MAHARASHTRA CYBER

CCC_CA_2025_10

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# HIDDEN THREAT

## Cyber Slavery & Indian Youth

2025

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PUBLIC ADVISORY

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This advisory highlights the urgent threat of cyber slavery frauds that are targeting Indian citizens—particularly youth between 20 and 30 years of age—under the guise of high-paying overseas job offers. Over the past 18 months, more than 5,000 Indians are estimated to have been trafficked to cyber scam hubs in Southeast Asia, including Cambodia, Myanmar, and Laos.

Victims are lured via WhatsApp, Telegram, and shady job portals, often paying up to ₹2,00,000 to fake agents for job placements abroad. Upon arrival, they are taken to secured compounds, stripped of their passports, and forced to operate cyber fraud operations for 15–18 hours a day under threat, violence, and surveillance. In April 2024 alone, over 250 Indians were rescued from such cybercrime syndicates in Cambodia.

This advisory explains the modus operandi of traffickers, highlights recent rescue cases, and offers practical safety tips to help individuals avoid falling into these traps. It also provides verified government resources, including the eMigrate portal, Indian embassy contacts, the Cybercrime Helpline (1930), and support from Maharashtra Cyber via the helpline number (1945) for immediate reporting and assistance.

The objective is to equip Indian citizens with the awareness and resources to protect themselves and their communities, and to stop this growing form of digital-age human trafficking.

# INTRODUCTION

In recent months, India has witnessed a disturbing rise in cases where citizens—particularly young job seekers and tech-savvy youth—have been lured abroad by fake job offers and subsequently forced into cybercrime operations. These victims are trafficked under the pretense of legitimate employment in countries like Cambodia, Myanmar, and Laos, only to find themselves trapped in high-surveillance compounds, subjected to abuse, and coerced into running online scams targeting global victims.

This emerging form of exploitation—widely referred to as cyber slavery—represents a dangerous blend of human trafficking and cybercrime. Victims are typically contacted through messaging apps, fake job portals, or unlicensed recruitment agents, and promised high-paying roles such as “crypto analyst” or “digital marketing executive.”

This advisory has been created to raise awareness, educate citizens, and provide clear preventive and corrective measures. It includes real case studies, key statistics, and a list of emergency contacts to help individuals protect themselves and support others who may be at risk.

**Key Highlights:**

- **Explains how cyber slavery frauds are executed, step by step**
- **Presents recent numbers and real cases involving Indian citizens**
- **Lists precautions to verify job offers and avoid fraud**
- **Shares helpline numbers for immediate assistance and rescue**
- **Provides official government resources like the eMigrate portal and embassy contacts**
- **Encourages citizens to spread awareness and report suspicious activity**

# WHAT IS CYBER SLAVERY?

Cyber slavery is when people are tricked by fake job offers, usually for work in another country, and once they arrive, they are forced to work in online scams against their will. Their passports are taken away, they are not allowed to leave, and they are often abused or threatened if they refuse to do the work.


It's a modern form of human trafficking where victims are used by criminal gangs to cheat others through fake websites, investment scams, or online fraud, while being kept under constant surveillance and fear.

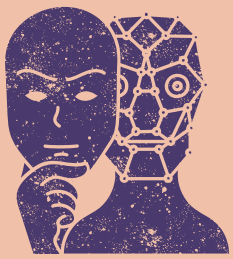
# THE SCAM PLAYBOOK

## TARGETING

Victims (usually aged 18–35) are approached via WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, or shady job portals with attractive job offers abroad.

## FAKE PROMISE

Job offers include roles such as "Data Entry", "Customer Support", "Crypto Analyst", or "Digital Marketing Executive", promising ₹1–2 lakh/month.



## RECRUITMENT

Fake agents facilitate the visa, ticket, and accommodation for a fee (₹50,000–₹2,00,000). Victims are told the job is in Dubai, Thailand, etc.

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# JOURNEY INTO THE TRAP

## TRAFFICKING

After reaching the transit country (e.g., Thailand), they are moved illegally to scam hubs in Cambodia, Myanmar, or Laos.

## FORCED LABOUR

Passports are confiscated, and victims are forced to work 12–18 hours a day in guarded cybercrime compounds.

## THREATS & ABUSE

Physical violence, starvation, torture, and threats to family members are used to ensure compliance.

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# RECENT INCIDENTS

### 540 Indians Trapped in Myanmar Scam Hubs Rescued — March '25

Tricked by fake job offers, 540 Indians were forced into 18-hour scam shifts under abuse and surveillance in Myanmar.
All rescued. Traffickers under probe.

### Maharashtra Cyber Cell Rescues 64 Victims from Human Traffickers — March '25

Maharashtra Cyber's major crackdown rescued 64 Indian nationals from trafficking disguised as job offers. Victims were saved before being smuggled to scam compounds and safely repatriated. Legal action is underway against the perpetrators.

### 54 Arrested in Cyber Slavery Racket, Tamil Nadu — Feb '25

Authorities arrested 54 individuals, including six Malaysians, for luring educated youth into forced labor through fake job offers in Southeast Asia.

### International Trafficking Gang Uncovered in Cyber Slavery Scheme, Goa — Feb '25

Women were lured into cyber slavery through fake work-from-home opportunities, with plans to set up illicit call centers in India and Nepal.

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# RECOMMENDATIONS

### Stricter Regulation of Overseas Job Recruitments

Enforce mandatory background checks and licensing for recruitment agencies sending workers abroad, especially to Southeast Asia.

### Public Awareness Campaigns on Cyber Slavery Tactics

Launch nationwide awareness drives to educate job seekers about fake job offers, trafficking red flags, and safe migration practices.

### Bilateral Agreements for Rapid Rescue and Repatriation

Strengthen diplomatic ties with Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand to ensure faster identification, rescue, and repatriation of trafficked citizens.

### Dedicated Helpline and Tracking Portal for Missing Citizens Abroad

Create a centralized, multilingual helpline and tracking portal to report missing persons and monitor the status of Indians working overseas.

### Cybercrime and Human Trafficking Task Forces

Set up joint task forces combining cybercrime, immigration, and anti-trafficking units to proactively dismantle trafficking networks and online scam compounds.

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