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse around regional and global anti-trafficking strategies.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This article employs a comparative and qualitative policy analysis methodology to discuss anti-trafficking measures at the Indo-Bangladesh border. Primary and secondary sources of data were obtained from government official documents, international organisation publications, official statements, academic journal articles, as well as the official documents of NGOs published between 2018 and 2023. The research systematically examines India and Bangladesh's legal frameworks, policy case studies and enforcement records and several documents, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, the Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report, and other significant reports. These comparative approaches involved examining models for anti-trafficking in developed countries, namely the U.S. and Germany, using legislative language and statutory documents, institutional reports and academic literature. The approach requires triangulation of literature sources to maintain accuracy and reliability. No original fieldwork or interviews were performed, but the review collects and synthesises literature and data to identify policy gaps, best practices, and recommendations. The framework analysis focuses on the four dimensions of anti-trafficking in line with the recommendations of the UN: prevention,



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protection, prosecution, and partnership, to structure the comparative analysis and tailor recommendations to specific regions.

### 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A comprehensive guide to the research. The study builds on a series of interrelated research questions aimed at elucidating the diverse contexts associated with human trafficking at the Indo-Bangladesh border, as well as elucidating policy gaps and recommendations on appropriate legal responses. The questions strive to capture a more nuanced grasp of the contemporary scene and provide inputs on what has been best from the international practice. *Firstly*, in what ways are human trafficking patterns and drivers being identified across the Indo-Bangladesh border? This question aims to reveal the socio-economic, cultural and structural factors contributing to the region's vulnerability to trafficking. It also explores the demographic profiles of victims, as well as the operational modus operandi of trafficking networks. *Secondly*, what is the ability of the current laws and regulatory mechanisms in India and Bangladesh to tackle cross-border trafficking? In this study, we focus our attention on the strengths and weaknesses of existing laws, the effectiveness of specialised agencies and task forces, and the issues faced in identification, prosecution and rehabilitation. *Thirdly*, what will be the key policy and implementation gaps that prevent the success of anti-trafficking initiatives at the Indo-Bangladesh border? This brings the issue to the fore in terms of inter-agency cooperation, corruption of authority and the absence of sufficient resources, as well as the socio-political barriers obstructing effective action. *Fourthly*, what do we do to tackle those gaps? Are anti-trafficking measures in the US and Germany in parallel with those in India and Bangladesh, and what are some lessons learned from the comparison that are transferable? Through comparison, the study highlights global best practices and unique practices that might be tailored to the South Asian situation. *Fifthly*, what actual legal, political and operational recommendations in the framework of these can enhance the anti-trafficking campaign along the Indo-Bangladesh border? The concluding question brings together the findings to suggest substantive reforms with a focus on survivor-centred approaches, transnational cooperation and capacity-building of institutions. By attending to these research questions, we seek to make a more substantial contribution to dialogue about policy and to develop future anti-trafficking strategies in the region.

### 4. CURRENT LANDSCAPE AT THE INDO-BANGLADESH BORDER

The Indo-Bangladesh border, stretching over 4,000 kilometres and traversing diverse terrains from dense forests to sprawling riverine zones, remains one of the most sensitive and heavily patrolled frontiers in South Asia. Despite these efforts, the border is infamous for being a hotspot for human trafficking and related transnational crimes. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the porous nature of this boundary, combined with historical, cultural, and familial ties between communities on both sides, facilitates the clandestine movement of people, often with the complicity or negligence of local actors (UNODC, 2023).



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#### 4.1 Prevalence and patterns of trafficking

Human trafficking across this border is multifaceted and deeply entrenched. Victims are typically women and children who are targeted for sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude, and even organ trade. According to the 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report, traffickers regularly use fraudulent job or marriage offers that victimise those who are vulnerable because they are poor, with little education, and displaced by recurring natural disasters (U.S. Department of State, 2023). Children are disproportionately affected, with many falling victim to forced begging, child labour, and sexual exploitation. Traffickers often operate well-organised syndicates that work on both sides of the border (International Labour Organisation, 2022). These syndicates have an artful grip at evading law enforcement, often bribing officials, or capitalising on deficiencies in surveillance and coordination.

4.4 Existing Legal Frameworks. India and Bangladesh have laws to combat human trafficking. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of 1956 and follow-up amendments in India provide the principal legal instruments as well as sections of the Indian Penal Code about kidnapping, abduction, and exploitation. The most recent Bill is the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, which was introduced to establish an overall and comprehensive legal framework while facing administrative and resource issues in implementation. In contrast, Bangladesh enacted the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012, which criminalises all forms of trafficking, in addition to prescribing stringent penalties. The victim protection and rehabilitation provisions of the Bangladeshi law are also included. But Human Rights Watch (2021) indicates that there is still a huge gap between what is in the law and what is actually carried out. Corruption, lack of awareness among law enforcement, and the sluggishness of the courts make these laws ineffective.

#### 4.3 Major Agencies and Cross-Border Cooperation.

Various government agencies are engaged in combatting human trafficking at the border. While India primarily relies on the Border Security Force (BSF), state police, and specific Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs), in Bangladesh, the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), along with law enforcement agencies, is the leading-line actor. Both countries have set up women and children's desks at border checkpoints and police stations to help identify victims and offer assistance. But structural limitations like political sensitivities, legal standards divergence, limited sharing of information, and other things impede effective cross-border cooperation. Efforts at bilateral meetings and joint task forces have been established, but bureaucratic inertia and insufficient sustained collaboration undermine their impact (UNODC, 2023). Joint rescue operations and coordinated repatriation of victims do exist, and they are sporadic rather than systematic.

4.4 Structural and Socio-Economic Challenges The trafficking problem is further worsened by the socio-economic backdrop. Due to high unemployment, gender-based discrimination, and inadequate access to education and healthcare, some groups are at a particular risk. Migrant groups, ethnic minorities,



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and those displaced by climate change-induced disasters are at greater risk. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these vulnerabilities and led to an increase in trafficking as economic desperation increases (International Labour Organisation, 2022).

## 5. POLICY GAPS IN THE INDO-BANGLADESH CONTEXT.

Even though India and Bangladesh both have anti-trafficking laws and systems in place, the effectiveness of such measures remains low in their bilateral border due to gaping policy gaps. These gaps manifest in various forms: weak law enforcement, inadequate victim identification and protection, weak border management and continuing socio-economic precarity.

### 5.1 Law Enforcement and Prosecution Weaknesses.

Among the significant policy gaps is the failure of law enforcement agencies to effectively prevent, detect and prosecute human trafficking cases. Both countries have specialised units and legal provisions dealing with trafficking, but enforcement is spotty and often weak. Corruption, inadequate resources and lack of specialised training among border officials and police prevent timely investigation and prosecution (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Thereby, traffickers often work with impunity, and conviction rates are shockingly low on both sides of the border (U.S. Department of State, 2023). Plus, enforcement agencies' overlapping jurisdictions and lack of communication only aggravate matters. For instance, within Indian jurisdictions, Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) often lack the power and budget to operate autonomously, while in Bangladesh, locally based police forces have high caseloads and limited forensic capabilities (UNODC, 2023).

### 5.2 Inadequate Victim Identification and Protection.

Another major policy gap is the failure to effectively identify and protect victims of trafficking. Many victims remain undetected due to a lack of awareness, fear of reprisals, or mistrust of authorities. Even when identified, victims often do not receive adequate support or rehabilitation services. Shelters may be overcrowded or underfunded, and victims—particularly children and women—are at risk of secondary victimisation within the legal system itself (International Labour Organisation, 2022). Cross-border repatriation of rescued victims is also fraught with bureaucratic delays and a lack of standardised procedures. Without proper documentation, many victims languish in detention centres or shelters for extended periods, further traumatising them and complicating their reintegration into society.

### 5.3 Lack of Border Management and Monitoring Skills.

The length and geography of the Indo-Bangladesh border are enormous obstacles to effective monitoring. Although both countries stepped up border patrol and installed fencing in portions of the border, large segments remain exposed to unauthorised crossings. Traffickers take advantage of these loopholes, usually employing informal routes and corrupt linkages to avoid being detected (UNODC, 2023). Indian and Bangladeshi authorities also do not have an integrated monitoring system or real-



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time information sharing. Joint operations and intelligence exchanges are few and far between, while current bilateral frameworks are not always well executed. This lack of coordination complicates timely interventions and enables trafficking networks to respond quickly to measures of enforcement.

#### 5.4 Socio-Economic Vulnerabilities Fueling Trafficking

Socio-economic disparities are fundamental problems continuing to drive the magnitude of trafficking. High unemployment, persistent poverty, gender inequality, and lack of access to quality education and healthcare create fertile ground for traffickers to recruit and exploit victims. Natural disasters, climate change, and displacement further exacerbate vulnerabilities, particularly among marginalised and border communities (International Labour Organisation, 2022). Despite some government initiatives aimed at poverty alleviation and social protection, these programs often fail to reach the most at-risk populations, leaving them exposed to traffickers' tactics.

### 6. LEGAL REMEDIES AND RECENT INITIATIVES

In the past two decades, India and Bangladesh have both recognised the urgent need to strengthen their legal and institutional frameworks in light of their shared border. They have launched multi-jurisdictional laws and judicial procedures to prevent human trafficking in their respective territories. All of these initiatives aim to impact human trafficking reduction. Though there have been some strides in this regard with legislative reforms, international accords, and multi-stakeholder efforts, the performance of these measures continues to be hampered by gaps in implementation and evolving trafficking networks.

#### 6.1. Recent Legislative Amendments

India and Bangladesh have also passed and amended various laws that target human trafficking. The Indian Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (ITPA), 1956, continues to be the principal law in this area against commercial sexual exploitation. But anti-trafficking laws haven't been limited to these areas. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, included trafficking within sections 370 and 370A of the Indian Penal Code, acknowledging that trafficking can be applied to other forms of exploitation, aside from prostitution (Government of India, 2013). More recently, a comprehensive framework has been offered through the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, focused on victim protection, rehabilitation, and institutional accountability. Though not yet enacted as law, the Bill is indicative of a shift towards a more holistic approach (U.S. Department of State, 2023). Bangladesh has also reinforced its domestic legal response with the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012, that criminalises all trafficking and carries penalties up to life imprisonment. Such law also mandates special tribunals to provide speedy trials and for the protection and rehabilitation of victims (Human Rights Watch, 2021). The National Plan of Action for Combating Human Trafficking (2018–2022) was also launched to assist the coordination efforts



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of government and civil society and build up institutional capacity (Bangladesh Ministry of Home Affairs, 2018).

## 6.2 International Agreements and Bilateral Initiatives.

Acknowledging that trafficking is a cross-border endeavour, India and Bangladesh have reached bilateral deals and taken on several regional structures. The 2015 bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on preventing and combating human trafficking emphasises information sharing, joint investigations, and repatriation of victims (UNODC, 2023). Both countries are also parties to the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution (2002), which entails a regional commitment to cooperative action to combat the problem. India and Bangladesh are also signatories to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) as well as the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol). Such instruments compel signatories to commit to prevention, prosecution and protection of victims (UNODC, 2023).

## 6.3 Role of NGOs and Civil Society.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society have greatly facilitated this connection between the letter of the law and what goes on on the ground. Sanlaap (India), Justice and Care (India and Bangladesh), Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA), and other organisations offer legal assistance, psychosocial support, and rehabilitation services to survivors. They operate awareness campaigns, help to raise awareness and conduct training workshops tailored for police for capacity development as well as in law enforcement and cross-border advocacy (International Labour Organisation, 2022). Civil society has played a key role in advocacy for victim-centred approaches, oversight of government action, assistance to support cross-border collaboration, and cooperation on cross-border cooperation. NGOs are frequently engaged in repatriation and facilitate victims' return and reunification, and aid survivors to reintegration back into communities, addressing the long-term consequences of trafficking.

## 7. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: LESSONS FROM DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

If India and Bangladesh have made significant progress in eradicating human trafficking, studying the approaches of their developed counterparts could prove to be instructive when it comes to bolstering their anti-trafficking efforts at the Indo-Bangladesh border. Lessons gleaned from the United States and Germany, both internationally renowned jurisdictions with stringent legal systems, intensive enforcement tools, and strong victim care structures, will be taken forward in this section.

### A. UNITED STATES

The United States has implemented a multi-pronged strategy to address human trafficking, rooted in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) (2000), which has been reauthorised and expanded



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at various points. The TVPA criminalises trafficking of persons for any reason, authorises a harsh penalty, and provides federal, local, and state actors with the tools to prevent, prosecute and aid in a legal response that protects victims of trafficking (U.S. Department of State, 2023). The Act also established the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, which is responsible for facilitating national policy and publishing the important Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. One of the strengths of the U.S. model is the victim-centred approach. Survivors are also entitled to protection, temporary immigration relief, medical treatment, legal assistance and witness support, regardless of whether or not they can make use of or participate in criminal proceedings. Professional groups of law enforcement, social services and civil society work together to identify victims, investigate crimes and provide rehabilitation (Polaris Project, 2022). The United States is another nation tapping advanced technology to track down trafficking networks, utilising data analytics and multi-agency databases to provide rapid sharing of information. The U.S. has also spent a lot of its economic resources on border control. Comprehensive surveillance, biometric verification, and real-time intelligence are utilised by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to monitor borders and intervene when trafficking attempts occur (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2023). Although challenges still exist, especially regarding undocumented migrants, the implementation of technology and inter-agency coordination has bolstered detection and response.

## B. GERMANY.

Germany's approach to addressing trafficking in persons is an exemplar of the European Union's sweeping strategy. According to European directives, the German Criminal Code makes all types of trafficking—work and sexual (European Commission, 2022)—criminal. Germany has its own units within the Federal Criminal Police Office; it also has regional task forces that work together with prosecutors, social workers and Non-Governmental Organizations. One of Germany's strengths is its built-in victim support system. Survivors receive immediate protection, access to safe shelters, psychological counselling, legal aid, and vocational training. There is a close working relationship between NGOs and government agencies, which is important to provide a continuum of care, from rescue through to reintegration (Bundeskriminalamt, 2023). And in Germany, witness protection programs let survivors testify without fear of retaliation. Germany's international cooperation is part of its anti-trafficking initiative. Germany is a member of the EU and is involved in joint investigations, intelligence sharing and cross-border operations with other states of the European Union and Interpol. The Schengen Information System and Europol databases have enabled real-time data sharing to facilitate the tracking of traffickers across borders (Europol, 2022). Germany also has public education campaigns and training for police and the judicial officers to increase the number of victims identified and conviction rates. Preventive measures have also been augmented with surveillance, data analysis, and community efforts.



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## 8. COMPARATIVE INSIGHTS: WHAT CAN INDIA AND BANGLADESH LEARN?

An examination of anti-trafficking strategies in the United States and Germany provides insightful insights into the approaches that India and Bangladesh should use to work towards overcoming the issues posed by their shared border. There are contextual differences, but they illustrate several best practices—especially with respect to the legal provisions, victim-centred approaches, collaboration between agencies, and technology.

### 8.1 Effective Legal Provisions and Enforcement Models

One critical lesson from developed countries is the need for thorough, well-defined legal frameworks criminalising every kind of trafficking. The U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and Germany's alignment with European Union directives help to provide certainty toward prosecution (U.S. Department of State, 2023; European Commission, 2022). Strengthening national laws to close loopholes, harmonise cross-border definitions of trafficking, and promote timely judicial processes are critical for both India and Bangladesh. This includes continuously monitoring and updating current laws, so that they relate to new channels of trafficking as they emerge.

### 8.2 Victim-Centered Approaches and Rehabilitation

Both the U.S. and Germany prioritise the rights and needs of victims, providing immediate access to shelters, medical care, legal assistance, and long-term rehabilitation programs (Polaris Project, 2022; Bundeskriminalamt, 2023). These survivor-centric models not only protect vulnerable individuals but also encourage cooperation with law enforcement, thereby increasing prosecution rates. In contrast, many victims in India and Bangladesh face bureaucratic obstacles, inadequate shelter conditions, and social stigma. Adopting a rights-based approach, ensuring confidentiality, and supporting reintegration can help break the cycle of exploitation and empower survivors.

### 8.3 International and Inter-Agency Cooperation

Inter-agency cooperation is a key element of success both in the U.S. and the German systems. Inter-agency task forces, sharing information, and joint operations lead to better detection, investigation, and prosecution. In Germany, close links between police, judiciary, and NGOs provide a wider range of services for victims. For India and Bangladesh, formal means of cooperation in communication, intelligence sharing, and coordinated rescue/repatriation efforts would likely greatly improve these goals (UNODC, 2023). Bilateral arrangements must be implemented by way of established protocols, mutual training, and periodic evaluation.

### 8.4 Use of Technology and Data-Driven Approaches

Sophisticated technologies are at the forefront of contemporary anti-trafficking programs. Data analytics, biometric verification, and integrated surveillance along the U.S. border are used to keep track of trafficking through the smuggling process (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2023).



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Germany uses real-time databases and information systems for cross-border tracking and victim identification (Europol, 2022). There are opportunities here for India and Bangladesh to invest in technology—for example, digital case management, mobile alert systems, and biometric border controls—to increase effective monitoring, improve identification of victims, and disrupt trafficking networks.

## 9. ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES.

To fight human trafficking along the Indo-Bangladesh border successfully, a strategy comprising multiple strategies and inter-agency activity should be pursued. Based on comparative perspectives and the challenges unique to the region, the following recommendations focus on policy reform, enforcement, victim advocacy and community involvement.

### 9.1 Reforms to Policy and Legislation.

India and Bangladesh, as partners and fellow citizens, need to revisit the current legislative system and its inadequacies. It would be essential if laws are brought into tandem to keep definitions of trafficking offence definitions, to create a common language around its penalties and procedures. Frequent revisions are indispensable to keep up with evolving trafficking patterns, including digital recruitment and novel forms of exploitation (U.S. Department of State, 2023). Both countries should make the timely passage of comprehensive anti-trafficking laws—like India’s Trafficking in Persons Bill—a priority and ensure effective implementation with clear rules and standard operating procedures.

### 9.2 Better Coordination Across the Border.

But since trafficking is a transnational crime, strong bilateral cooperation is essential. India and Bangladesh should form joint task forces comprised of representatives from border security, police, immigration, and the social service agencies. These task forces should meet on a regular basis, do joint operations and share real-time intelligence in order to disrupt trafficking networks (UNODC, 2023). Standardised protocols for identifying victims, as well as rescue and repatriation, must be defined and implemented. Yearly bilateral reviews and mutual training programs can help foster trust and enhance coordination.

### 9.3 Improved Victims’ Protection and Support.

Victim-specific strategies need to guide each anti-trafficking effort. Both countries must focus on bolstering and upgrading shelters, trauma-informed medical and psychological services, legal aid and vocational training. Victim identification protocols should be reinforced, and the confidentiality of survivors should be protected in all stages of the legal process. Efforts should also work with NGOs and community organisations for holistic rehabilitation and reintegration.



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#### 9.4 Capacity Development for Law Enforcement and Judicial Services.

At the frontline, officers on the ground and judicial agencies, who are frequently trained in the new trends in trafficking, victim identification and trauma-informed investigations, need training and education. Specialised anti-human trafficking units must have sufficient resources and capacity to conduct an in-depth investigation (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Cross-border workshops and exchange programs can encourage mutual understanding and adopt best practices. Forming performance metrics that can effectively monitor and incentivise successful enforcement.

#### 9.5 Using Technology and Information Technology.

With modern methods, border control, trafficking routes, and crime statistics could be brought under our jurisdiction to enhance surveillance. Investment in digital case management systems, biometric identification at border crossings, and mobile alert platforms for border operations can go a long way in boosting detection and response measures. Development of interoperable databases to share trafficking data, with respect for privacy and data security requirements, should work hand in hand between both governments.

#### 9.6 Community Participation and Awareness.

Rooting out trafficking takes a bottom-up approach that involves local communities and socio-economic drivers of vulnerability based on socio-development and social responsibility in identifying the causes of vulnerability. Awareness campaigns in schools, school education for the public, and monitoring groups in the vicinity of trafficking can help residents recognise such issues as trafficking (International Labour Organisation, 2022) and report it to law enforcement. Programs to promote gender equality, financial inclusion and disaster response programs will lower risk levels. Integrated with local leaders and faith-based organisations can strengthen community resistance even more.

### 10 CONCLUSION

Human trafficking at the Indo-Bangladesh border is a systemic and complex problem, where some of the most vulnerable people in South Asia are at risk for exploitation, abuse, and human rights violations. The article has analysed the current legal and enforcement situation, as well as observed some ongoing legal and enforcement obstacles, and reviewed the possibilities for improving protection for persons with trafficking through legislative reform, cross-border collaboration, victim-centred solutions, and the integration of comparative experiences from developed countries like the United States and Germany.

Despite commendable progress made by India and Bangladesh—from the passage of laws and bilateral treaties to the formation of dedicated agencies and active partnerships with civil society—implementation gaps persist in making meaningful progress. Weak enforcement, corruption, lack of



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victim detection, and inadequate coordinated cross-border work give traffickers a high level of impunity. Socio-economic factors such as poverty, gender inequality, and the recurring nature of natural disasters also compound the challenges faced by border communities with increasing vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities were also exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the need for better resilience and adaptive policy responses (International Labour Organisation, 2022).

The comparison shows how developed countries have successfully leveraged state-of-the-art laws as well as advanced technology, cross-sector collaboration, and survivor-oriented frameworks to dismantle trafficking networks and assist victims. The U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act and Germany's EU-compliant criminal code, for instance, both showcase the value of clarity, consistency, and regular legislative review (U.S. Department of State, 2023; European Commission, 2022). The same article also states that countries like these place strong emphasis on holistic victim support that extends beyond rescue and protection, and goes further, to long-term rehabilitation and reintegration, under the guidance and assistance of NGOs and local communities.

For India and Bangladesh, the lessons from the case are clear: effective anti-trafficking isn't a question of laws on paper. They need ongoing political will, support for law enforcement and services to cover its ends and real and robust cross-border cooperation. Technology integration — including biometric border controls, digital case management and real-time intelligence sharing — can help detect and disrupt trafficking networks. At the same time, grassroots participation and socioeconomic upliftment are needed to tackle root vulnerabilities and prevent exploitation at its source.

.... In the future, a comprehensive sustainable anti-trafficking regime at the Indo-Bangladesh border will need a synergy of policy changes, institutional capacity development, community inclusion, and the global implementation of best practices adapted to the local context. Governments need to conduct periodic reviews and updates of national legal frameworks, operationalise joint task forces, fund training and technology and extend partnerships with civil society. All interventions around trafficking should be survivor-centred, safeguarding the rights and dignity of victims. ....

And closing those remaining policy and legal gaps is much more than just a matter of law enforcement—it is an urgent human rights imperative. By learning from international models and fostering a culture of regional cooperation, India and Bangladesh can build a future in which the border is no longer a corridor of exploitation but a line of shared responsibility and protection. The path forward requires collective commitment, adaptability, and unwavering resolve to end human trafficking and uphold human dignity along one of the world's most vulnerable frontiers.

*"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."*  
— Edmund Burke



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