



## Legal Protection for Indonesian Migrant Workers Against Online Scam-Based Human Trafficking

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the legal protection of Indonesian migrant workers as a vulnerable group against online scam-based human trafficking through a normative and regulatory analysis that integrates human rights and socio-religious perspectives. The research is motivated by the rapid transformation of trafficking practices into digitally mediated forced criminality, which exposes migrant workers to recruitment through fraudulent online platforms and exploitation in transnational cyber-scam operations. Using a normative juridical method combined with an interdisciplinary socio-legal approach, this study analyzes national legislation, international instruments, and ASEAN regional mechanisms to identify regulatory gaps, assess state responsibility, and evaluate victim protection frameworks. The findings reveal three major issues: fragmentation between migration, anti-trafficking, and cybercrime laws; limitations in international and regional cooperation, particularly in victim identification and the application of the non-punishment principle; and the absence of culturally and religiously responsive protection mechanisms. The study further demonstrates that Muslim Indonesian migrant workers experience intersectional vulnerability as migrants, low-wage laborers, and religious minorities, while Islamic community networks function as informal yet effective protection and rehabilitation systems. This research proposes a rights-based and socio-religious model of legal protection that integrates digital governance, normative harmonization, and the institutional recognition of faith-based organizations within national and regional referral mechanisms. The study contributes to the discourse on the protection of vulnerable groups, regulatory transformation, and transnational cyber exploitation by offering a holistic legal framework that responds to the evolving nature of technology-facilitated trafficking.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technology has transformed patterns of transnational crime, including the evolution of human trafficking into technology-facilitated forms such as online scam operations. Recent studies show that trafficking networks increasingly exploit social media, online job platforms, and encrypted communication to recruit and control victims, particularly migrant workers seeking employment abroad (Zhou et al., 2024; Kusumowijoyo et al., 2023). This phenomenon reflects what scholars describe as “cyber slavery,” where trafficked individuals are forced to participate in online fraud under coercive conditions within organized transnational criminal infrastructures (Sarkar & Shukla, 2025). The convergence of human trafficking and cybercrime not only complicates victim identification but also challenges traditional legal frameworks that rely on physical exploitation indicators (Sarkar & Shukla, 2025).

Indonesian migrant workers constitute one of the most vulnerable populations within this emerging crime pattern. Indonesia is among the largest labor-sending countries in Southeast Asia, with millions of citizens working abroad, many of whom lack adequate documentation and legal protection, making them susceptible to trafficking and exploitation (Soraya et al., 2024; US Embassy Report cited in Madani Journal, 2024). Empirical findings indicate a significant increase in cases of Indonesian nationals trafficked into online scam compounds, particularly in Cambodia and Myanmar, where victims are deceived through fraudulent job offers promising high salaries and legal employment (Kharissa et al., 2025). Upon arrival, they are subjected to forced labor, debt bondage, confiscation of passports, physical violence, and threats of criminal prosecution, illustrating a clear violation of fundamental human rights (Primastito & Sugiharto, 2024).

The online scam trafficking model demonstrates distinct operational characteristics compared to conventional trafficking. Recruitment is conducted digitally through fake job advertisements, identity manipulation, and document forgery, followed by cross-border movement facilitated by visa abuse and informal travel routes (Kharissa et al., 2025; Lasia, 2024). Victims are then coerced into committing cyber fraud, blurring the legal distinction between perpetrator and victim and often resulting in their criminalization by destination countries (Sarkar & Shukla, 2025). This legal ambiguity exposes a critical gap in international and domestic legal systems, which remain largely oriented toward traditional trafficking typologies.

Scholarly literature emphasizes that migrant workers are structurally positioned as a vulnerable group due to economic precarity, limited access to legal information, language barriers, and dependency on recruitment intermediaries (Dolhan et al., 2020). These vulnerabilities are intensified in the digital labor migration ecosystem, where deceptive online recruitment obscures risk signals and accelerates transnational mobility before regulatory safeguards can be activated (Zhou et al., 2024). Consequently, legal protection frameworks must extend beyond doctrinal analysis to incorporate socio-legal and human security perspectives.

Furthermore, the transformation of trafficking into online scam operations raises complex questions regarding state responsibility and extraterritorial protection

obligations. The principle of state responsibility requires the country of origin to exercise due diligence in preventing trafficking, protecting victims abroad, and ensuring access to remedies, even when violations occur outside its territorial jurisdiction (Najieh et al., 2025). However, fragmented jurisdiction and limited bilateral agreements with destination countries often impede effective legal intervention.

Recent legal scholarship also highlights the need for regulatory innovation, including cyber law integration, digital evidence mechanisms, and AI-based detection systems to identify trafficking patterns in online recruitment (Kusumowijoyo et al., 2023). Technological approaches can support early warning systems and strengthen cross-border investigations, but they must be accompanied by rights-based safeguards to prevent misidentification and criminalization of victims (Sarkar & Shukla, 2025).

Despite the growing body of research on trafficking and migrant worker protection, significant gaps remain in normative and regulatory analyses that specifically address online scam-based trafficking targeting Indonesian migrant workers. Existing studies tend to examine legal protection in general trafficking contexts or focus on regional governance without integrating the digital dimension and its implications for victim status, legal accountability, and transnational cooperation (Bangun & Kinanti, 2025; Soraya et al., 2024).

Indonesian migrant workers constitute one of the largest labor-sending populations in Southeast Asia and are frequently positioned within low-wage, precarious employment sectors. Their vulnerability is not only legal and economic but also structural, arising from weak regulatory oversight, fragmented transnational protection mechanisms, and the criminalization of irregular migration (Sativa et al., 2025). In the context of online scam trafficking, empirical reports indicate that Indonesian workers are often lured with promises of administrative or marketing jobs abroad, only to be subjected to passport confiscation, debt bondage, excessive working hours, and physical coercion in scam compounds (Safira & Padmi, 2025). These conditions demonstrate a significant gap between formal legal protection frameworks and the lived realities of migrant workers.

Existing normative legal scholarship has largely focused on statutory instruments, bilateral agreements, and international conventions governing trafficking and migrant protection. While these analyses provide an essential regulatory foundation, they tend to remain doctrinal and state-centric, overlooking the socio-cultural and religious dimensions of vulnerability. This limitation is particularly significant in the Indonesian context, where the majority of migrant workers identify as Muslims and maintain strong connections to religious practices and community networks during migration. Research on trafficking survivors shows that faith can function as a coping mechanism; victims often rely on prayer, religious meaning-making, and spiritual resilience to survive conditions of coercion and isolation (Pertek, 2022).

The socio-religious dimension also shapes patterns of protection. Muslim migrant communities frequently organize informal support systems through mosques, religious study groups, and faith-based charities that provide financial assistance, shelter, and information sharing. These community-based mechanisms operate as

complementary protection infrastructures, particularly when state consular access is limited. However, normative legal analyses rarely integrate these religious and communal structures into the framework of migrant protection, resulting in a fragmented understanding of vulnerability and resilience.

Furthermore, Muslim identity may generate both protection and risk in destination countries. On one hand, shared religious affiliation can facilitate solidarity networks that enhance access to assistance and recovery. On the other hand, Muslim migrant workers may face discrimination, language barriers, and restricted access to religious practices, which can intensify social isolation and dependence on employers or recruiters. The intersection between religious identity, digital deception, and legal precarity therefore constitutes a critical but underexplored dimension in trafficking scholarship.

Another major gap in the literature concerns the lack of systematic analysis of online scam trafficking within a normative-regulatory framework. While technological studies have identified patterns in fraudulent job postings and digital recruitment infrastructures (Zhou et al., 2024), these findings have not been sufficiently translated into legal policy analysis, particularly regarding victim identification, non-criminalization principles, and transnational jurisdiction. In many cases, trafficked individuals forced to conduct online fraud are misidentified as cybercrime perpetrators rather than victims of trafficking, which undermines their access to legal remedies and rehabilitation.

From a human rights perspective, migrant workers are recognized as a vulnerable group requiring special protection under international law. However, the implementation of protective norms remains inconsistent due to weak enforcement, jurisdictional fragmentation, and limited coordination between origin and destination states. This gap is further widened in digital trafficking cases, where the evidentiary threshold for proving coercion is complex and often technologically mediated.

In Islamic normative discourse, trafficking and forced criminality constitute violations of human dignity (*karāmah*), justice (*‘adl*), and the prohibition of exploitation (*zūlm*). These principles align with international human rights norms but also provide an ethical framework that resonates with the lived experiences of Muslim migrant workers. Integrating Islamic ethical values into legal protection strategies can therefore enhance victim-centered approaches, strengthen community participation, and improve the legitimacy of regulatory interventions.

From a transnational governance perspective, ASEAN has adopted several legal instruments, including the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP) and regional declarations addressing technology-facilitated trafficking. However, implementation remains uneven due to the principle of non-interference and weak enforcement mechanisms among member states (Bangun & Kinanti, 2025). Similarly, international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) employ a 3P + Partnership framework prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership yet structural limitations and jurisdictional fragmentation continue to hinder effective victim protection (Nadya & Takwa, 2025).

Within the Indonesian legal system, the state has enacted Law No. 21 of 2007 on the Eradication of Trafficking in Persons and Law No. 18 of 2017 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers. These instruments establish the state's obligation to provide restitution, rehabilitation, legal aid, and repatriation for trafficking victims (Najieh et al., 2025). Nevertheless, normative analyses reveal persistent gaps in implementation, particularly in digital recruitment monitoring, cross-border law enforcement cooperation, and victim-centered identification mechanisms (Primastito & Sugiharto, 2024; Soraya et al., 2024).

Therefore, this study aims to conduct a normative and regulatory analysis of legal protection for Indonesian migrant workers as a vulnerable group against online scam-based human trafficking. By examining national legal frameworks, international instruments, and regional mechanisms, this research seeks to identify regulatory gaps, assess state responsibility, and propose a rights-based legal protection model that responds to the evolving digital nature of trafficking. This approach contributes to the broader discourse on vulnerable group protection, human rights, and regulatory transformation in the context of transnational cyber-enabled exploitation.

## 2. METHODS

This research employs an interdisciplinary normative juridical approach that goes beyond a purely doctrinal legal analysis by integrating socio-legal and socio-religious perspectives to examine the legal protection of Indonesian migrant workers as a vulnerable group in online scam-based human trafficking. The normative component focuses on the systematic analysis of international and national legal instruments, including the Palermo Protocol (2000), the *ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (ACTIP), Law No. 18 of 2017 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, as well as relevant regulations on trafficking in persons, cybercrime, and victim protection. This stage aims to identify normative gaps, regulatory fragmentation, and the limitations of existing legal frameworks in addressing technology-facilitated trafficking and cross-border digital recruitment.

To meet the journal's interdisciplinary scope, this study incorporates a socio-legal approach by utilizing secondary empirical data derived from international organization reports, recent scholarly publications (2020–2025), and policy documents on digital trafficking, migrant labor governance, and structural vulnerability. Within this framework, the socio-religious dimension is treated not as a theological inquiry but as a form of social capital and community-based resource that shapes migrants' access to protection, coping mechanisms, and support networks. Particular attention is given to how Muslim migrant workers navigate structural discrimination in destination countries, limited access to formal legal remedies, and reliance on faith-based community organizations, mosques, and Islamic solidarity networks as informal protection mechanisms. This perspective allows the study to capture forms of legal vulnerability that are not visible within formal legal texts but are embedded in social practices and institutional arrangements.

The research materials consist of primary legal sources (international conventions, national legislation, and relevant policy frameworks), secondary legal sources (peer-reviewed international journal articles and institutional reports), and non-legal socio-anthropological studies on migrant Muslim communities. Data collection is

conducted through an extensive library-based research method. The analytical techniques combine the statute approach, conceptual approach, and policy-oriented case analysis, which are then examined through an intersectionality framework to map overlapping vulnerabilities related to migration status, economic precarity, digital illiteracy, gendered risks, and religious identity.

By integrating normative legal analysis with socio-legal and intersectional perspectives, this methodology enables a more comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of existing legal protection mechanisms. It also evaluates the role of non-state actors particularly faith-based community networks as complementary components within the broader protection regime for victims of online scam-based human trafficking. Ultimately, this approach seeks to formulate a more inclusive and context-sensitive model of legal protection that responds to the digital nature of trafficking and acknowledges the socio-religious realities shaping migrant workers' lived experiences.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Normative Gaps in the National Legal Framework for Cyber-Enabled Trafficking

The doctrinal examination of Indonesia's anti-trafficking and migrant worker protection regime indicates that the statutory framework formally recognizes trafficking as a serious transnational crime and migrant workers as a legally protected vulnerable group. However, the normative architecture remains predominantly oriented toward conventional trafficking patterns involving physical recruitment, transportation, and exploitation. Contemporary forms of trafficking linked to online scam operations rely on digital deception, remote coercion, and forced participation in cyber-fraud, which are not explicitly regulated in existing statutory provisions. Recent legal scholarship confirms that trafficking law globally has struggled to adapt its doctrinal elements to technology-mediated exploitation (Chuang, 2021; Gallagher & Surtees, 2021).

The legal definition of trafficking in Indonesian positive law is sufficiently broad to encompass deception and abuse of vulnerability in digital recruitment. Nevertheless, the absence of explicit recognition of cyber-facilitated recruitment, platform-based coercion, and forced criminality produces interpretative uncertainty at the enforcement level. Empirical and doctrinal studies show that victims of online scam trafficking are frequently misidentified as cybercrime offenders rather than trafficked persons, thereby losing access to victim protection mechanisms (Cockbain & Bowers, 2022; Kempadoo, 2021; Broadhurst et al. 2023). This misclassification contradicts the non-criminalization principle and undermines the protective function of anti-trafficking law.

Another normative gap concerns evidentiary regulation. Existing procedural law does not provide specific guidance on the admissibility, preservation, and cross-border transfer of digital evidence in trafficking cases. As online scam operations are coordinated through encrypted messaging platforms and transnational digital infrastructures, traditional evidentiary standards based on physical surveillance and witness testimony become insufficient. Comparative research demonstrates that the

absence of specialized digital evidence provisions significantly reduces prosecution success in cyber-enabled trafficking cases (Lavorgna et al., 2023; Leukfeldt & Yar, 2023; Powell et al., 2022).

Institutional fragmentation further weakens the effectiveness of the legal framework. Anti-trafficking enforcement bodies, labour migration authorities, and cybercrime units operate under separate regulatory mandates without a harmonized doctrinal protocol for handling cases involving forced online fraud. This fragmentation leads to overlapping jurisdiction, delayed victim identification, and inconsistent legal qualification of offences. Studies on transnational cyber-trafficking highlight that integrated legal and institutional approaches are necessary to address hybrid forms of exploitation that combine labour trafficking and cybercrime (Hoiry et al., 2024; Sarkar & Shukla, 2025).

Preventive regulation also remains underdeveloped. Current legal instruments emphasize post-factum protection such as repatriation, rehabilitation, and witness protection, but provide limited normative obligations for digital prevention. There are no explicit statutory duties imposed on digital platforms to detect fraudulent recruitment targeting migrant workers, nor are there regulatory mechanisms for algorithmic monitoring of trafficking indicators. Global analyses confirm that preventive cyber-governance is a critical component of modern anti-trafficking strategies, particularly in addressing online recruitment and deception (Weitzer 2021; Jones 2022; Surtees and Brunovskis 2022).

Finally, the doctrinal analysis reveals a lack of normative integration between trafficking law, labour migration law, and electronic information law. Each regime operates within its own regulatory logic, resulting in legal silos that fail to capture the complex nature of online scam trafficking. This regulatory fragmentation diminishes legal certainty, weakens victim protection, and limits prosecutorial effectiveness. Therefore, the findings demonstrate the urgent need for doctrinal harmonization and explicit cyber-trafficking provisions within Indonesia's positive legal framework to ensure that the law remains responsive to evolving forms of transnational digital exploitation.

### **State Responsibility and the Limits of International and Regional Cooperation**

The findings indicate that state responsibility in addressing online scam-based trafficking must be understood within the broader framework of international human rights obligations, particularly the duty to prevent trafficking, protect victims, prosecute perpetrators, and ensure remedies. Contemporary legal scholarship after 2020 emphasizes that these obligations are grounded in the principle of due diligence, which requires states to anticipate emerging forms of exploitation, including cyber-enabled trafficking. Studies by Gallagher & Surtees, (2021) and Piotrowicz (2022) highlight that failure to regulate digital recruitment channels constitutes a breach of preventive obligations under international law. In the Indonesian context, the absence of comprehensive cyber-migration governance demonstrates a gap between normative commitments and operational capacity.

At the pre-departure stage, Indonesia's protective framework remains largely administrative rather than preventive. Research by Hidayah and Susilo (2023) shows

that migrant worker training programs rarely include digital risk awareness or verification mechanisms for online job offers. This regulatory deficiency allows traffickers to exploit social media ecosystems, a trend also documented by Latonero (2021) in the context of technology-facilitated trafficking. As a result, state responsibility is not fully realized because preventive measures fail to address the technological modalities of recruitment.

In destination countries, the protection deficit becomes more pronounced due to conflicting legal priorities between anti-trafficking and cybercrime enforcement. Empirical studies published after 2020 demonstrate that victims forced to conduct online scams are frequently detained for immigration or fraud offenses without proper trafficking identification. Research by Cockbain & Bowers, (2022) and Busch-Armendariz et al. (2023) confirms that victim misidentification remains a systemic problem in transnational cases. This practice violates the non-punishment principle and reflects a narrow law-enforcement approach that prioritizes cybercrime suppression over victim protection.

International cooperation mechanisms, although formally established, remain constrained by jurisdictional fragmentation and uneven implementation. The Palermo Protocol provides a normative foundation for cross-border collaboration, yet operational challenges persist in mutual legal assistance, evidence sharing, and extradition. Studies by UNODC-affiliated scholars after 2020 indicate that digital evidence collected in scam compounds often fails to meet admissibility standards across jurisdictions. This procedural incompatibility delays prosecutions and weakens deterrence. In Southeast Asia, these challenges are compounded by differences in legal definitions of trafficking and cybercrime.

Regional cooperation within ASEAN demonstrates similar limitations. While the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP) promotes a coordinated approach, comparative analyses by Jones (2020), Yea (2021), and Kneebone (2022) reveal significant disparities in victim identification procedures, shelter standards, and repatriation mechanisms. These disparities create protection gaps for Indonesian migrant workers trafficked into scam operations located in neighboring countries. Furthermore, the absence of binding enforcement mechanisms within ASEAN limits the effectiveness of regional commitments.

A critical but underexplored dimension of state responsibility concerns the integration of socio-religious protection into transnational cooperation frameworks. Post-2020 interdisciplinary studies emphasize that faith-based organizations often serve as first responders in trafficking cases involving migrant workers. Islamic humanitarian networks, zakat institutions, and diaspora mosques provide emergency assistance, legal mediation, and repatriation support. However, these actors operate outside formal cooperation mechanisms, resulting in parallel rather than integrated protection systems. Recognizing their role within official referral pathways would strengthen victim-centered approaches and enhance culturally responsive rehabilitation.

The intersection of religious identity and legal vulnerability further complicates cross-border protection. Muslim migrant workers trafficked into non-Muslim majority countries may face barriers in accessing religious services, halal food, and culturally appropriate counseling during detention or shelter placement. Research by Bales (2021) and Segrave (2023) underscores that culturally insensitive protection environments can hinder victim recovery and discourage cooperation with law enforcement. Incorporating religious accommodation into minimum protection standards is therefore essential to fulfilling human rights obligations.

In light of these findings, state responsibility must be reconceptualized as a multi-layered obligation that extends beyond formal legal cooperation to include technological governance, victim identification reform, and the institutional recognition of community-based protection networks. Strengthening mutual legal assistance, harmonizing digital evidence standards, and integrating faith-based actors into referral mechanisms would address existing structural limitations. Such an approach aligns with a rights-based model of protection that responds to the evolving nature of cyber-enabled trafficking while acknowledging the socio religious realities of Indonesian migrant workers as a vulnerable group.

### **A Rights-Based and Socio-Religious Model of Legal Protection**

The findings support the need for a transformative legal protection model that integrates normative regulation, human rights principles, and socio-religious protection mechanisms to address the evolving nature of online scam-based trafficking. Contemporary scholarship after 2020 consistently argues that traditional anti-trafficking frameworks are insufficient when exploitation occurs through digital platforms and forced criminality. Studies by LeBaron (2020), Chuang (2021), and Gallagher (2022) emphasize that a rights-based approach must prioritize victim protection over prosecution and incorporate structural vulnerability factors, including migration status, digital exclusion, and religious identity. In the Indonesian context, this requires aligning migration governance, cybercrime regulation, and anti-trafficking law within a unified protective framework.

A key component of this model is the recognition of forced online scamming as a form of trafficking that triggers the non-punishment principle. Research by Cockbain & Bowers (2022) and Segrave (2023) demonstrates that victims compelled to commit cyber fraud should be legally classified as trafficked persons rather than offenders. Incorporating this principle into domestic Indonesian law and bilateral agreements would prevent secondary victimization and ensure access to remedies, compensation, and rehabilitation. This doctrinal shift reflects the evolution of international legal standards in response to technology-facilitated exploitation.

Preventive protection must also be strengthened through digital governance. Studies by Latonero (2021) and Mirjam van Reisen (2022) highlight the role of online platforms in facilitating recruitment and deception. A rights-based regulatory model therefore requires mandatory verification of cross-border digital recruitment, algorithmic monitoring of suspicious job advertisements, and transnational data-sharing mechanisms. For Indonesian migrant workers, pre-departure training should include digital literacy, risk assessment of online employment offers, and access to

verified recruitment portals. Such measures operationalize the state's due diligence obligation in the digital sphere.

The integration of socio-religious protection constitutes a distinctive contribution of this model. Post-2020 interdisciplinary research shows that faith-based organizations play a critical role in trafficking prevention, victim identification, and reintegration. Islamic institutions including zakat agencies, pesantren networks, and migrant worker religious associations provide culturally responsive shelters, legal mediation, and psychosocial support grounded in spiritual resilience. Studies by Howell and Lind (2020), Bano (2021), and Petersen (2023) demonstrate that faith-based assistance enhances trust, reduces stigma, and facilitates long-term recovery among trafficking survivors. Recognizing these actors within formal national referral mechanisms would bridge the gap between state and community protection systems.

Furthermore, a socio-religious model acknowledges the intersectionality of vulnerability. Muslim migrant workers often experience layered marginalization as migrants, low-wage workers, and religious minorities in destination countries. Research by Yea (2021), Bales (2021), and Ford and Lyons (2022) confirms that structural discrimination increases exposure to exploitative recruitment networks. Legal protection must therefore include culturally appropriate shelters, access to halal food, prayer facilities, and religious counseling as part of minimum victim support standards. These measures are not merely symbolic but constitute substantive components of human dignity and recovery under international human rights law.

At the regional level, ASEAN cooperation should incorporate community-based and faith-based actors into cross-border protection frameworks. Current mechanisms focus primarily on law enforcement cooperation, overlooking the role of civil society in victim assistance. Integrating Islamic humanitarian organizations into ASEAN referral pathways would enhance early identification, safe repatriation, and post-return reintegration. Comparative studies after 2020 indicate that multi-stakeholder models combining state agencies, international organizations, and religious networks produce more effective protection outcomes than state-centric approaches.

Finally, this rights-based and socio-religious model contributes to regulatory transformation by reframing trafficking as a multidimensional human rights issue rather than solely a criminal law problem. It aligns legal protection with the lived realities of Indonesian migrant workers in the digital economy and responds to the transnational character of cyber exploitation. By integrating normative law, digital governance, and community-based religious support, the model advances a holistic protection framework that is both contextually grounded and normatively consistent with international human rights standards.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that online scam-based human trafficking represents a new and complex form of exploitation that current legal frameworks are not fully prepared to address. Although Indonesia has relatively comprehensive anti-trafficking regulations, the normative analysis reveals significant fragmentation between migration law, anti-trafficking law, and cybercrime regulation. This legal

fragmentation weakens preventive protection, complicates victim identification, and creates challenges for cross-border enforcement in cases involving Indonesian migrant workers.

Based on these findings, this study proposes a rights-based legal protection model that integrates three key elements: normative harmonization between migration, anti-trafficking, and cybercrime regulations; preventive digital governance through verified recruitment systems and digital literacy for migrant workers; and institutional recognition of faith-based organizations as complementary actors in victim protection and recovery. Strengthening regional cooperation within ASEAN, particularly in the standardization of legal definitions and digital evidence procedures, is also essential to address transnational cyber-enabled trafficking.

This research contributes to the development of legal scholarship on the protection of vulnerable migrant workers by highlighting the importance of integrating legal, technological, and socio-religious dimensions in addressing cyber-enabled human trafficking. However, this study is limited to normative and regulatory analysis; therefore, future research should incorporate empirical data on the experiences of migrant worker victims and the effectiveness of community-based protection mechanisms in practice.

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