



## EDITORIAL: THE HINDU

**GENERAL STUDIES 2: POLITY**  
**TOPIC: HUMAN RIGHTS**

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### Human smuggling must engage Parliament's attention

#### Plight of Deported Indians

- Many Indians deported from foreign countries **face inhumane treatment** before being sent back.
- They are often **shackled, handcuffed, and publicly humiliated** during deportation.
- Some illegal migrants have been **abandoned in dangerous areas**, such as being forced to clear ammunition fields in Iraq.

#### Growing Problem of Irregular Migration

- Every year, **thousands of Indians attempt illegal migration** in search of better opportunities.
- Human smugglers **actively operate** in states such as Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, and Gujarat.
- The illegal migration industry, known as "**kabootarbazi**," thrives due to:
  - **High profits and minimal risks.**
  - **Lack of strict legal enforcement.**
  - **No need for skills or investment**, making it an easy criminal business.

#### Horror and Exploitation of Migrants

- Many migrants are **misled by human smugglers**, who promise them a better future abroad.
- Instead, they **face extreme dangers and exploitation**, including:
  - **Suffocation deaths** in overcrowded containers.
  - **Drowning** during dangerous sea crossings.
  - **Forced labor** under inhumane conditions.
- Survivors report **horrifying conditions**, such as:
  - **Starvation and dehydration** for long periods.



- **Being crammed into unsanitary spaces** without basic facilities.
- Human smugglers operate **with no regard for human life**, turning migration into a **criminal money-making business**.

## Criminal Networks and Organized Human Smuggling

- Human smuggling has evolved into a **global criminal enterprise**, often run by **mafia networks**.
- Migrants are sent to **conflict zones or illegal labor camps**, where they are **exploited and abused**.
- Since the **profit margins are high and the risks are low**, criminals continue expanding these operations.

## Need for Stronger Legal Frameworks

- The **Emigration Act, 1983**, which governs migration, **does not define or criminalize human smuggling**.
- Weak legal provisions allow **smugglers to escape punishment easily**.
- The proposed **Emigration (Overseas Mobility Facilitation and Welfare) Bill** aims to improve migration policies, but its **implementation is uncertain**.

## Efforts by Punjab and Their Limitations

- Punjab enacted the **Punjab Travel Professionals Regulation Act, 2012**, to regulate travel agents.
- The law aims to:
  - **Monitor travel agents** and prevent fraudulent migration practices.
  - **Criminalize human smuggling**, defining it as the illegal transportation of people abroad in exchange for money.
  - **Introduce licensing requirements and impose penalties** for violations.
- However, **weak enforcement and corruption** have limited the law's effectiveness.

## Need for a Strong Central Law

- **Existing state and national laws are insufficient** to curb human smuggling.
- A **comprehensive central law** is necessary to:
  - **Strictly regulate migration and prevent human smuggling**.



- **Provide better enforcement mechanisms** and severe penalties.
- **Ensure the safety and protection of Indian citizens** from exploitation.
- Parliament must **urgently introduce strong legal measures** to combat illegal migration and **safeguard vulnerable migrants**.

## Conclusion

- Human smuggling is a **serious humanitarian crisis** that continues to exploit thousands of Indian migrants.
- Weak laws and poor enforcement **allow this illegal industry to thrive**, putting countless lives at risk.
- A **strong and well-implemented national law** is essential to curb human smuggling, punish offenders, and protect aspiring migrants.
- Addressing the root causes—**lack of employment opportunities, awareness, and strict legal frameworks**—is crucial to **preventing illegal migration** and ensuring safe overseas employment for Indian citizens.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/human-smuggling-must-engage-parliaments-attention/article69263355.ece>