

SOCIAL REHABILITATION OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IN INDONESIA: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF PROBLEMS AND RESPONSE EFFORTS

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Abstract

Trafficking in persons, or human trafficking, is a complex form of human rights violation because it involves exploitation, violence, deception, abuse of a position of vulnerability, and weak social protection for victims. This study aims to analyze the profile of trafficking in persons in Indonesia, identify response efforts undertaken by government and non-governmental organizations, and formulate a social rehabilitation model for victims of trafficking in persons. The study employed a qualitative approach using a case study method. Data were collected through documentation studies, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions with victims of trafficking in persons, victims' families, case workers, and administrators of the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (Serikat Buruh Migran Indonesia/SBMI) at the research sites. The findings show that victims of trafficking generally come from poor families, have low levels of education, face limited access to decent work, and are recruited through non-procedural channels. Victims experienced labor exploitation, physical and psychological violence, document confiscation, communication restrictions, unpaid wages, and psychosocial trauma. Current case responses remain dominated by repatriation, legal advocacy, and family reunification, while post-trauma social rehabilitation has not yet been implemented systematically. From a social work perspective, victims of trafficking require a person-in-environment approach, trauma-informed care, a rights-based approach, case management, and socio-economic reintegration. This study recommends an integrated social rehabilitation model that includes identification, comprehensive assessment, initial protection, shelter services, psychosocial support, legal assistance, health services, economic empowerment, family reunification, social reintegration, and continuous monitoring.

Keywords: trafficking in persons, TPPO, social rehabilitation, social work, trauma-informed care, social reintegration.

Introduction

Trafficking in persons is a social, legal, economic, mental health, and humanitarian problem that remains a serious challenge in Indonesia. This phenomenon is not only related to criminal acts committed by perpetrators against victims, but also reflects structural vulnerabilities within families, communities, the labor market, and the social protection system. In many cases, trafficking occurs because victims are in a weak economic situation, have low levels of education, have limited access to information,

and lack safe employment options. These conditions make victims more likely to accept job offers that appear promising but actually contain risks of exploitation.

As an archipelagic country with high population mobility, Indonesia faces major challenges in preventing trafficking in persons. Labor mobility between regions and across national borders creates opportunities for people to improve their welfare, but at the same time it may create space for illegal recruitment practices, document falsification, contract fraud, and labor exploitation. The initial research manuscript states that trafficking in persons in Indonesia is linked to social vulnerability, economic necessity, and the continued opportunities available for perpetrators to exploit policy loopholes and weak field supervision.

From a social work perspective, victims of trafficking cannot be viewed only as victims of crime; they are also human beings who experience damaged social relationships, loss of safety, decreased self-confidence, and impaired social functioning. Victims need not only to be freed from places of exploitation, but also to regain their dignity, receive psychosocial recovery, obtain family support, secure legal protection, and have opportunities to rebuild their social and economic lives. Therefore, social work interventions must be holistic, gradual, rights-based, and sensitive to victims' traumatic experiences.

The person-in-environment (PIE) approach is an important framework for understanding trafficking in persons. This approach places the individual within a dynamic relationship with social, economic, cultural, family, and institutional environments. Victims of trafficking often come from poor families, environments with limited employment opportunities, low educational backgrounds, and communities with insufficient education on safe migration. In these conditions, victims' decisions to accept job offers cannot be separated from environmental pressures that push them to seek income in ways perceived as quick and feasible. Thus, trafficking in persons is the result of the intersection between individual vulnerability and weaknesses in environmental protection systems.

Trauma-informed care is also an important foundation in assisting victims. Van Rooy et al. (2025) explain that service pathways for victims of trafficking need to include victim identification, initial response, referral, coordination, and follow-up while paying attention to traumatic experiences. Tsoi et al. (2025) emphasize that services for survivors of trafficking must be designed comprehensively, survivor-informed, and multidisciplinary because victims' needs are not limited to a single aspect, but include mental health, legal protection, safety, family, and life sustainability. In this context, victims should not be treated merely as witnesses or sources of legal information, but as subjects who have the right to recovery.

Gibbs et al. (2024) affirm that the principles of trauma-informed care include safety, trust, transparency, peer support, collaboration, empowerment, and sensitivity to victims' cultural backgrounds and experiences. These principles are highly relevant for victims of trafficking because they often experience deception, threats, violence,

isolation, control, and loss of control over life decisions. If services are delivered hastily, judgmentally, or with excessive emphasis on legal proof, victims may experience retraumatization. Therefore, the service system must ensure that every assessment, interview, referral, and assistance process is conducted safely, confidentially, empathetically, and with respect for victims' choices.

A rights-based approach is also a central perspective because victims of trafficking are rights holders whose dignity must be restored. Rodda (2024) emphasizes the importance of protecting survivors' rights to access a dignified life, including the right to be free from stigma, the right to employment, education, legal services, and social support. Islam (2024) shows that post-trafficking reintegration is influenced by intersectional challenges, particularly gender, poverty, stigma, and unequal power relations. This strengthens the argument that victim assistance must address the structural roots that make victims vulnerable to exploitation.

In Indonesia, the handling of trafficking victims has involved various parties, including the central government, local governments, police, social affairs offices, manpower offices, witness and victim protection agencies, civil society organizations, international organizations, and migrant worker communities. One civil society organization that plays an important role is the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (SBMI). SBMI receives complaints, provides case assistance, builds advocacy networks, facilitates repatriation, provides safe migration education, and connects victims with relevant institutions. However, the findings show that social rehabilitation programs for victims of trafficking have not been implemented in a fixed and systematic manner.

This problem highlights the need for a social rehabilitation model that does not position victims merely as short-term aid recipients, but as survivors who require long-term assistance. Social rehabilitation needs to include case reception, identification, comprehensive assessment, case conferences, intervention planning, shelter services, psychosocial support, health services, psychological counseling, legal assistance, family strengthening, economic empowerment, social reintegration, and monitoring. Such a model must be developed by integrating the roles of social workers, psychologists, health professionals, legal advocates, families, communities, and government and non-governmental institutions.

Based on the above explanation, this article is organized to answer three main objectives. First, it describes the problem of trafficking in persons in Indonesia based on qualitative research findings. Second, it analyzes response efforts undertaken by government and non-governmental organizations, particularly through the role of SBMI. Third, it formulates an appropriate social rehabilitation model for victims of trafficking by strengthening contemporary theories and concepts in social work, trauma-informed care, rights-based approaches, and socio-economic reintegration.

Research Method

This study used a qualitative approach with a case study method. A qualitative approach was selected because the study seeks to understand the experiences of trafficking victims in depth, including the background of departure, recruitment processes, forms of exploitation, psychosocial impacts, mechanisms for case handling, and social rehabilitation needs. A case study was used because the phenomenon of trafficking in persons cannot be separated from the social, family, community, recruitment network, assisting institution, and service system contexts surrounding victims. The research sites were located within the work areas of the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union, namely Indramayu Regency, Sukabumi Regency, Malang Regency, and Kupang Regency. These locations were selected because they have experience in assisting migrant worker and trafficking cases and have civil society networks actively providing advocacy and assistance to victims. The locations also reflect variations in social, economic, and migration contexts that enrich the understanding of the dynamics of trafficking in persons in Indonesia.

Research informants were selected purposively, namely those with direct experience or in-depth knowledge of trafficking cases. Informants included victims of trafficking in persons, victims' families, SBMI case workers or staff, and related parties who understood victim assistance processes. The criteria for victim informants included having experienced recruitment, transportation, transfer, placement, or exploitation processes indicating trafficking in persons; being willing to provide information; and being able to be interviewed with due attention to confidentiality, safety, and respect for the victim's psychological condition. Data collection techniques included documentation studies, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. Documentation studies were used to examine case records, organizational documents, regulations, activity reports, and other materials relevant to trafficking in persons. In-depth interviews were used to explore the experiences of victims and families, including reasons for departure, recruitment processes, working conditions, forms of exploitation, repatriation processes, and recovery needs. Focus group discussions were used to explore the views of case workers, organizational administrators, and related parties regarding patterns of case handling, service constraints, and recommendations for a social rehabilitation model.

Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting data relevant to the research focus, such as victim characteristics, vulnerability factors, recruitment patterns, forms of exploitation, psychosocial impacts, the role of SBMI, and social rehabilitation needs. Data were displayed in thematic narratives so that relationships among phenomena could be explained comprehensively. Conclusions were drawn through repeated verification of information obtained from victims, families, case workers, and supporting documents. Data trustworthiness was maintained through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was strengthened through source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was

conducted by comparing information from victims, families, case workers, and organizational documents. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of interviews, focus group discussions, and documentation. Transferability was strengthened by providing detailed descriptions of the research context. Dependability was maintained through documentation of the research process, while confirmability was ensured by linking findings to traceable data and analytical processes.

Ethical considerations were an important part of this study because the research subjects were victims of trafficking who had traumatic experiences. The study needed to ensure informed consent, confidentiality of identity, respect for informants' choices, and avoidance of questions that could trigger retraumatization. Informants were given explanations about the purpose of the study, the type of information to be collected, the right to refuse to answer, and the right to stop the interview if they felt uncomfortable. These ethical principles are consistent with trauma-informed care, which emphasizes safety, choice, and victim empowerment.

Research Findings

The findings show that trafficking in persons is a layered social problem and cannot be understood merely as a criminal event. This phenomenon is closely related to economic vulnerability, low education, limited access to decent work, weak literacy on safe migration, and suboptimal protection systems for prospective migrant workers and their families. Based on field data, victims of trafficking generally live in vulnerable socio-economic conditions. They are driven to work outside their region or abroad due to family needs, limited income sources in their places of origin, and hopes of earning better income. In this context, job offers from agents or sponsors are often accepted as a way out of economic pressure, even though information about legality, risks, employment contracts, and protection is not fully understood.

Most informants in this study were women. This indicates that women remain a highly vulnerable group in trafficking practices, particularly because of high demand for female labor in domestic work, household work, caregiving, and other informal sectors. Domestic work often takes place in private spaces, limiting state, community, and protection agency oversight. As a result, victims working in this sector are more likely to experience isolation, communication restrictions, excessive working hours, document confiscation, verbal abuse, physical violence, and unpaid wages. Women's vulnerability is also influenced by social constructions that position women as responsible for supporting family income, while at the same time not always being equipped with adequate information, skills, and access to protection.

In terms of education, most victims had low educational backgrounds, especially elementary and junior secondary school graduates. Low education affects victims' ability to understand information about safe migration procedures, employment contracts, workers' rights, risks of exploitation, and complaint mechanisms when violations occur. Low education also limits employment options. Under these

conditions, job offers promising high wages, quick processing, and simple requirements become highly attractive. Victims tend to trust recruiters' promises because they do not have sufficient knowledge to verify the legitimacy of agents, the contents of employment contracts, visa status, placement locations, or institutions responsible for their protection.

In terms of age, most victims were of productive age. However, some victims were underage at the time of departure. In several cases, underage departure was made possible through the falsification of documents, such as identity cards or passports. This finding shows that trafficking in persons does not only occur at the placement stage in destination areas or countries, but begins at the recruitment stage in the place of origin. Document falsification reveals the involvement of local actors who exploit weak administrative supervision, families' limited understanding, and victims' desire to obtain employment quickly. This also shows that trafficking prevention cannot be carried out only at points of departure or borders, but must begin in villages, families, communities, and civil registration service systems.

Economic factors were the main reason victims accepted job offers. Victims generally departed because they wanted to help parents, finance children's education, pay family debts, meet household needs, or improve socio-economic conditions. Economic pressure placed victims in an unequal position when dealing with recruiters. On one side, victims needed employment; on the other, recruiters had information, networks, and power to manage the departure process. In this position, victims easily believed promises of high wages, light work, safe accommodation, and fast departure processes. Victims also often lacked the courage to refuse because the offer was perceived as a rare opportunity to escape poverty.

In addition to economic factors, family factors also played an important role in shaping victims' vulnerability. Some victims came from families facing severe economic pressure, household conflict, limited social support, or dependence on the income of particular family members. In such situations, the decision to work outside the region or abroad was often not merely an individual decision, but also a family decision. Families could provide encouragement, support, or approval because they hoped victims would help improve the family's economic situation. However, families did not always have sufficient knowledge about trafficking risks, proper placement procedures, and protection mechanisms when victims encountered problems.

Victim recruitment patterns were generally carried out through illegal agents, local sponsors, brokers, neighbors, friends, or people known to the family. Social closeness between recruiters and victims made persuasion easier. Victims and families felt trust because recruiters were not strangers. In many cases, recruiters used narratives of previous migrant workers' success, promises of high income, and ease of departure. Recruiters also often failed to explain job risks, legal status, contract terms, or actual working conditions. Once victims had departed, they only then discovered that the work they performed did not match the initial promises.

The forms of exploitation experienced by victims varied. Some victims experienced forced labor with long working hours and inadequate rest. Some experienced unpaid wages, unclear wage deductions, or wage deductions used to pay departure costs that had not previously been explained openly. Others experienced verbal abuse, physical violence, threats, communication restrictions, passport confiscation, and prohibition from leaving the workplace. These conditions placed victims in situations where they lost control over themselves. Victims were not free to determine working hours, communicate with their families, move elsewhere, or seek help.

Based on the elements of trafficking in persons, the majority of cases experienced by informants showed the presence of process, means, and purpose of exploitation. The process element appeared in recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of victims. The means element appeared in deception, abuse of a position of vulnerability, document falsification, inducement, pressure, threats, or other forms of coercion. The purpose element appeared in labor exploitation, inhumane use of victims' labor, and profit-taking from victims' powerless positions. Thus, victims' experiences cannot be viewed as ordinary labor problems, but as violations of human rights requiring protection, recovery, and law enforcement responses.

The impacts experienced by victims were not only economic, but also physical, psychological, social, and spiritual. Physically, victims could experience severe fatigue, illness, declining health, injuries due to violence, or health problems caused by poor working conditions. Psychologically, victims experienced fear, anxiety, insecurity, nightmares, sleep disturbances, hypervigilance, shame, guilt, loss of self-confidence, and difficulty trusting others. Some victims showed trauma symptoms that persisted long after returning to Indonesia. Such trauma emerged because victims had been in situations of threat, isolation, helplessness, and lack of control over their bodies and lives.

Social impacts also appeared in the process of victims' return. Victims who returned to their places of origin were not always immediately accepted by their environment. Some victims faced stigma because they were considered to have failed at work, brought problems, or failed to meet family economic expectations. Some victims also felt ashamed to interact with neighbors because their experiences were seen as a disgrace. Such social stigma could worsen victims' psychological condition. Victims who should receive support could instead experience exclusion, negative judgment, or social pressure. In this situation, social reintegration becomes a crucial stage because victims' recovery is determined not only by individual conditions but also by family and community acceptance.

The findings also show that most victims returned to Indonesia with SBMI assistance or by escaping from exploitative situations. SBMI assistance was very important because the organization is close to migrant worker communities, victims' families, and advocacy networks at local, national, and international levels. In many

cases, victims or families contacted SBMI after encountering difficulties accessing formal institutions. This indicates that civil society organizations hold a strategic position as an entry point for complaints, particularly for communities that do not yet understand government service procedures or feel more comfortable reporting to organizations close to the community.

Case handling by SBMI generally began with community complaints, direct visits from victims or families, the results of outreach activities, or reports from networks. After receiving a complaint, SBMI conducted initial tracing, identified the chronology of the case, communicated with the family, and requested a power of attorney as the basis for assistance. The power of attorney was important because SBMI needed legitimacy to coordinate with various parties, both government and non-governmental institutions. SBMI then provided case assistance through coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the police, local governments, Manpower Offices, Social Affairs Offices, DP3A, LPSK, IOM, embassies, consulates, legal aid institutions, and civil society networks.

SBMI's role in assisting victims can be understood through several social work functions. First, SBMI carries out an advocacy function, namely fighting for victims' rights to obtain protection, repatriation, legal assistance, and access to services. Second, SBMI performs a broker or service-linking function, connecting victims with institutions that have the authority or resources to help. Third, SBMI performs an accompaniment function, assisting victims and families in understanding case processes, accessing services, and dealing with psychosocial pressure. Fourth, SBMI performs an educational function by providing information to prospective migrant workers, former migrant workers, families, and communities about trafficking in persons, safe migration, workers' rights, and the risks of illegal agents.

The findings also reveal limitations in victim assistance. Services received by victims generally included repatriation, family reunification, education about trafficking, legal assistance, and in some cases entrepreneurship training. These services are important, but they are not sufficient to address victims' recovery needs comprehensively. Victims who experience trauma, physical violence, psychological pressure, and social vulnerability require more systematic social rehabilitation. Social rehabilitation does not merely mean returning victims to their families; it also means helping victims restore social functioning, safety, self-confidence, family relationships, life skills, and economic independence.

Another limitation found was the absence of a permanent program specifically designed for the social rehabilitation of trafficking victims. SBMI has extensive networks and experience in case handling, but it does not yet have a complete, sustainable, and adequately resourced social rehabilitation system. Rehabilitative assistance still depends heavily on work networks, referrals, the availability of service institutions, and support from other parties. This condition causes victim services to be inconsistent from one case to another. Victims located in areas with strong service networks may receive

assistance more quickly, while victims in areas with limited networks may face barriers to accessing social rehabilitation.

These findings demonstrate the urgent need to develop a more integrated social rehabilitation model for victims of trafficking in persons. The model needs to begin with case reception, identification, initial assessment, outreach, intake, and engagement. At the initial stage, social workers or case workers need to build a sense of safety and trust with victims. Victims of trafficking are often in conditions of fear, suspicion, shame, or unreadiness to openly recount their experiences. Therefore, the initial approach must be empathetic, nonjudgmental, confidential, and respectful of victims' choices. The principle of informed consent needs to be applied at every stage of service so that victims understand their rights, risks, benefits, and available service options.

The next stage is comprehensive assessment. Assessment should not only explore the chronology of the case, but also cover physical, psychological, social, legal, economic, educational, spiritual, family, safety, and potential aspects of victims. Assessment also needs to examine the needs of victims' families and communities of origin because recovery does not occur only at the individual level. Victims who return to unsafe or unsupportive family environments are at risk of repeated pressure. Therefore, family and social environment assessment becomes an important part of determining whether victims can be reunified with their families, need temporary placement in shelters, or require referral to other protection services.

After assessment, case conferences or multidisciplinary case discussions are needed. Case discussions involve social workers, case workers, psychologists, health professionals, legal officers, families, and related institutions. The goal is to develop intervention plans suited to victims' needs. In trafficking cases, victims' needs are often complex and cannot be addressed by a single profession. Victims may require health services, psychological counseling, legal protection, repatriation, shelter, social assistance, skills training, and economic support. Case conferences help ensure that services are coordinated and do not run separately.

The implementation of social rehabilitation services needs to include initial protection through shelters or safe houses, fulfillment of basic needs, psychosocial stabilization, counseling, medical services, legal assistance, self-development, recreational activities, and skills training. Shelter should not be understood merely as temporary housing, but as a safe space for recovery. Within shelters, victims need a supportive environment, freedom from threats, structured daily activities, emotional support, and opportunities to rebuild self-confidence. Psychosocial services in shelters need to be delivered gradually, beginning with emotional stabilization, strengthening of safety, restoration of self-esteem, and preparation for reintegration.

Social reintegration is the final stage that strongly determines the sustainability of victims' recovery. Victims who have recovered physically and begun to stabilize psychologically need to be prepared to return to their families or communities. However, repatriation must not be carried out hastily. It must first be ensured that the

family can accept the victim, the social environment is sufficiently safe, and ongoing support is available. If the family is not yet ready, social workers need to strengthen the family through education, family counseling, mediation, and preparation for acceptance. Reintegration also needs to be accompanied by access to education, health services, productive business assistance, vocational training, and post-service monitoring.

Overall, this study shows that assistance for victims of trafficking requires a shift in orientation from rescue and repatriation alone toward comprehensive recovery. Victims do not only need to be removed from exploitative situations; they also need assistance to recover from trauma, regain dignity, build economic independence, and perform social functions more effectively. SBMI has demonstrated an important role in advocacy, assistance, and case-handling networks. However, in order to optimize services for victims, a standardized, integrated, trauma-based, rights-based social rehabilitation model involving multiple stakeholders on a sustainable basis is required.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that trafficking in persons is a multidimensional problem that must be analyzed through structural, ecological, and psychosocial perspectives. Victims of trafficking should not be understood as individuals who simply made poor decisions in choosing employment, but as individuals in vulnerable conditions caused by economic pressure, low education, limited access to information, weak family protection, and illegal recruitment practices that exploit their disadvantaged position. In the person-in-environment perspective, individuals are always in reciprocal relationships with social, economic, cultural, and institutional environments. Therefore, victims' vulnerability to trafficking must be read as the result of interactions between personal factors and environmental factors that do not support victims' self-protection.

The dominant economic factors found in this study show that poverty remains a key driver of vulnerability to trafficking in persons. Victims accepted job offers because they hoped to improve family conditions, pay debts, or meet basic needs. However, poverty does not operate alone. It intersects with low education, limited local employment, gender inequality, and weak safe migration literacy. Fernández-Sánchez et al. (2025) affirm that labor trafficking among migrant populations often arises from structural inequality and weak legal protection for economically disadvantaged groups. Thus, prevention of trafficking cannot be carried out merely through appeals for people to be cautious of illegal agents, but also through strengthening family economies, safe migration education, expansion of decent work, and social protection for vulnerable groups.

The findings on the dominance of female victims demonstrate the importance of gender analysis in understanding trafficking in persons. Women are more widely involved in domestic and informal sectors that carry high risks of exploitation because

they take place in private spaces and are minimally supervised. Islam (2024) explains that women survivors of trafficking face intersectional reintegration challenges, namely the convergence of gender, poverty, social stigma, and power relations within families and communities. In the context of this study, women victims of trafficking experienced not only labor exploitation but also psychosocial pressure after returning to society. Shame, fear of being judged as failures, and social stigma can hinder recovery. Therefore, interventions for women victims need to be gender-sensitive, rights-based, and attentive to power relations that shape victims' experiences.

From the perspective of trauma-informed care, the findings show that victims of trafficking need services that are not only administrative and legalistic but also attentive to their traumatic experiences. Victims who have experienced violence, threats, isolation, document confiscation, communication restrictions, and forced labor may experience complex trauma. Tsoi et al. (2025) emphasize that services for trafficking victims must be specifically designed because victims' trauma is often long-lasting and not always immediately visible. The main principles of trauma-informed care are creating safety, building trust, providing choices to victims, encouraging collaboration, strengthening empowerment, and respecting victims' cultural backgrounds. These principles are relevant to the findings, especially because victims of trafficking often feel that they have lost control over their lives.

Case responses that have so far focused more on repatriation and legal advocacy need to be expanded into sustainable social rehabilitation. Repatriation is indeed important because victims need to be removed from exploitative situations. However, repatriation is not the end of recovery. Victims returning to their places of origin still carry traumatic experiences, fear, shame, economic vulnerability, and the possibility of social stigma. Cordisco Tsai et al. (2024) affirm that trauma-based interventions and mind-body approaches can help trafficking survivors rebuild a sense of safety, self-control, and psychological resilience. In the context of social work, social rehabilitation must include physical, psychological, social, legal, spiritual, educational, and economic recovery. In other words, victims need assistance so that they can again perform social functions, make decisions, build healthy relationships, and develop independence.

The role of social workers is very important in this process. Social workers can act as case managers who coordinate the various services needed by victims. In trafficking cases, victims do not need only one type of assistance, but a combination of services covering protection, health, psychology, law, social support, economy, and family. Van Rooy et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of a clear care pathway for trafficking victims, from identification, initial response, referral, coordination, to follow-up. The findings of this study are consistent with this concept. Without strong case management, victim services risk becoming fragmented. Victims may move from one institution to another without process certainty, repeat traumatic stories multiple times, or lose access to follow-up services.

SBMI's role in this study demonstrates the strength of civil society organizations in reaching victims and families. SBMI is close to migrant worker communities, understands case patterns, and has cross-institutional advocacy networks. This role is important because victims and families often find it easier to access organizations that are close to them than to directly access formal institutions. However, SBMI's limitations in providing social rehabilitation programs still indicate the need for institutional strengthening. The government needs to view civil society organizations as strategic partners in the protection system for trafficking victims. Such partnerships can be realized through training, funding, service operational standards, referral systems, social work supervision, and case data integration.

Social reintegration is an aspect that requires special attention. Victims of trafficking who return to families and communities are not automatically free from risk. If the family's economic condition remains difficult, if victims experience stigma, or if the community does not understand trafficking in persons, victims may again be placed in vulnerable situations. Sibanda (2025) emphasizes that services for women survivors of trafficking must be multidimensional and not oriented only toward material needs, but also toward psychosocial recovery, protection of rights, and capacity strengthening. Therefore, victim reintegration is not sufficient if it only returns victims to their families. Reintegration must be accompanied by family assessment, strengthening of social support, productive business assistance, vocational training, access to education, access to health services, and monitoring.

Economic empowerment is an important component in preventing victims from re-entering the trafficking cycle. However, economic empowerment should not be understood merely as the provision of capital or short training. Victims require business mentoring, financial literacy, motivational strengthening, potential mapping, market access, and family support. Economic programs for trafficking victims must be designed as part of social rehabilitation, not as separate assistance. In this way, economic empowerment becomes a means of strengthening social functioning rather than merely a short-term productive activity.

Based on the overall findings and analysis, the social rehabilitation model for victims of trafficking needs to be built on five main principles. First, it must be rights-based, positioning victims as subjects with rights to protection, recovery, information, participation, and dignity. Second, it must be trauma-based, ensuring that all services create safety and do not cause retraumatization. Third, it must be case-management based, coordinating various services according to victims' needs. Fourth, it must be family- and community-based, involving victims' social environments in the recovery process. Fifth, it must be empowerment-based, helping victims build social and economic independence. With such a model, assistance for victims of trafficking does not stop at case resolution but moves toward humane, sustainable, and transformative recovery.

Recommended Social Rehabilitation Model for Victims of Trafficking in Persons

The social rehabilitation model recommended in this article is an integrated model that places victims as the main subjects of recovery. This model is not only oriented toward repatriation, but toward the comprehensive restoration of social functioning. The first stage is case reception and initial identification. Cases may be received through reports from victims, families, communities, hotlines, social media, institutional referrals, or outreach. At this stage, social workers or case workers conduct initial screening to identify indications of trafficking based on the elements of process, means, and purpose of exploitation.

The second stage is intake and engagement. Social workers build initial relationships with victims and families in a safe, empathetic, confidential, and nonjudgmental manner. At this stage, victims are provided with information about their rights, available types of services, possible risks, and choices to accept or refuse services. Informed consent is a key principle because victims have the right to understand every action that will be taken toward them. This stage is important because many victims of trafficking experience loss of trust in others due to deception, threats, and exploitation they have endured.

The third stage is comprehensive assessment. Assessment covers physical, psychological, social, legal, economic, educational, spiritual, family, safety, interest, talent, potential, and protection needs. Assessment is not conducted only once; it may be ongoing according to changes in victims' conditions. Assessment also needs to involve the family when it is safe to do so, because families have a major influence on victims' recovery and social reintegration.

The fourth stage is a case conference or multidisciplinary case discussion. Assessment results are discussed with social workers, psychologists, health professionals, legal advocates, families, and related institutions to develop a service plan. Case conferences help ensure that intervention plans are not prepared unilaterally but are based on victims' real needs and the capacity of available services. In trafficking cases, case discussions are also important to maintain victims' safety, especially when threats from perpetrators or recruitment networks remain.

The fifth stage is the implementation of social rehabilitation services. These services include shelters or safe houses, fulfillment of basic needs, psychosocial guidance, medical services, psychological counseling, psychiatric counseling when needed, self-development, recreational activities, legal assistance, skills training, and economic empowerment. Services are provided gradually while considering victims' readiness. Victims who are still in crisis need stabilization and safety before participating in self-development or economic empowerment programs.

The sixth stage is reunification and social reintegration. Reunification is carried out when the family is assessed as safe, accepting of the victim, and able to support the recovery process. If the family is not yet ready, family strengthening must be conducted through education, family counseling, or mediation. Social reintegration includes access

to education, health services, productive business assistance, vocational training, strengthening of social relationships, and community acceptance. This stage must be accompanied by monitoring so that victims do not re-enter exploitation networks.

The seventh stage is evaluation, termination, and continuous monitoring. Evaluation is conducted to determine whether services have met victims' needs, whether victims feel safe, whether families can provide support, and whether victims have better socio-economic access. Termination is carried out when service goals have been achieved or when victims choose to discontinue services. After termination, monitoring remains necessary to ensure recovery sustainability, especially in the areas of safety, mental health, economy, and social relationships.

Table 1. Social Rehabilitation Model for Victims of Trafficking in Persons

Stage	Main Activities	Objective
Reception and identification	Complaint reception, initial screening, verification of trafficking indications, home visit	To determine initial protection needs and victim safety
Intake and engagement	Rapport building, informed consent, explanation of victim rights, service agreement	To build trust and ensure victim participation
Comprehensive assessment	Assessment of physical, psychological, social, legal, economic, family, and spiritual aspects	To map victims' needs and resources
Case conference	Multidisciplinary discussion and intervention planning	To integrate services in a coordinated manner
Social rehabilitation	Shelter, basic needs, psychosocial support, health services, counseling, legal assistance	To restore safety, health, and social functioning
Reintegration	Reunification, family strengthening, access to education/health, economic empowerment	To build socio-economic independence and prevent re-exploitation
Monitoring and termination	Service evaluation, case supervision, termination, follow-up	To ensure the sustainability of recovery

Ultimately, the success of this model is strongly determined by the monitoring and evaluation system. Monitoring should not only assess whether victims have been repatriated, but whether they truly feel safe, are accepted by their families, have access to services, have sources of livelihood, and are not again exposed to the risk of exploitation. Evaluation also needs to examine the quality of inter-institutional coordination, response speed, victim satisfaction, and sustainability of post-service support. Thus, the social rehabilitation model does not stop as a concept, but becomes a practical instrument for improving the protection system for trafficking victims in Indonesia.

Implementation strategies must also consider financing sustainability. Social rehabilitation for victims of trafficking requires funding for shelters, health services, counseling, transportation, legal aid, training, business assistance, and monitoring. Therefore, the government needs to provide special financing schemes that can be accessed by service institutions. The business sector may also be involved through corporate social responsibility programs, particularly to support vocational training, market access, and business development for victims after reintegration.

At the direct service level, every victim needs an individual intervention plan. This plan contains short-, medium-, and long-term needs. Short-term needs include safety, food, clothing, accommodation, health services, and psychological stabilization. Medium-term needs include legal assistance, counseling, family strengthening, and skills development. Long-term needs include education, employment, productive business, community acceptance, and monitoring. This individual plan must be flexible because victims' conditions may change during the recovery process.

At the district/city level, coordination mechanisms need to be established to connect the Social Affairs Office, Manpower Office, DP3A, police, community health centers, hospitals, social welfare institutions, civil society organizations, and legal aid services. These mechanisms can be formalized in standard operating procedures that regulate complaint reception, victim identification, assessment, referral, shelter services, legal assistance, and social reintegration. With clear SOPs, each institution understands its role and victims do not experience confusion in accessing assistance.

The implementation strategy for the social rehabilitation model for victims of trafficking needs to begin at the local level because victim recruitment often occurs in villages or communities of origin. Village governments, community leaders, social cadres, community social workers, women's organizations, schools, and religious institutions need to be involved in trafficking prevention education. This education should not only explain the dangers of trafficking, but also describe safe migration procedures, how to verify agent legality, the importance of employment contracts, risks of document falsification, and complaint mechanisms when indications of exploitation occur.

Strategy for Implementing the Model at the Local Level

The third practical implication is the need to integrate data and cross-institutional referrals. Trafficking cases often involve multiple actors and regions, so referral systems must be clear from the village, district/city, provincial, national, and overseas representative levels. Victim data must be managed carefully so that victims' identities are not disclosed to unauthorized parties. At the same time, such data are needed to ensure that victims receive continuous services and that assistance is not interrupted after repatriation.

The second practical implication is the importance of trauma-informed care training for all officers who interact with victims. Complaint service officers, legal

advocates, social workers, health professionals, shelter staff, law enforcement officers, and community volunteers need to understand signs of trauma, ways to communicate with victims, confidentiality principles, and ways to avoid questions that blame victims. This training not only improves service quality, but also strengthens victims' trust in the protection system.

The first practical implication is the need for a standardized assessment for victims of trafficking that integrates legal, social, psychological, health, family, and economic aspects. Assessment has often been separated among legal, health, and social institutions. As a result, victims must repeat traumatic stories to many parties. With an integrated assessment, basic information can be collected more ethically, safely, and without causing retraumatization. Social workers can serve as assessment coordinators because the profession has a mandate to view human needs holistically and connect victims with relevant resources.

The social rehabilitation model for victims of trafficking developed in this article has theoretical implications for the development of contemporary social work practice. Theoretically, this model expands the application of person-in-environment in the context of trafficking by placing victims within the relationship between individual vulnerability, family pressure, recruitment networks, informal labor markets, migration policy, and social protection systems. Thus, victims' problems are not reduced to individual issues but understood as the result of interactions among various mutually influencing systems. This approach is important because social work practice must be able to read patterns of structural injustice that make a person more vulnerable to exploitation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Trafficking in persons in Indonesia is a multidimensional problem rooted in poverty, low education, gender inequality, weak safe migration literacy, limited decent work, and illegal recruitment practices. Victims of trafficking generally come from vulnerable groups and experience exploitation through deception, abuse of a position of vulnerability, document falsification, forced labor, violence, document confiscation, communication restrictions, and unpaid wages. Responses to victims have so far been carried out through advocacy, legal assistance, repatriation, family reunification, trafficking education, and strengthening information on safe migration. SBMI plays an important role as a civil society organization close to victims and families. SBMI functions as an advocate, service broker, companion, educator, and connector between victims and various institutions. However, post-trauma social rehabilitation services have not yet been implemented systematically and sustainably. Victims of trafficking need not only release from exploitative situations, but also psychosocial recovery, counseling, health services, legal protection, family strengthening, economic empowerment, and social reintegration. Therefore, an integrated social rehabilitation

model needs to be developed based on social work, trauma-informed care, rights-based approaches, case management, and socio-economic empowerment.

Recommendations

The government needs to develop and strengthen national standards for the social rehabilitation of victims of trafficking in persons, covering case reception, identification, assessment, protection, psychosocial support, legal services, health services, economic empowerment, reintegration, and monitoring. These standards are important so that victim services do not depend solely on the condition of each institution but have minimum guidelines that can be applied consistently. Social workers need to be formally involved in all stages of trafficking victim assistance, from case reception, assessment, case conferences, legal assistance, rehabilitation, family strengthening, economic empowerment, to social reintegration. The role of social workers as case managers needs to be strengthened so that victim services do not become fragmented.

SBMI and other civil society organizations need institutional support, training, funding, referral systems, and service supervision so that they can provide social rehabilitation more systematically. Governments and international organizations need to strengthen partnerships with civil society organizations because these organizations are close to victim communities. Shelter services need to be strengthened so that they not only provide safe accommodation but also become centers for psychosocial recovery, self-strengthening, counseling, skills training, legal assistance, and preparation for social reintegration. Shelters also need procedures that are trauma-sensitive, protect confidentiality, and respect victims' choices.

Families and communities need to be involved in the recovery process so that victims do not experience stigma, rejection, or social exclusion. Community education on trafficking in persons, safe migration, and support for survivors is an important part of preventing re-exploitation. Economic empowerment programs for victims need to be developed through vocational training, productive business assistance, financial literacy, business mentoring, and market access. Economic programs must be integrated with psychosocial recovery so that victims have the mental readiness, social support, and skills needed to become independent. Further research needs to be conducted to test the effectiveness of the social rehabilitation model for victims of trafficking through quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches. Future research also needs to explore the experiences of male victims, children, persons with disabilities, and victims who experience repeated exploitation.

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