



Human Trafficking in the Global South: An Academic Exploration

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EDITORIAL NOTE

Human trafficking remains one of the most brutal violations of human dignity in the contemporary world. Despite international conventions, national legislations, and decades of advocacy, trafficking continues to flourish-particularly in the Global South-where structural inequality, poverty, conflict, gendered vulnerabilities, porous borders, and weak governance intersect to produce conditions of extreme exploitation. It is within this deeply troubling global reality that this special issue of the *Journal of Underrepresented & Minority Progress (JUMP)* takes shape. Conceived in response to the urgent need for academically grounded yet socially responsive scholarship, this volume seeks to interrogate trafficking not as an isolated crime but as a systemic, transnational phenomenon embedded within historical, political, economic, and cultural contexts.

The special issue was envisioned to create space for nuanced, interdisciplinary engagements with human trafficking, moving beyond sensationalist narratives to examine the macro-, mezzo-, and micro-level forces that sustain trafficking economies. The contributions collectively explore poverty, migration, gender discrimination, conflict, natural disasters, neoliberal pressures, institutional corruption, and fragile legal frameworks, while also foregrounding individual experiences of trauma, displacement,

silencing, and loss of agency. Equally significant is the issue's engagement with diverse genres and mediums—ranging from policy-oriented studies and ethnographic research to literary texts, graphic narratives, cinema, and web series—underscoring the belief that trafficking must be understood not only through statistics and laws but also through stories, representations, and lived realities.

Taken together, the papers in this volume offer a powerful and comprehensive overview of trafficking as a global crisis with deeply localized manifestations. The geographical sweep of the issue is particularly striking. The scholarship travels across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, gradually narrowing its focus from global patterns to specific national, regional, and local contexts. From transcontinental trafficking routes to the lived realities of India, Nepal, Myanmar, Afghanistan, and Türkiye, and further into regions such as the Indo-Nepal Terai, Kashmir, and Punjab, the issue reveals how trafficking adapts to different socio-political terrains while remaining part of a broader transnational system of exploitation. This movement from the global to the regional is not merely descriptive; it is analytical, demonstrating how macro-level forces translate into everyday vulnerabilities and coerced choices.

A defining strength of the volume lies in its recognition that trafficking is not limited to one form or one victim profile. The studies examine sexual exploitation, forced labor, organ trafficking, domestic servitude, and forced criminality, revealing the many ways in which bodies and lives are commodified. Several contributions expose the role of borders, migration regimes, disasters, and armed conflict in intensifying vulnerability, while others foreground institutional complicity, corruption, and the failure of justice systems that discourage survivors from seeking legal redress. Particularly compelling are the works that challenge conventional frameworks by expanding the discourse on trafficking to include forced crime in militarized regions and by employing critical theories to understand governance, power, and silence. The engagement with cinema and visual narratives further authenticates the omnipresence of trafficking, demonstrating how popular culture both reflects and shapes public understanding, ethical responsibility, and policy imagination.

What emerges from this collective scholarship is a clear and urgent message: existing policies are insufficient unless they are revised, contextualized, and implemented with sensitivity to regional realities. The contributions in this issue are not only intellectually rigorous but also deeply policy-relevant. By addressing both micro- and macro-level dynamics, they offer valuable insights for policymakers, administrators, civil society

organizations, and international agencies working at regional and global levels. The volume demonstrates that meaningful interventions must be survivor-centric, transnational in cooperation, and grounded in an understanding of local socio-cultural contexts.

This special issue is the outcome of a rigorous and committed editorial process. A total of fifty abstracts were received, reflecting the urgency and global resonance of the theme. Thirty full-length papers were shortlisted for peer review, and after multiple rounds of careful evaluation, revision, and deliberation, nine papers were selected for publication. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the contributors for their patience, scholarly integrity, and ethical engagement with such a sensitive subject. We also sincerely acknowledge the editorial and review team of JUMP for providing a robust and inclusive platform that has enabled this dialogue to take shape and for upholding the vision set forth in the Call for Papers.

As this issue reaches its readers, it does so with a profound sense of responsibility. Scholarship alone cannot dismantle trafficking networks, but it can illuminate silences, challenge complacency, and inform action. We invite readers not only to engage critically with these contributions but also to carry their insights beyond academia—by sharing this work, initiating conversations, and drawing the attention of policymakers, stakeholders, ministries, and institutions that have the power to effect change. Human trafficking thrives where silence prevails; this issue calls upon its readers to transform knowledge into advocacy and collective action.

Guest Editors:

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MANJU RANI, PhD is a senior academician and poet with a Ph.D. in English and over 18 years of teaching experience in higher education. Her areas of specialization

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