

# Causes of Human Trafficking

There is no one cause of human trafficking in Indonesia. Trafficking is caused by an entire range of different conditions and issues. These include:

- **Lack of Awareness:** Many people who migrate for work within Indonesia or abroad are unaware of the dangers of trafficking and the ways in which migrant workers are deceived or pushed into abusive or slave-like labor.
- **Poverty:** Poverty has forced many households to devise survival strategies that have included migrating for work and bonded labor, i.e., renting out a person's labor to pay off a debt or a loan.
- **Material Expectations:** The desire for consumer products and higher standards of living fuel migration and render migrants vulnerable to trafficking.
- **Cultural Factors:** The following cultural factors contribute to trafficking:
  - **Women's Role in the Family:** Although cultural norms stress that a woman's place is at home as wife and mother, it is acknowledged that women may have to become supplementary wage earners in times of family need. A sense of duty and obligation drives many women to migrate for work in order to support their families.
  - **Children's Role in the Family:** Obedience to parents and an obligation to support the family makes children vulnerable to trafficking. Child labor, child migration for work, and child bonded labor are deemed acceptable family financial strategies to survive.
  - **Early Marriage:** Early marriage has serious implications for girls, including health hazards, the end of schooling, limited economic opportunities, disruption of personal development, and, often, early divorce. Divorced girls are legally seen as adults and are vulnerable to trafficking as a result of their economic vulnerability.
  - **History of Bonded Labor:** The practice of renting out one's labor or that of a family member to pay off a loan is an accepted family survival strategy. People placed into bonded labor are especially vulnerable to abusive and slave-like work conditions.
- **Lack of Birth Registry:** People without proper identification fall prey to trafficking more easily, since their age and nationality cannot be documented. Children who are trafficked, for example, are more easily passed off as adults to anyone who asks.
- **Lack of Education:** People with limited education have fewer viable job skills and opportunities and are thus more prone to trafficking as they look to migrate for unskilled work.
- **Corruption and Weak Enforcement of Laws:** Traffickers can often bribe corrupt law enforcement and immigration officials to overlook criminal activities. Public administrators can also be bribed to falsify information on ID cards, birth certificates, and passports, making migrant workers more vulnerable to trafficking due to illegal migration. In addition, lack of state funds budgeted for countertrafficking efforts hampers law enforcers' ability to effectively deter and prosecute traffickers.