



The Asia Foundation
Improving Lives, Expanding Opportunities

Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) are both human rights violations deeply rooted in inequality and systematic discrimination

The multi-country study on ‘Optimizing Screening and Support Services for GBV and TIP Victims’ research unpacks the intersectionality between gender-based violence (GBV) and trafficking in persons (TIP), where GBV is identified as one of the critical push-factors for trafficking.

The study revealed that across the three countries India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, there was limited comprehensive understanding of the interlinkages between TIP and GBV among law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and service providers (government and non-government service providers).

The research findings highlight that GBV and TIP victims often suffer similar and intersecting forms of abuse. Yet the service delivery system largely compartmentalizes the provision of services based on the type of crime, rather than on the common experiences of violence and abuse suffered by both types of victims.

Respondents from all three countries expressed diverse views on whether or not services should be integrated or separated to enhance services for victims of TIP and GBV.

“

Yes! It [the services] can be integrated under a common location. Itna compartmentalize nahi hona chhiye [the services should not be compartmentalized so much]. If a counsellor is capable of handling both the victims of TIP and GVB, then it can be done. There are services which are overlapping and can be given at a common location. The only difference is in the duration of the services required by each victim.

”

Child Welfare Committee, Delhi, India, July 18, 2020

“

I think both the situations are different so they should be kept separate. Initially, for three to four days both the victims of TIP and GBV can be kept under one roof in One Stop Centre. But after that they should be kept in separate spaces because the trauma of the victims of TIP and GBV are different.

”

Government Official, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Maharashtra, July 7, 2020

“

There is no need to keep the victims separate and away from the GBV victims. I don't understand why that would be a necessity. They just need a safe place to stay and with many of the victims, the challenge is that they don't have a place to stay so a shelter would be good. As for housing possible commercial sex workers with other victims of violence, they are all women at the end of the day, so I don't understand why there needs to be some form of separation. As for threats, I don't believe the situation is that bad it requires a trafficked victim to be kept completely separated from the rest.

”

Law enforcement officer, Colombo district, Sri Lanka, September 15, 2020

“

“Since TIP at the core is about exploitation, psychosocial support is necessary and however you look at it, it must be differentiated from GBV. Trafficking can be very serious. Otherwise, it would be simplistic and easy to say about sex workers especially, “coming here after loitering around and having had a good time [gihilla, ravum gahala, natala avilla”]. But they are victims. This is why I say even for such people who provide services, their own mindset must be changed. It must change and if that doesn’t happen, the services provided are not going to be helpful. They must be sensitive to the victims and to the issue at hand”

”

Senior State Counsel, Colombo district, October 29, 2020

“

Since both these forms of violence are inter-related, victims of gender-based violence are at risk of being trafficked in the future. Likewise, victims of trafficking are also at risk of being subjected to gender-based violence. When the two types of victims are placed together, they can share their personal experiences with each other. This will help increase awareness, among both types of victims, about the risks of being exposed to the other type of violence.

”

Focus Group Discussion with service providers, Nepal, September 12, 2020

“

Along with drug trafficking, human trafficking is among the top five crimes in Nepal. There is a lot of workload with regard to cases concerning human trafficking. If services are provided separately, I think we can handle the complaints received more effectively. Evidence collection can also be done well.

”

Police official, Morang district, September 11, 2020

The findings indicate three directions to address the central question. The largely qualitative data analysis revealed these possible ways forward to conduct policy advocacy dependent on the country context:

Integrated Service Delivery

Resources for service delivery across the three countries are uncertain, uneven, and scarce. Additionally, different agencies are involved in service delivery. These agencies are geographically spread out, creating hurdles for victims in navigating the different service delivery centres. Thus, some interviewed stakeholders saw integration as a pragmatic way forward for optimum resource utilization and for services to be pooled at a common location.

Hybrid Service Delivery

Another group of stakeholders recommended a hybrid model of service delivery where some services could possibly be integrated, such as legal, medical and healthcare, psychosocial counselling, livelihood, and capacity development training (including skills training).

Separate Service Delivery

Some stakeholders maintained that services should be kept separate. The argument for separation was rationalized on the ground that the service needs of GBV and TIP victims are different albeit with some commonalities. However, the risk of not being able to do justice to either group by integrating services has to be realistically considered.

This research was funded by a grant from the United States Department of State.

The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the author[s] and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.



The Asia Foundation
Improving Lives, Expanding Opportunities