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Migrant labourers and their vulnerability to Human Trafficking in the Central Asian Region

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Abstract

Human trafficking, for the exploitation of migrant labour, is a violation of human rights. Trafficked victims of forced labor, forced prostitution, and slavery-like conditions are exposed to continuous, sexual, and psychological violence. As their means of influence, traffickers sell, exchange, and abuse victims using intimidation and coercion.The former Soviet zone has become one of the world's major human migration regions in the last decade.Human trafficking is a multidimensional issue exacerbated in the countries of destination by poverty and disparities in economic opportunities vis-a-vis unmet labor demands and strict migration laws. The migration in the region shortly began after the independence of the Central Asian Republics to support subsistence to the families leaving behind. The article analyses the case of migration and trafficking in Central Asia.Majority of these migrants prefer Russian federation as their main destination to work where corruption and human trafficking problem is huge. There are limited governing bodies to regulate recruiters' activities, so migrant workers are at the mercy of recruiters who are known to charge exorbitant fees that indebted migrant worker before arriving in their destination countries. Labour trafficking is a global humanitarian issue but there is scarcely any quantitative research on the issue.The paper looks at the dynamics of human trafficking and labor migration. The paper is divided into two parts; the first part deals with the factors leading to migration and the second part deals with the labour trafficking among these migrants. This study examined labor abuse indicators among migrant workers in the Russian Federation and the subsequent human trafficking risks.

Trafficking, smuggling and migration are separate issues but they are interrelated. Migration may take place through regular or irregular channels or can be forced by war, an economic crisis or an environmental disaster. Majority of the illegal or irregular migration is assisted by the middlemen or smuggler who facilitates the process for a fee. Sometimes they demand an excessive fee and may expose the migrant to serious dangers in the path of their journey, but on arrival at their destination, the migrants are free and normally may not see the smuggler again. Trafficking is different as it involves the movement of people to exploit their labor or services. Researchers suggest that a vast number of migrant workers are trafficked for several purposes. Many learn about well-paid jobs abroad through family or friends, or through "recruitment agencies" and other individuals willing to find them a

job and arrange travel. For most trafficked people, it is only until they arrive in the country of destination that their real problems begin as there is no work they were promised, and instead, they are forced to work in jobs or conditions they disagreed with. It is no accident that the increase in trafficking occurred during a time of growing international demand for migrant workers, which was not sufficiently understood or encouraged. Lack of regular migration channels left the migrants to rely on the irregular means to obtain jobs outside the country to improve sustainable livelihood. Given this, many policymakers have responded to the issue by introducing tighter immigration laws, which usually make smuggling and trafficking more lucrative and make matters worse. This article, therefore, seeks to look at the issue of migration and trafficking within a broader migration framework and analyse the impact on the Central Asian countries.

The Five Republics of Central Asia-Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are located strategically between Russia, China, the Caucasus and South Asia.After independence in 1991, all these countries had faceddifficult transitions and uncertain futures.Despite vast reserves of fossil fuel in some and mineral resources in others, the area has seen a significant decline in living standards over the last decade, partly because the CARs were ill-equipped to act as independent economic units and partly due to badly controlled transitions.Legacies of economies of command and authoritarian rule, along with imperfect markets and limited privatization and democratization, remained an important aspect of these countries.Intra-regional migratory flows represent legacies from the Soviet past, seasonal influences, and differential economic performance and prospects across the five republics with poor Tajiks, Kyrgyz and Uzbeks moving into wealthier Kazakhstan and Russian Federation.Migration is both risky and uncertain for all migrants and non-migrants living in the country. Irregular migration has given rise to new forms of trafficking in the Central Asian region. Human trafficking is, according to UNODC (2008), a mechanism in which people are kidnapped and recruited, transported and abused in the countries of destination, or even in the countries of origin. The notion of human trafficking is strongly connected with that of forced labor where people are held by improper means such as force, fraud or deception, to exploit them. ‘When a victim of forced labor is recruited, transported or harbored by offensive means, he or she may be legally defined as a victim of trafficking and the recruiter, transporter or harbor is a trafficker’(Sarrica, 2015).With extensive illegal migration of labor, trafficking in human beings is evident in all its forms which have serious implications for the region. If a

migrant worker is forced to work they become victims of trafficking in human beings as they work under restrictive and unfavourable conditions (OSCE, 2011).

Geography and Population in Central Asia

Being part of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian countries had undoubted benefits in terms of education and public health, and in enforcing formal equality between men and women.Dependence on Moscow and inadequate modernisation meant that the Central Asian Republics (CAR) was ill-prepared to become sovereign states at the end of the twentieth century.Their ability to function as autonomous economic units is limited by the Soviet command economy's legacies, where the entire region was a primary raw material producer with underdeveloped and specialized industries.Thus, transition resulted not only in the loss of, however resentful, political and cultural certainty but also in the economic and social support system provided by the Soviet Union to its citizens and all the CARs had to contend with the conundrum of building a national identity with complex population mixes (Mehendale and Atabaki, 2004). These uncertainties combine with uncomfortable relationships between republics, which have occasionally resulted in explicit conflicts over territory and resources, particularly in the Valley of Ferghana.

While referred to as a single region, Central Asia is made up of five culturally and ethnically diverse countries which have followed different paths of political and economic transformation in the last 29 years since independence from the Soviet Union.The size, topography and population of the Central Asian republics vary greatly. Geographically, Kazakhstan is the largest with the lowest population density. Tajikistan's landmass, as well as Kyrgyzstan, is primarily mountainous. Uzbekistan has the highest population in the region, even though not the largest in landmass. Given their common history, and being referred to as a single region, the countries vary in their political and economic growth, cultural and ethnic composition, and international ties. In the 1990s, Central Asia witnessed much of the same economic transformation challenges as Central and Eastern Europe and other former communist countries, such as skyrocketing inflation, gradual de-industrialization, and the breakdown of welfare programs of the Soviet kind. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have not yet completed their transitions to a market economy. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan joined the upper-middle-income group and Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan remain in the lower-middle-income category (World Bank Country and Lending groups). The countries of Central Asia are landlocked, though the Caspian Sea borders Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, which is not an open sea. Also, the Soviet transport

network focused on Russia and other Soviet republics, while connections with the outside world were nearly non-existent.

After independence, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan succeeded in growing rapidly primarily due to the hydrocarbon bonanza. Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan have a slow growth rate compared to Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. As a result, the gap in per capita income between those two Central Asian countries subgroups has risen over the past 15 years.Throughout the 1990s, poverty headcount rates at $1.90 and $3.10 a day (throughout 2011 PPP) were high or very high in all Central Asian countries except Kazakhstan (Batsaikhan and Dabrowski, 2017). About half of the populations of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan live in urban areas while slightly above 35 percent of the populations of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan live in urban areas. The share in Tajikistan is even smaller 26.8 per cent in 2015, has hardly changed since the beginning of the 21st century. This correlates to the still high level of poverty in that country due to low agricultural productivity and other jobs in rural areas. The limited share of the urban population often means restricted access to public services, higher schooling, health care and business opportunities. At the other hand, if significant portions of the rural population begin migrating to urban areas, this will result in increased demand on already-constrained public services and may contribute to social and political tensions. Fertility rates and the population age structure of a nation represent current levels of development and can decide potential economic capabilities and growth possibilities. Overall, the high population share of Central Asia below the age of 14 and the continued population growth (which in some countries is rapid) point to favorable demographic perspectives with a wide supply of young labor in the coming decades (as opposed to other former Soviet Union countries, Europe and East Asia) (Batsaikhan and Dabrowski, 2017).

Factors responsible for the Central AsianMigration

Common Culture and history:Eurasian migration system was shaped within the Russian Empire.This is focused on socio-economic relations between the region and the spread of Russian as the key medium of interpersonal communication within the former Soviet Union.Migrants from Central Asia are guided by the fact that Russian knowledge and understanding of mentality increase their employment opportunities in Russia and Kazakhstan; countries both geographically and culturally close to each other.

Infrastructure and geography: From the viewpoint of Central Asian workers, Russia and Kazakhstan have a convenient position. Given its transport position in the heart of Eurasia,

Central Asian states have a far stronger link with Kazakhstan and Russia via Kazakhstan than with China, Afghanistan, the Middle East and other regions. In this migration subsystem, the transportation aspect has a more important effect on population migration. Russia and Kazakhstan can be accessed by various means from Central Asia: by rail and motor vehicles, by sea and by air. Air connectivity has become widespread; tickets to major Russian cities are fairly cheap.

Economy: For Central Asian labor migrants, typical push factors are production stagnation, low wages, widespread poverty, high unemployment, lack of jobs in their home country. On the other hand, economic pull factors in recipient countries (Russia and Kazakhstan) includes: diversified labor markets offer employment opportunities in different industries and regions and higher wages

Social factor: Mass consciousness in many Central Asian settlements reproduces behavioral stereotypes that are oriented towards labor migration to Russia as a life-success strategy. A significant proportion of young people choose to seek employment in Russia or Kazakhstan after graduating from school, preferring this to higher education institutions and considering migration as a more successful behavioral strategy (Ryazantsev and Horie, 2011). This can be explained by success stories that many relatives, neighbors and acquaintances have demonstrated that they had worked abroad and could afford a house, a car, other things they needed, etc. Different studies suggest that the bulk of Central Asian labor migrants are now using social networks and private intermediaries to get jobs in Russia and Kazakhstan (Ryazantsev et al, 2012). At the same time, the role of government agencies and private employment agencies in the employment of migrants in Russia and Kazakhstan remains extremely low.

Demographic factor: Russia as a major recipient country for the central Asian migrants experiences depopulation and shrinking labor resources.The projection shows that if these patterns continue, Russia will drop from 9th to 17th position by 2050 with 112 million inhabitants(Ryazantsev and Horie, 2011).Thus Russia may face a deficit of labor resources, decline in the number of army recruits, schools children and students and intensive ageing of the population. On the contrary, the population in Central Asian countries is on the rise. (Bartolomeo et al, 2014). Uzbekistan is Central Asia's most populous country with a birth rate of 2.5 c per woman (average 2005-2010 figure). Tajikistan's birth rate is even higher- 3.3 children per one reproductive age woman. The population here grew from 6.1 mln. to 7.2 million people during the same period. The Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS)'s Institute of World Economics and International Relations (IMEMO) forecast shows the

size of the Central Asian population will continue to grow. Uzbekistan will demonstrate the highest population growth rate, where the number of residents will increase by nearly 30 per cent by 2050, or by more than 11 mln. people. Tajikistan's population is expected to rise by almost 3.8 mln. people. By 2050 the Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan population will increase by 1.8 and 1.3 mln. people, respectively (Bartolomeo et al, 2014). By 2050, the Russian population will decline by 30 mln according to UN forecast.

Migratory flow from Central Asia to Russia

Although Central Asia represents just a fraction of the total world migrant population, the economies of the region are highly affected by migrant workers. The so-called forced migration in the CIS has decreased gradually since the mid-1990s, while labor migration has increased at the same time. Many observers noted the decline of Russian influence in post-Soviet space in the 1990s, especially in the five Central Asian states. This situation changed in the early 2000s and Russia made a pronounced comeback both geopolitically and economically on the Central Asian scene. Nevertheless, the emigration of "ethnic" Russians started to lose some of its significance at the turn of the 2000s as compared with the rapid growth of migratory flows of Central Asian titular nationalities.Such seasonal worker flows originated mainly from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Migration plays an increasingly important economic and social role both within the host country (Russia) and in the Central Asian republics.

Migrant remittances are an important part of the economies of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Russia is Central Asia's largest receiving country for migrant labour (UNDP, 2015). Similarly, Turkey and Kazakhstan draw labour migrants from Central Asia. Remittances help low-income households escape poverty, and also boost consumption and growth in the host economies, help finance their large trade deficits and contribute to the development of their financial sectors.

Between 1990 and 2003, the Russian Federation received more than 10 million people, approximately 8 million of whom were former Soviet citizens, with an estimated annual workforce of 800,000 (Tinguy, 2004). Tajikistan has the highest share of remittances in the world which contribute to the country's GDP. In 2007, remittances accounted for 36% or $1.8 billion of its GDP, while Kyrgyzstan ranked fourth in the world with 27% of GDP or $322 million (World Bank Migration and Remittances Factbook). Russia is part of major corridors for human migration and links Kazakhstan and Ukraine, both major sources and destinations of migrants. The CIS migration corridors are fairly inexpensive, with just about $300 required to travel either by train or by air from Tajikistan to Russia. In off-peak

seasons one-way airfares from Kyrgyzstan to Moscow start at $160. To migrants travelling within the Central Asian region, transportation costs are as little as $5–50 to interstate bus and taxi fares. All Central Asian states have visa-free entry to Russia but if they stay longer than three days, migrants need to register (Marat, 2009).

Profile of the Central Asian migrant worker

Men make up most (between 60-90 percent) of labor migrants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, though nearly half of Kyrgyzstan's labor migrants are women. Until 2008, the number of Tajik and Uzbek women travelling to Russia and Kazakhstan grew annually. Migrants from Uzbek, Tajik and Kyrgyz usually travel seasonally to Kazakhstan, where they spend some months working in the agricultural sector.Central Asian governments have been slow in implementing policies that would ease travel regulations for their citizens seeking work abroad or even within their own country. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan require exit visas and restrict their citizens' internal movements, while Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan retain inefficient bureaucracy in the passport and customs control departments, encouraging corruption and the emergence of intermediaries between migrants and authorities (Marat, 2009)

The CIS region has a significant number of unauthorized migrants, illegal workers or in the shadow of the law for the simple reason that CIS countries have not yet learned how to control and organize migration.This uncertain legal status of migrant workers results in various abuses and forced labour.In 2011 in Russia there were more than 1.5 million legally working temporary labor migrants from Central Asia (based on work permits and patents), which accounted for 60 percent of the total international workforce (Ryazantsev, 2012). In 2005, the Russian Federation officially counted just 180,000 citizens employed with residency and work permits from the CIS.These figures cannot be considered complete, because they represent the legally entering person and on a long-term basis who has settled in Russia.According to approximate expert estimates, the number of labor migrants currently living in slavery-like conditions is about 600,000 men, or 20 per cent of all migrant workers in Russia (Ryazantsev, 2012).

Some of the most serious reasons for the increase in labor migration among the poor central Asian nations were the drop in economic output, the reduction in the number of jobs, the destruction of technical and specialized secondary education systems, and decreasing stipends.All of this has the prospects for young people, who are usually the biggest proportion of migrants from Central Asia.The World Bank estimates that the per capita gross domestic product of Russia is 40 to 50 % higher than that of Kazakhstan,

almost five times higher than that of Uzbekistan, and more than eight times higher than that of Tajikistan which is a great receiving factor for a central Asian migrant(Tishkov et al, 2005**).** The discrepancy between the number of permits and the projected number of migrations in the Russian Federation indicates that the vast majority of such migrants are being pushed into illegal jobs.Every year, Russian employers obtain more than 300,000 work permits for foreigners, while official figures range from three to five million guest workers to Russia each year.This quota only applies to the professionals, not to the unskilled labourers**.**

Experts estimate that there are between 600,000 and more than one million Tajik migrants in Russia who sent over $1.8 billion in 2007 as remittances (Parshin, 2008).This sum is substantial, particularly compared to the $400 million in salaries Tajik citizens earn at home.IOM reports that Russia employs up to 90 percent of Tajik migrants **(**Migration and Remittances Factbook, 2009**).**Kyrgyz migrants are estimated to range from 500,000 to over one million. Most official sources quote 600,000 migrants working in Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkey, the United States and the Baltic States representing 11.7 per cent of the total population of Kyrgyzstan(The World Bank, Migration and Remittances Factbook.)

The emigrant population of Uzbekistan is in absolute numbers the highest in Central Asia. More than 2 million Uzbek immigrants allegedly reside in Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, South Korea, the United States and Europe. These migrants send out more than $1.3 billion in remittances annually, representing up to 8% of Uzbekistan 's GDP (The World Bank, Migration and Remittances Factbook). It is assumed that the real number of Uzbek migrants and the actual size of remittances are significantly higher than the official sources published. Approximately 60% of Uzbek migrants work in Russia making them one of the biggest immigrant communities.

Turkmenistan has the lowest number of emigrants working abroad in all the Central Asian countries. It is estimated that some 250,000 people in this population work in Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Iran and the United States **(**The World Bank, Migration and Remittances Factbook.**)**

Labor Trafficking from Central Asia

Although there have been many international concepts of trafficking in human beings, it was the Trafficking Protocol that introduced the broad term of the crime under international law. Article 3 of the Palermo Protocol (2000) on Trafficking states that

"'*Trafficking in persons' shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons, using threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at the minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or removal of organs"* (UNTC, 2000)

Forced labor and trafficking for sexual exploitation are known worldwide, with trafficking sometimes referred to as a modern type of slavery. Under oppressive working conditions, the words ' forced ' and ' slave ' labor evoke images of bound laborers tied to an owner. New forms of withholding wages and proofs of identity, restriction of workplace freedom may all come under the realm of forced labor in modern times.All forced labor cannot be a consequence of trafficking. Conversely, almost all cases of human trafficking end in forced labor (except trafficking for removal of organs). Lack of viable options can force a person to a substandard working condition which cannot be termed as forced labor according to Palermo protocol. If the recruiter purposely takes advantage of the lack of an alternative to exploit the worker it falls under the category of forced labor. Therefore trafficking for forced labor should assess the situation of external constraints that impact the free consent of the workers amounting to trafficking (ILO, 2008). More than 21 million people worldwide are victims of trafficking for forced labor, of which around 1.6 million people are from the post-Soviet area (ILO, 2012).

The Migration Research Centre estimates that 1 million people are subjected to exploitive labor conditions in Russia with withholding the documents and pay, physical abuse and poor living conditions (TIP report, 2012). There are several case studies conducted by different organizations like Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Human Rights Watch, and International Organization for Migration (IOM) which expose the nature of labor exploitation suffered by the migrants in Russia (Stephanie, et.al, 2013) For example, in 2008, some Tajik migrant workers were recruited through television advertisements to an employment agency named Vostok farm. The workers sign agreements to work in construction but upon reaching there, their passports were withheld and they are forced to dig stones in quarries with hand tools. Those who refused to do the work were told that they will deport them. The victims forcefully worked there for 85 days without pay and forced to live in an abandoned refrigerator truck and two cargo containers

with dirty mats and cots and were denied food if they rejected to work (Stephanie, et.al, 2013; Dutta, 2016). According to the reports of Tajik NGO, Modar " majority of victims of trafficking are young women, usually without higher education and career opportunities, making it easier for traffickers to lure them with false promises of legitimate and well-paid employment abroad and then sell them to brothels"(Regional Central Asia conference, 2006). These labor migrants' faces serious consequences for men who suffer exploitation and abuse for years lacking proper health care, mistreatment by police and employers (TIP REPORT, 2014).

Trafficking or Smuggling? Where does a Central Asian Migrant fit?

The trafficking/smuggling of binaries set up by the two Palermo Protocols offers far less protection to the second category of persons. While trafficked persons are considered innocent victims, smuggled persons are considered criminals. Both trafficked and smuggled people most often choose to leave their homes, whether as economic migrants, asylum seekers or reunite with their families or for other reasons (Aronowitz, 2001). Irregular migration raises very real dilemmas for Central Asian nations and also exposes migrants to instability and vulnerability. Smuggled people may become stuck in exploitative working conditions due to forms of debt bondage to those who have arranged their passage, to take only one example from the many available. In the overlap between smuggling and trafficking, we find a continuum of control that spans confiscation documentation and psychological control (through reference to "honour," threats of violence against family members, and so on), all the way to forced confinement and violence on the other (Aronowitz, 2001). Many people may begin their journey in one category and end in another one which establishes an operational connection between trafficking and smuggling that is not recognized by the international Protocols (Gallagher, 2001). Persons who are trafficked and smuggled lie along a continuum of violence that the relevant legal instruments largely ignore. Closing borders may completely halt trafficking and smuggling, but in today's interconnected world this is, of course, increasingly difficult. Tighter border controls have contributed to the expansion of smuggling and trafficking networks. According to an article on trafficking in Asia by Ronald Skeldon (2000), Human smugglers networks have proven to be extremely successful in illegally transporting large numbers of people and in amassing considerable income. Violence, violence and manipulation are an integral part of smuggling and learning about smuggling without trafficking are virtually impossible.

The Soviet Union's collapse led to the decline of industry, the region's collective farm system and rural infrastructure. Unemployment increased as the property was privatized, and jobs usually available at collective farms were gone. Wages were erratic for teachers, physicians and others and many schools and hospitals were forced to close. Particularly those institutions that remain open face persistent workforce shortages. Those conditions pushed the people to migrate to the neighbouring states in search of work prospects and employment. The lack of legal security and insufficient information on the part of the employees in this job sector makes the migrants extremely vulnerable to exploitation and violence from different sources. The weak border protection that followed the Soviet Union's demise opened the region to human smuggling networks of criminals and refugees from as far as South Asia and Africa on their way to Western Europe (IOM, 2003), This topic presents a particular challenge for the region's law enforcement authorities, as migrant smuggling often requires false passports and/or visas.

As legal labor migration channels are limited, illegal migration is likely to take precedence. The implications of this migration for the countries concerned, as well as for the labor migrants themselves, are significant. Because of their irregular situation, most labor migrants do not enjoy the same rights of protection as other ordinary citizens and are thus more vulnerable to underground employers ' exploitation. Human trafficking is the most egregious type of illegal migration. The most onerous form of migration across the region is human trafficking for labor exploitation, which is becoming a salient feature of migration dynamics in Central Asia. The business of trafficking maintains a low profile, where victims are forced to remain quiet by the traffickers and there are no official figures available. Labor migration is seen as a boon to the poor central Asian people to maintain their livelihood, so the majority of them wish to work abroad to earn money even if they know of taking the illegal channels of migration.

Violation of Rights and Discrimination of Labor Migrants in Russia

Labor migration has become an important part of the world economy; bringing migrants to developed countries where demand for cheap labor is extensive. Throughout recent decades, migration and related violations have become significant public and political issues. However, these issues remain under-researched throughout Russia even though the country is a primary destination for migrants from surrounding countries.US State Department Trafficking in Persons Study 2019 included Russia in the community of countries where 'the absolute number of victims of serious types of trafficking is very high

or is growing significantly'According to the World Bank (2016), Russia is currently ranked fifth in the world in terms of labor migration scale (approximately 9–10 million people) and about 2 million people have irregular status according to Ministry of the Interior (MVD) (RIA, 2018). Russian Federal Migration Service Director K. O. Romodanovsky has noted that migrant labor accounts for 8% of Russia's GDP (Ryazantsev, 2014).The existing mobility control system, including remnants of Soviet systems such as propiska*, has put many international migrants at risk for trafficking, particularly irregular migrants.Russia's migration policies often make the shadow economy more attractive for both employers and employees by reducing the costs and time associated with endless bureaucratic procedures and regulations. In the informal economy, at least two-thirds of migrant work exists in Russia. As a result, migrant workers are a highly profitable market for traffickers, intermediaries, employers and others who seek to exploit their vulnerability (Tyuryukanova, 2005).Another factor contributing to trafficking is the country's vastness: Russia comprises 11 time zones.Trafficked victims are usually isolated from their friends or family and the likelihood of a migrant returning to 'natural' life in remote areas or national republics with unknown languages and distrust toward outsiders is low (Buckley, 2018).

The origin of trafficking occurs even on the entry of the migrants to the destination countries where corruption is a severe problem in the post-Soviet states and Russian federation itself (Kelly, 2005). Tajikistan has been placed under 'Tier 2' group, Uzbekistan under ‘Tier 2 watch list’, Kyrgyzstan under ‘Tier 2 watch list’, Turkmenistan under ‘Tier 3’ and Kazakhstan under ‘Tier 2 watch list’ which states that every country is highly vulnerable and the government policies do not comply with the according to the UN anti Trafficking protocol (TIP Report, 2019). In Central Asia, export and trafficking of forced labor exceed trafficking for sexual exploitation (IOM, 2006). As the majority of the migrants work in the informal economy in the destination countries, there is very lack of legal protection which makes them vulnerable to the trafficking network (Olimova and bosc, 2003). The intensity of labor migration is growing day by day as there are severe unemployment and poverty in the region.

With the link of these unregulated migrants, more than 70 percent in Russia are prone to various forms of trafficking which includes restriction of freedom of movement, or

*Stalin, introduced Propiska for the control of the Soviet population and limited the possibility for citizens of the USSR to choose their place of residence. It asked every person to have a fixed place of residence approved by authorities.

confiscation of documents by the employers. Migrants found jobs with the help of informal networks or through friends, family and relatives who have come before them and are regarded as second class workers in Russia (UNICEF, 2011). Trafficking of men is closely associated with labor migration, while the trafficking of women is often for sexual and labor exploitation. One study of trafficking shows that "almost all male victims were married, but most female victims were unmarried or divorced"(ADB, 2016). The language skills of the migrants help them to secure jobs outside, but the young generation labor migrants have minimum language skill which possesses a threat of exploitation in the host countries. For the vast bulk of the population, the Russian labor market is more interesting than the jobs available in the origin countries which demands higher education (Mughal, 2007).

All the Central Asian states are found toward the bottom of the corruption Percentage Index of the Transparency International Corruption Percentage Index. With four out of five of these countries ranked in the bottom 30 countries, those with the highest level of perceived corruption (Regional Central Asia conference, 2006). ILO (2006) reports that illegal migrants work in the informal economy of Russia which is highly profitable for traffickers, intermediaries, and employers.

Slave labour is associated with such work include where lack of worker freedom and arbitrariness in the conduct of the employer is observed (Zagorsky et al, 2009). The forced nature of labor may take the form of modifications to the conditions of an employment contract involving the unjustified extension of the worker's responsibilities, types of jobs, hours worked, reduction in pay and time off, unjustified sanctions, and so on (Gromov, 2006).

Amid economic transformation and social change in the Russian Federation in the 1990s and 2000s, trafficking in human beings and slave labor became quite widespread. Despite the magnitude of the issue, there have been no complete and detailed statistics about this issue for a long time. The modern Russian economy can be characterized as "migrant-dependent" as every year between 1,5 million and 2 million official labor migrants arrive in the country (Ryazantsev, 2014). Within migration flows from the migrant workers' countries of origin new socio-demographic population groups have emerged. In Central Asian countries, for example, people living in rural districts, small towns, women and young people have started to engage more actively in migration (Ryazantsev and Horie, 2012). Rough expert estimates put the number of migrant workers in slavery at around 600,000, or 20 per cent of all migrant workers in Russia. The president of the Association

of Russian Human Rights Lawyers, E. Arkhipov, estimates the value of a native of one of the Central Asian states on the criminal market between US$ 300 and US$ 500, and says, "Labor migrants can be ordered through criminal networks and also through migrant workers leaders." (Ryazantsev, 2014). Migrants generally become slaves because of debts: they have to pay criminals just to get to Russia and return home (Rex News, 2012).

Economic sectors of the Migrants in the Russian Federation

In the Russian Federation, the "migrant" sectors of the economy can be identified, in which employers actively exploit the labor of foreign workers.

The main sectors are construction and repair works. An alarming finding in Tajikistan from a survey by IOM, (2014) states that more than 80 per cent of migrant workers had only informal contracts, that is, oral contracts with their employer. The migrant workers were prone to various forms of exploitation and abuse of their rights without a formal written contract, a widespread problem among foreign workers in the Russian Federation (Human Rights Watch, 2009). Sending home money is part and parcel of labor migration, more so for Central Asian migrant workers, who often work seasonally in the Russian Federation and send as much as possible of their wages to their families. Unlike other sectors in the construction, workers are being "transferred" by entire gangs after completing a building for a certain reward from one employer to another. Documents of the workers, often "retained" by the employer, can be transferred from the old master to the new one without even passing into the hands of the workers. Document confiscation is in itself a widespread method of exploiting and retaining control of the workers. Nearly one-third of workers in the construction sector do not hold passports. In this way, migrant workers are robbed of the freedom to freely choose their job and employer and become "confined" to their employer and cannot quit (Tyuryukanova, 2006). The regions of Moscow, the Moscow Oblast, Smolensk Oblast, Yaroslavl Oblast, Rostov Oblast, Samara Oblast and Krasnodar Krai have experienced a construction boom in Russia. Migrant workers mainly flock to these regions for working in these regions.

Apart from the construction sector, trade and catering is the second most attractive sector for the migrant workers. The exploitation of foreign workers' labor also occurs here on an extremely large scale. Research shows that debt bondage is the most widespread form of exploitation in this sector. Methods of placing a worker in a debt bondage situation are widely known among employers who own sales outlets and shops, and the "experience-sharing" practice is well established (Tyuryukanova, 2006).

The labor migrants also highly prefer another economic sector, the processing industry. Various forms of labor exploitation are widely used by this economic sector as work without an official contract, overtime, poor working and living conditions and non-paid wages. Central Russia, in the Urals and Siberia, is home to large manufacturing sites that exploit migrant labor (Ryazantsev, 2014).

In the transport sector too, migrant labor is actively used. Migrants also work as drivers of marshrutkas [fixed-route shares taxis], city buses, trolleybuses, etc. in many regions of Russia. Throughout recent years, there have been several conflicts arising out of the jobs of foreign workers throughout Russia's transport sector. From 1 January 2010 onwards, the Moscow City Council banned migrants from serving as drivers of the marshrutka. The prohibition did not stop businesses from hiring migrant labor, however. Within this economic sector, such forms of exploitation as overtime, the system of imposing fines for non-compliance with plans and accidents, and debt bondage are widespread.

The housing and utility sectors are among the most corrupt sectors in Russia which employ migrant workers. Research shows that the majority of migrant workers are not registered by employers in this economic field as their salaries are half of what Russian nationals earn. Also, arrangements exist in Moscow and other large Russian cities whereby Russian nationals are entered on the payroll but the work is done by CIS citizens (Ryazantsev, 2014). Migrant staff do not earn their wages on time, work more than the prescribed number of hours and live in miserable conditions (in basements, lofts and shafts of rubbish).

Migrant workers working in households also face labor exploitation. (Ryazantsev et al, 2012). Amendments to the law "On the legal status of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation" which came into force on 1 July 2010 formed the legal basis for the legalization of migrant workers working for private persons. Foreigners employed by legal entities must purchase a special license. This license became the brand-new document enabling foreign nationals to work in the Federation of Russia. The household sector employs a large number of migrants as gardeners, caretakers, guards and manual workers, particularly during the summer months. The domestic service sector includes a wide range of working types that require special skills, training and qualifications. They also include drivers, nannies, sick-nurses, health-care staff, and governesses etc.

Legislation of trafficking in Russian Federation

Despite the pervasiveness of the problem of trafficking in human beings and irregular

migration in the countries of the former USSR in the 1990s, these issues remained outside the field of view of the Russian Federation's state authorities for a long time. Russia is a country of origin, transit and destination for men, women and child trafficking. Estimated to range from 0.6 to 1.5 million victims are trafficked in Russian federation (TIP Report, 2019).

Russia signed the following two treaties in 2000 and ratified both in 2004: The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, including the Protocol on the Prevention, Suppression and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons, in particular Women and Children, also known as the Palermo Protocol, and the Protocol against Land, Sea and Air Migrant Smuggling. In 2004, the Federal Law 162-FZ3 introduced two anti-trafficking documents, namely 127.1 (Human Trafficking) and 127.2 (Use of Forced Labor), into the Russian Criminal Code (CC). The various types of exploitations are mentioned in Article 127-1 of the Russian Federation Penal Code: abuse of the prostitution of others; other forms of sexual exploitation; forced labor (or services); servitude. In the context of Article 127-1 of the Russian Federation's Criminal Code, the concept of a person's exploitation may be defined as a systematic appropriation of the results of the labor of another person committed by deception, misuse of trust, violence or threat of violence, or exploitation of the dependent position of the injured party (Ryazantsev, 2014). Russian law does not include a description of a "victim of trafficking." (Molodikova, 2020). Rather, the Russian definition of trafficking focuses mainly on the process of trafficking and the types of exploitation; the Russian definition does not focus on force, fraud and coercion. The definition of 'human trafficking' itself was especially absent in legislation and the practice of state authorities and law enforcement agencies. Despite the lack of concerted efforts, there have been claims that some agencies have taken steps to address trafficking, including by naming some victims, although the number of victims that the government has reported remained insignificant.Human trafficking and the use of slave labor are serious and burning issues which are currently relevant to Russia. The state structures in the Russian federation dramatically step up their activity to counteract human trafficking after signing the Palermo Protocol in 2000. In 2001 the Commission on the Status of Women attached to the Government of the Russian Federation was launched at the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2002, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs formed an internal working group to tackle violence against women and human trafficking. In 2002, the State Duma Committee for Civil, Criminal, Arbitration and Procedural Law formed an inter-agency working group to draft a federal bill to combat trafficking in

persons. However, in reality, the state machine works poorly: there is no funding for victim protection and both victims and witnesses often don't want to testify in court, fearing revenge from their perpetrators. Not surprisingly, Russia has continued to be placed in Tier 3 since 2019 in U.S Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report.The Russian Federation's mechanism for controlling labor migration is still extremely flawed, allowing unscrupulous employers and offenders to deliberately lure labor migrants into human trafficking and labor abuse.