

Modern Slavery in Bangladesh

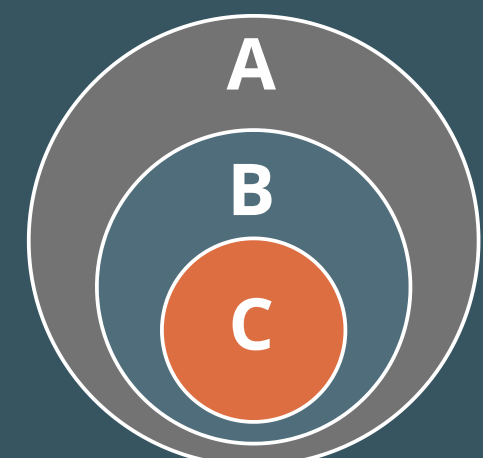
Bangladesh, with a population of approximately 165 million, is the eighth most populous country in the world. Despite its rapid economic growth and significant role in the global garment industry—which accounts for 11% of the country's GDP and over 80% of its total exports—Bangladesh faces serious human rights challenges, including a high prevalence of modern slavery.

Modern slavery in Bangladesh manifests in various forms, such as forced labor, child labor, human trafficking, debt bondage, forced marriage, domestic servitude, and sexual exploitation. Factors contributing to this issue include discrimination against minority groups, displacement, violence, inadequate monitoring and enforcement of labor laws, poverty, gender-based discrimination, unsafe migration, and lack of access to education.

Key Facts

-  1.2 Million People in Modern Slavery ([Walk Free](#))
-  Tier 2 Ranking from the [U.S. State Department](#)
-  Garment Sector is Particularly Affected

| Human Trafficking | Forced Labor | Sexual Exploitation | Debt Bondage |
|--|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children into forced labor, sexual exploitation, and domestic servitude via sea, land, and air routes. • Trafficking men abroad using fake jobs. • Many vulnerable groups are at risk. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevalent in agriculture, garment production, fish processing, shipbreaking, brick kilns, and aluminum production. • Workers in the garment sector are particularly at risk. • Migrant laborers from rural areas are especially vulnerable. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial sexual exploitation of children is a pressing issue • 22% of street-based and brothel-based female sex workers in Dhaka are minors aged 17 or younger. <p>Freedom Fund Report</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common in brick kilns, agriculture, and garment production sectors. • Migrants face debt bondage due to loans taken to cover recruitment fees and travel expenses |
| Child Marriage | Domestic Servitude | Child Labor | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51% of girls are married before their 18th birthday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 15% before the age of 15. • Driven by poverty, unemployment, gender discrimination, and cultural practices <p>UNICEF 202 Child Marriage Report</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily women and children • Victims often live with their employers • Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy (2015) exists but is challenging to enforce | <p>3.537 million are working children. (A)</p> <p>Of these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.776 million are classified under child labor (B) • 1.068 million work in hazardous conditions (C) <p>2022 National Child Labor Survey</p> | |





Legislation, Challenges, and Recommendations

Key Legislation



- [Emigration Ordinance 1982](#)
- [Penal Code 1860](#)
- [The Children Act 2013](#)
- [Bangladesh Passport Order 1973](#)
- [Passport Act 1920](#)
- [Passport \(Offences\) Act 1952](#)
- [Bangladesh Labour Act 2006](#)
- [2012 Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act](#)
- [Child Marriage Restraint Act of 2017](#)
- [The Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy \(2015\)](#)
- [The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Rules, 2017](#)

Recommendations



1. Enhance police training and coordination
2. Engage communities in awareness campaigns
3. Empower community leaders to enhance early detection
4. Economically empower at-risk groups
5. Support Bangladeshi migrant workers abroad
6. Ensure business accountability
7. Provide comprehensive victim support
8. Regularly update labor and anti-trafficking laws

Critical Challenges

- **Weak Enforcement:** Enforcement is inadequate due to limited resources, corruption, and lack of training.
- **Cultural Practices:** Cultural norms contribute to child marriage and child labor.
- **Poverty and Lack of Education:** Economic hardship and limited access to education increase vulnerability

Penalties



For sex trafficking and labor trafficking - 5 years to life imprisonment and 50,000 (BDT) Minimum Fine.



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