

ILO Study Report on 'Forced Labour'

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Context

A recent study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) reveals that forced labour is responsible for generating \$36 billion in illegal profits annually. This represents a 37% increase since 2014, attributed to both a rise in the number of individuals subjected to forced labour and higher profits gained from exploiting victims. The study obtained data through surveys conducted among workers, including Indian workers in Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Definition and purview of Forced Labour

- Forced labour involves forcing people to do work against their will and sometimes under threat or force.
- The term also describes situations where conditions are tough, sometimes critical labour brings in less than \$10 a month. Workers are trapped due to threats and, often, debts incurred for or by the firm.
- Forced labour occurs in a variety of traditional industries, both legal and illegal.

Role of International Labour Organization ILO

- A key player on the world stage at work to end this was the International Labour Organization (ILO).
- It plays a major part in the development of protocols and conventions which give stress to prohibiting forced or compulsory labour as paramount human rights.
- The ILO employs a variety of different methods in order to combat forced labour. Among their activities are to try and prevent coercion itself, assist in victim

rehabilitation so that those harmed can make a recovery, and pursue coercers of all varieties.

- The agency also emphasises education about and awareness of this sort of labour, the enforcement of labour laws to ensure there is compliance with them, safeguards for individuals when they go to be recruited or placed in jobs, and dealing with those conditions which give rise to it.
- The ILO is involved not only in bringing about international competition to stamp out forced labour, but also advising on action plans and national policies that are effective.
- It is important to note that the ILO remains firm in its definition of forced labour, as set out in its conventions, to ensure that measures taken aim also at trafficking human beings for forced slavery.

Indian Context of Forced Labour

- Where forced labour has never abated, it is a major problem in India. The International Labour Organization reported that the number of individuals affected by forced labour or forced marriages leaped from 2016 to the start of 2021, bringing a host of exploitative situations in various trades and industries.
- Challenges from forced labour have been addressed, especially in places like Uttar Pradesh (India). By incorporating interventions into the community, labour conditions were improved, food security more assured, social protection services provided and debts reduced or eliminated. These efforts demonstrate that empowering communities in turn to address forced labour is an effective means of preventing its occurrence.
- For India, the problem of forced labour remains pervasive and requires continued efforts to resolve. Local initiatives have achieved some success against this problem, suggesting that a comprehensive approach involving legal, socio-economic and community-based measures to stamp out labour exploitation is necessary for the country.

Conclusion

Forced labour remains a pressing issue globally, with India being particularly vulnerable. Efforts to combat it have involved community-based interventions showing promising results, but the challenge is complex and deeply rooted. Continued, multifaceted strategies are essential to eradicate this form of exploitation and protect the rights of vulnerable populations.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q. "Examine the current scenario of forced labour in India. Discuss the effectiveness of existing measures to combat this issue and suggest comprehensive strategies that could be adopted by the government to eradicate forced labour, ensuring alignment with human rights norms and sustainable development goals." [250 Words]