

HISTORY OF PROSTITUTION AND HOW IT LED TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR SEX

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ABSTRACT

Prostitution today is associated with a darker side a society,a profession which is looked upon as an illegal and dirty trade .However ,interestingly,it was never so in the beginning.Some of the earliest accounts of prostitution can be encountered in scriptures of MESOPOTAMIA , where prostitutes enjoyed a religious status and were closely associated with goddess of fertility. Similarly Greeks looked upon it as a legal and ethical way out to tap sexual energies.The status enjoyed by the profession can be traced from wordings of a Christian saint AUGUSTINE who said “IF YOU EXPEL PROSTITUTION FROM SOCIETY, YOU WILL UNSETTLE EVERYTHING ON ACCOUNT OF LUST”.In, INDIA concept of NAGARVADHU was prevalent ,where beautiful girls of a town where made to compete and the winner was made NAGARVADHU , basically a prostitute for the royal family. She mastered in dance forms and other skills and was respected for this.During medieval age , the profession began it’s journey from white to blacks when English priests, professed that establishing physical relationship outside marriage is unethical ,however the priests came up as one the major fraction of clients of prostitutes of that time.Prostitutes came to be known as “SISTERS” who practiced the profession in church funded “CONVENTS”.In ,INDIA same concept came out as DEVDASI SYSTEM,where young girls were married off to gods of the temple and were called “SERVANTS OF GOD”.Intially they performed at temple celebration devoted to godes,but later also serves as sex partners of priests.Stigma when got attached to the profession gave rise to menace of “HUMAN TRAFFICKING”,as demands never came down but the number of service providers did.

In context of INDIA,latest statistics come up as a ticking bomb,it states that almost 20,000 women and chidren were the victims of human trafficking in INDIA in 2016 , a rise of nearly 25% compared to 2015.This vulnerable section of the society is easy to target in the name of employment,marriage proposals and others.Metro cities have emerges as hubs of prostitution which is not yet legal under Indian laws.Often trafficked girls are locked up in unhygienic brothels guarded by pimps or musclemen.these pimps and”MADAMS”of brothels share a significant share of earnings.Girls are offered money by pimps sometimes in order which never happens ,this makes them victims of exploitation yet again. Unprotected sex with customers make them HIV POSITIVE.This danger of catching a disease has given rise to demand of younger and virgin girls which makes the situation even more dangerous.Many NGOs worldwide have come for rescue but the scenario will only improve when all other stakeholders which Includes – the

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State , the police and society come together and become more vigilant plus sensitive towards the issue.

INTRODUCTION

Prostitution a profession which is always looked upon as an unethical trade never had a history similar to its present. Almost all major civilizations in early times had respected the profession. Greeks, for instance, had a culture of marrying in a same bloodline to keep it pure , which clearly meant that greek marriages were based on mere social arrangements , this resulted in unsatisfied sexual partners in a marriage , Greeks here were clever to understand that an horny, unsatisfied man could be potential threat to the society , this made prostitution a necessity in such social arrangement . Brothels were elegantly decorated and maintained . Prostitutes lived free from social rules and the same time enjoyed admiration as well as respect in a otherwise patriarchal society . Similarly, scriptures of MESOPOTAMIA have equated prostitutes to goddesss of fertility.

INDIAN CONTEXT

Prostitution in INDIA finds no clear mention in scriptures . The famous DANCING GIRL of MOHENJODARO , is according to some experts must have been a courtesan employed to entertain royalities (PRIEST KING) , however it is a mere assumption with no written records similar to engravings in GREEK towns . **RIG VEDA** , also mentions a extra marital love affair of **JARA** and **JARINI** which may or may not have concept of exchange of money or gifts ,hence was not a form of professional prostitution. Hence, there is absolutely no way to find out when did the prostitution arose in India as in its present form .Around , 6th century BC , cities and kingship became more organized with flourishing international trade , this allowed new kings to maintain a faction of courtesans as entertainers which could possibly be the beginning of prostitution in India . **KAUTILYA** mentions four sources of prostitutes for the state - either they were born as prostitutes's daughter or was captured in a war or was purchased or they were the women punished for adultery . Another interesting form of indulging girls into prostitution was donating them to temples on the assumption that this will make the donor a wealthy person on earth and a happy resident heaven up in the sky. **ARTHASHASTRA** had used the term "**GANIKA**" for state owned prostitutes. They had been classified into three categories base on their beauty and wealth owned by them. The MAURYAN state made arrangements to train these GANIKAS as their skills set earned them more money which the state taxed. They were taught dancing , singing, playing on the vina and other skills. These ganikas were regulated by **GANIKADHAYAKSHA** who exercised complete power on them. He classified them, paid them salaries, took care of their health in working age and even after retirement. A

concept of punishing the ones harming the ganikas physically, emotionally, or financially was unique to this regulated state prostitution . Another type of prostitutes who find mention in “arthashastra” are **VESYAS** who were used for all kinds of prostitution and not just serving kings . They also acted spies to the state to keep an eye on military personnel . Interestingly, “ganikas” in Mauryan empire enjoyed property rights which was not enjoyed by other women of the society at that time , also they had matriarchal laws of inheritance where a land of state prostitute was granted to her daughter after her death, which was again a unique feature. Although these state prostitutes were not legally free persons but they enjoyed all legal rights of a free person . **GUPTAS** another most celebrated dynasty of Indian history also patronized this form of profession with social security granted to them in all forms .

MEDIEVAL AGE

During this time that is around 12th century prostitution flourished under dynasties like **MUGHALS**. Even after their decline a unique form of prostitution emerged named “**TAWAIF SYSTEM**”, wherein young girls were state owned properties but were allowed to earn beyond state’s ambit. They owned places of their services named **KOTHAS** or **NISHATKHANA**” they were patronized by independent chieftains of Mughals, the then **NAWABS**. The term Tawaif finds its origin in a Arabic word “taif” which refers to “a person who performs circumambulation of Kabba or Mecca . They like other prostitutes were highly skilled practitioners of arts . They were trained right from young ages. A Ceremony named “**MISSI**” denoted that a girl was now a prostitute , her front teeth were blackened as a mark of her new profession. Another ceremony named “**NATH UTHAI**”, meant that a young trained girl was now ready to enter the profession . Her nosepin was removed as a part of the ceremony . Clients paid high for new prostitutes as chances to contact sexually transmitted diseases were null. However it is to be noted that Twaifs were never offered social security as **GANIKAS** of ancient times . They regulated their business on their own . But it is noteworthy that their skill set were admired to a level that young princes were sent to kothas to learn manners and elegance from these prostitutes . Their proximity to the state’s elite also meant that , they sometimes actively participated in politics . For instance , **ABDUL HALIM SHARAR** , described in his book “**GUZISHTA LAKHNAU**”, the story of **HAKIM MAHDI**, the then Prime minister who succeeded in his financial operations due to a tawaif named “**PIYARO**”. He even wrote “ It is said that until a person had association with tawaifs he was not a polished man “. Interestingly, English merchants who came in late 18th century also enjoyed their art. But the rebellion of 1857 came as a major blow to entire tawaif culture. Twaifs such as “**ASIS UL NIZA**” came on forefront to help freedom fighter “**SHAMSHUDDIN SAWAR**” for which she was penalized. Many such tawaifs were held guilty and punished for helping in rebellion.

Additionally, as India came under British rule, Victorian notions began to dominate the society. British who had actively patronized the tawaifs before the rebellion, now called the profession “**napakh**”. The lack of patronage and the taboo attached to the profession led its slow death, with tawaifs getting absorbed in bollywood industry in form singers for instance “**GAUHAR JAAN**”, a famous tawaif of her time who became the first Indian to record her voice. Others had no options but to leave the profession which was respected for art and elegance but now demanded only for sex along with shame associated with it.

TEMPLE PROSTITUTION also prevailed during the same time in southern India. One such example was “**DEVDAASI SYSTEM**”. The word “**DEVDAASI**” literally means “female servant of god”. According to the ancient Indian practice, young pre pubescent girls were married to goddess “**YELLAMA**” in a festival named “**SAUNDATI FESTIVAL**”. Then they were donated to temples, where they performed for lord yellama during temple processions. Having star performers attached to temples was more of a kind of advertisement, which would attract more pilgrims and hence more money for the temple. They were housed in temples and palaces and owned wealth in form of jewellery. Since, they did not have husband, they were the owners of their houses, a position unimaginable at that time. Earlier elite class women also indulged into the profession on their will in the name of religion with seldom sexual favours to priests. But, unfortunately, similar to the fate of the tawaifs, they were also tagged unethical by the British which devalued the profession open only to girls with compulsion the faction devoid of land, economic resources, education and other necessities to survive upon. Coincidence was that the new devdasis who came out of compulsion were mostly “**dalits**”, which also indicates the discrimination based on caste prevailing in the society. After independence, the system was criminalized but unfortunately, the system has deep roots in illiterate and poor strata of southern society, where older ladies of village who tie their hair as god yellama convince parents of young girls to donate their daughters to lord merely on the basis of her age and getup. Shocking statistics point out at the prevailing danger, which states that almost 30,000 young girls are still entrapped into the system in the name of religion with a major cause of poverty. Lack of education makes them even more vulnerable to abuse and other moral hazards. This also closes all avenues to escape as it is a system with full social acceptance which prevents the possible local help and lack of education closes door to external legal help or rescue.

PRESENT SCENARIO

Stigma attached to prostitution and lack of regulation has made the situation grim. Sexual service providers no more existed after British era but the urban centers

developed during era of industrialization came up as biggest centers of demanding sexual favours due to unsatisfactory work and married lives. Lack of service providers and increased demands simply meant that there occurred a need to devise a way to bridge this gap. Soon this gap was fulfilled through **“HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR SEX”**. Young girls are often trafficked on pretext of good jobs in urban spaces , or are tricked by their boyfriends or husbands. Poor young girls sometime opt for such profession out of compulsion. One such largest space is **“G.B. ROAD”** of national capital. which has this trade openly flourishing in little unhygienic spaces above regular shops. Majority of girls found there are trafficked from vulnerable parts of country like **“Jharkhand ,Orissa ,Bihar, West Bengal”** .Porous borders of NEPAL also serves a source of sex slaves from neighboring country. Naikas in brothels negotiate on behaves of these prostitutes and musclemen placed outside the dirty brothels also receive a major chunk of their income .This leaves girls with little economic resources to escape or to educate themselves. Nexus between the policemen and brothel owners closes all options to escape from the trade. Sometimes pimps give money to the girls to escape which is not possible for them in majority cases. This again them vulnerable to abuse by even pimps and a little earn by them goes into their hands. Lack of sex education makes them vulnerable of contacting sexually transmitted diseases at a higher rate. This also opens a avenue of even more dangerous aspect of forced prostitution which is **“human trafficking of young virgin girls”** which earn them hefty amounts as the chances to contact a disease is null plus clients can sexually dominate the service provider. Un hygienic conditions inside brothels clearly violates their rights to lead a healthy granted under article 21 of Indian constitution.

SHOULD IT BE A LEGALISED TRADE

Former chairperson of **“NATIONAL COMMISSION OF WOMEN”**, LALITA KUMAR MANGALAM had advocated for the regulation of sex trade in order to provide better living conditions to service providers . She debated that regulation will- bring down the incidences of human trafficking , will lower chances of contacting sexually transmitted diseases and will ultimately help in regulating working hours of service providers, plus will help in reducing cases of rapes as sexual aspirations can be fulfilled in a legal way. She had compared the conditions to advanced countries like Germany, where sex trade is regulated and sex traders are provided with social security like any other employee.

However it is to be understood that Indian scenario is entirely different from foreign countries. Women here are worshipped on one hand and molested or killed before even being born. Therefore legalizing such trade will not help . A man with sick mindset will end up raping a girl in a legal brothel and molesting a girl on street. Thus there is a need to work upon mindset of people instead of justifying their unethical demands.

Secondly, sex trade at individual level was never illegal as per Indian laws but pimping or running brothels was always illegal so asking for legalization is like demanding for legal brothels and brothels which is other form of modern slavery where, a person earns by the way of others' labor. Hence the question of legalization of sex trade does not arise. Regulation of working hours is also vague as it is illogical to assume that a person can have sex for 8 hours continuously . Instead clients need to regulated who sometimes can be sexually volatile . Age of consent becomes second most important issue where a trafficker can easily proof a girl to be eligible to carry out such trade . "CHOICE", a word used for debating in favor of girls opting such profession must also be questioned as it is almost impossible that a girl with good education and economic resources will ever opt for such profession. State must therefore work upon the root cause for grim situations of sex traders . They must be first rescued and rehabilitated with good other economic alternatives with good education for their children and in order to curb trafficking the reason of poverty must be addressed so that no girl is duped in the name of lucrative jobs. Police forces must be made more sensitive to the problem through their training so that they can stop such incidences in first hand instead of entering into nexus with pimps. Society must also opt a positive attitude towards victims of such cruel trade so that rehabilitation of such girls becomes easy and successful.

MALE PROSTITUTION

Less talked about , the trade flourishes in dark which makes it even harder to report and rescue if needed. Clients may range from rich unsatisfied ladies to rickshaw walals asking for services in private spaces often provided by clients making service providers vulnerable to abuse ranging from sexual to denial of payments as it is not a organized illegal trade like female prostitution. Earlier, criminalized sex between same sex made the act illegal and punishable offence which forced the trade to flourish without any remedies in case of any human rights violations. Often clients demand sex without condoms which makes both of them vulnerable of contacting sexually transmitted diseases. No NGO has till now raised this issue .less in number but still demands attention for regulation. Recent decriminalization of sex with same sex at least has freed them legal penalties if caught ever. Other aspects like regulation and better reporting is the need of the hour.