

YRF Summary Report

Sex Work Industry of G.B.Road: The Dark Side of the Gleaming Road.

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Introduction

In India, women are considered divine and worshipped in the form of goddess but contrary India is also a country which is considered the world's most dangerous place for a woman where every twenty minutes a girl is raped no doubt that today we can see a slow and steady rise of women in almost every field of importance but despite this, there is a persistent rise in terrible crimes against women. for instance; Domestic violence, rapes, lack of access to justice, perpetual suppression by the patriarchal society are some major factor to make them vulnerable to sex trafficking or entering into the sex trade. The research paper talks about various factors which compel women to enter in sex trade and how this trade ruin their dignity and their all rights to live a life.

But this phenomenon is not new or fresh one, If we trace the pages of history we come to know that, In India, it has been continuing from the Mughal Era, In Mughal Courts, there used to be tawaifs who were highly successful entertainers in Mughal darbars. The tawaifs excelled in and contributed to music, dance (mujra), theatre, and the Urdu literary tradition and were considered an authority on etiquettes. They were catered to the nobility of India. This tradition had promoted by Colonial powers who came in India in the early 16th century.

During the Colonial Period Britishers established brothels such as G.B road of Delhi, the Cantonment Act of 1864 which regulated prostitution and structured brothels for Britisher's entertainment which provided for about 12-15 Indian women kept in it called chaklas for each regiment of thousand British soldiers. These prostitutes were recruited from rural Indian families and paid directly by the British authorities. In the 19th and early 18th centuries thousand of women and girls from continental Europe and Japan were trafficked to British India, where they worked as prostitutes for British soldiers and this evil tradition continues to this day in a different manner.

There are more women sex slaves today than at any time in history. Girls are abducted by the traffickers from the streets at an alarming rate and sold as sex slaves. The majority of prostitutes working today at Brothels were trafficked from a younger age and forced into the sex trade. Very few come willingly. As India's deeply religious culture discourages casual sex before marriage as Indian cities continue to swell with overpopulation and urbanization more men are turning to brothels to have sexual freedom but at what cost?, It may be at the cost of women's dignity, her rights or her self-respect. The families of these women also face many difficulties and social pressure of displacement from the residence.

It is not possible to be successful in assisting sex workers and sex trafficking victims to protect because of their vulnerability in the society and their limited access to helping groups. So it is our onus to light this issue and to establish an understanding in readers towards this vulnerable section. The major purpose of doing this research to spread more and more awareness about the inhuman scenerio of this sex trade and how prostitution fuels this industry. The readers will be more sensitized after reading over the issue. Further the paper also shed light on real life experiences of these sex workers, which could be beneficial to cut the perpetual interpretation of society about the prostitutes and prostitution.

Researchers indicate that the majority of sex workers in India work as prostitutes due to a lack of resources to support themselves and their children. Most of them do not choose this profession but out of necessity, often after the breakup of a marriage or after being disowned and thrown out of their homes by their families they have to step into this trade. Women are overall more Economically vulnerable, and this make them an easier target for traffickers. Poverty and lack of education are also key factors when looking towards the root of sex trafficking. In many families the children, mainly girls, are focused on prostitution to financially support their families. The abject poverty which is associated with large number of family members in which absence of other earning member, aged parents and lack of educational requirements as a major constraint to get job opportunities, are prominently some major inability to fulfil their needs and choosing sex work as a means of earnings. There are few earning alternatives for these women for instance: domestic work, agriculture, daily wages service at industries and factories but they have to voluntarily move towards sex work after having found other kinds of work to be more arduous and ill-paid. These work are also unsafe for women apart from daily humiliation, they have face physical and sexual abuse, no specific work hours, no days off or yearly vacation are some major factors which compel these women to indulge in sex work. Consequently willing or non-willing women enter in this trade.

But because of the less proportion of women who come in this trade willingly, traffickers abduct women and often women's close acquaintance force them in this trade by giving false promises of marriage or better job. Some women and girls are by tradition come into prostitution to support the family. For example the Bachara Tribe.

The research paper emphasis on the G.B Road which is located in Delhi, India. The G.B Road is one of the largest red-light districts in the country. The road is famous as a market for machinery, automobile parts, hardware and tools and is the largest market for these items in the National Capital Region. The road is crowded with vehicles and persons during the day as it is a commercial area. The segment of the road starting from the Ajmeri Gate in the south until the small intersection with a street leading up to Farash Khana in the north has shops on the ground floor and brothels on the first and second floors. Each kotha has a number and it is identified by it. Streets and houses at the back of the road are residential areas. Loknayak, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Sanjeevan Hospital , Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia are some major hospitals nearby G.B.Road.

This area is covered with several hundred multi-story brothels where over 3,000 sex workers along with their children live . These brothels come alive at night after the shops at the ground level close.

The living condition is too cramped here because of the inferior outer and inner infrastructure. The dingy room here are divided on 6ft6“.

Methodology

The research paper is prominently based on descriptive case study method in which the method describes the characteristics of the population or phenomenon are studied. This methodology focuses on more on the “What” of the research subject than the “Why” of the research subject.

In order to do so we have interviewed a sex worker particularly of a G.B.Road to collect the real life experiences of this trade which will help closely in understanding the issue in a meaningful manner. The research paper and finding is prominently based on interaction happened with her. Due to Covid-19 pandemic and ultimate need of social distancing, we made social media platform our means to interact with the woman. We had to face hurdles in finding the real sex worker who works at G.B.Road.

Data Analysis and Results

As our study is based on case study method, we randomly chose few women for the study and eventually we selected Manju,(name has been changed to protect her identity).Our major findings are based on interaction happened with her. The reason of choosing only Manju is, that she has a daughter and as this trade is prominently biased and vulnerable towards a female so it's our onus to analyse the overall condition of her daughter as well, for Instance her educational status and by this evaluation we can get answer that how far the girl child of these sex workers are prone to indulge in this sex trade.

Manju is a sex worker who works and lives at G.B. Road along with her six-year-old girl child to make both end possible. She charges 1000 INR for having sex and usually earns 10-14 thousand INR/month but lockdown has dwindled her earning. We asked about her past life, where did she come from, her marital status. She looked here and there and took a pause and then she refused to tell. After a brief conversation with her we could assume the reason of her entry in this trade.

There are variety of reasons of entering into the sex trade. Some studies have cited economic hardships or poverty as the main reason for women's entry into sex work in India. The abject poverty which is associated with large number of family members in which absence of other earning member, aged parents and lack of educational requirements. But once they get in this trade there is no way to escape. If somehow they are rescued the society discriminates them and marginalized them due to their background and hence they face sexual abuse by the males of the new environment as well and consequently they have to indulge in this trade again. Where they have to live in in-human condition and they become more prone to infected with sexual transmit diseases and for that they can not have medical facilities without any hurdles.

Old and young both sex workers often face barriers in accessing any medical aid and other healthcare facilities. be they experience debilitating stigmatization that erodes their ability to protect their health and well-being. They prefer not to reveal their occupation when seeking care to government or private hospitals due to their experience of being stigmatized and discriminated. These sex workers are often humiliated and criticized. They are made to wait for inordinately long periods of time, they are not examined properly and often denied to give medical services. Manju also points out of that sometimes sex workers are subjected to sexual demands by the doctors. Due to such demands by doctors sex workers hesitate and avoid going to the hospitals and lockdown also made these number far higher.

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on the night of March 24 a weeks-long nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of Covid-19, among other things, sex work also came to a halt. The lives of thousands of sex workers living in the brothels on Delhi's GB Road changed overnight. The lockdown measures imposed by the government meant no work for these women who survive on a daily income. It was a crisis like no other. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the sex workers found themselves sitting idle whole day and in such a hard time, the government and the society have also made them lonely. Some NGO's come forward to distribute sanitary pads, free rations, sanitisers and masks but it was irregular and they were compelled to rely on the mercy of others. Manju is one of them who tells that before the lockdown she usually attended 12-13 customers per day but this numbers reduced during lockdown. And at the end of the day she did not have money to feed herself and her daughter.

As the sex work is heavily stigmatized in our society, Most of the children of G.B Road do not go to school. Those who go eventually quit because of the discrimination and bullying they face in school. The stigma these children face elsewhere prevents them from venturing out of G.B.Road with limited access to education. The kids are cut off from other opportunities in life. It is commonplace for children of sex workers to join the sex trade when they come of age. Girls will become prostitutes and the boys probably become pimps. For the children of kotha owners, they will probably take over the kotha business or engage in the trade in other ways. These children do not enjoy their childhood alike other kids. They live right in the midst of the sex trade. They are witnessed to the chaos and violence that take place on streets and behind closed doors. Access to quality education and skill building exercises would help break the vicious cycle of poverty they tend to get stuck in.

Conclusion

To conclude, the paper express the brutal reality of sex workers lives. They have to face problems in almost every sphere of life for instance: physically, sexually, emotionally, economically and digitally as well. Not only the pimps and clients exploit them, the society and the administration also exploit them. Despite having various constitutional provisions and laws we are still lacking to put a hold to this in-human issue. The Law is just adding glory to the paper, the need of the hour is to execute these rules at ground level. Swati Maliwal(DCW's chief)says that why do we need G.B Road. But what we exactly need to employ them so that they can live with dignity. Whenever we talk about the existence of G.B.Road we must think about the proper rehabilitation process. The problem is still can be controlled if the strong steps are taken deliberately and policies are made and implemented strictly. If timely steps are not taken then in very short time it will be too late. It is also imperative to realize that we, as citizens, have a role to play as well. We must work on breaking the social stigma surrounding the occupation and begin to address our attitudes and biases towards this community. It is also essential to put pressure on the government to address this issue in a more meaningful manner because they are also human being and most importantly they have right to live with dignity.

Suggestions

- **Economic Empowerment** : In most cases, poverty is the major factor that drives women into prostitution. The government should formulate schemes in such a manner, which give benefits to economically weaker women. Government should establish skill enhancement centres with collaboration and support of private institutions.
- **Educationally Empowerment**: The most crucial step is to cut down the chronology! The inner and outer factors which compel sex workers children to quit school should be stopped. The school administration should set up a counselling session for those children who come from this background and ensure that the school environment does not bully them.
- **Health Check ups**: Many sex workers of G B. Road are having benefits from 'Mohalla clinic '. This is a very beneficial initiative of state government where sex workers can go and avail free health check up benefits. But even after this the local government should ensure easily accessible healthcare facilities and the medical staff do not discriminate them on the basis of their work.
- **Rehabilitation Centre**: Some women are rescued and sent to rehabilitation centre but the infrastructure and basic amenities there are in inferior condition. DCW's own visits have shown that the situation there is so bad. Rehabilitation centres that are run by the government, should have food, drinking water, cleanliness, a good environment and other basic amenities. The infrastructure and environment should be such where women are made self-reliant and confidential and in this district administration should inspect them regularly.
- **Awareness programmes** should be conducted to spread awareness regarding sexual transmit diseases and use of contraception methods to prevent HIV, AID's.
- **Advertisement**: with the assistance of NGO's and police officials , the advertisement and awareness programmes should be conducted in villages, local schools and in general public in order to alert public of being victimized.
- **Vaccination drives**: Due to Covid-19 pandemic an urgency of people's vaccination to combat the virus. The government should set up vaccination booths and centres at G.B.Road. because the non-governmental organisations can not be accountable if the sex workers are not vaccinated. Hence it is onus of government to establish free vaccination drives for these sex workers and their children of free of cost.



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