

A Causal Analysis of Women Engaging in Commercial Sex

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Female sex workers (FSWs) are women who engage in sexual behavior with others for monetary compensation. The FSW community has comparable demographic characteristics to the overall population, with a focus on youth, low education, and high mobility. Some women engage in sex trafficking on purpose, not to earn money, but to violate social norms. Feminists who grow up in broken or dysfunctional homes have their familial support networks disturbed. Disruptions to the financial support network include forced departures due to financial restrictions, unemployment, and so on. Women's decisions to enter the sector are significantly influenced by peer behavior. Sexual assault may have a detrimental effect on an individual's viewpoint, self-awareness, and emotional capacity. While the majority of FSWs are motivated by economic considerations, a sizable percentage is driven to prostitution. Other women forced into the sex trade have great things to say about it, and when given the opportunity to leave, some opt to stay.

Keywords: Female Sex Workers; Causal Analysis; Sexual Behavior; Commercial Sex; Economics

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FEMALE sex workers (FSWs) are women who engage in sexual activity with others in exchange for tangible benefits such as money. Prostitutes who give a variety of pornographic services are the objects. The number of FSWs has increased significantly, while the incentives for women to engage in the sex trade have become more diversified as women's social position and sexual views have changed (1). This paper evaluates the causes and probable predisposing factors for FSWs to engage in sex trafficking by doing a literature search on the FSW community in order to provide the groundwork for future relevant research.

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic features of the FSW population are similar to

those of the general population, with an emphasis on youth, poor education, and high mobility. Kramer and Berg studied 309 street FSWs in Arizona, USA, and discovered that they had an average age of 31.5 years and were 54% single (2). According to the Australian poll, 44% of respondents are under the age of 30, and 57% have a secondary school education or less (3). From 1990 to 2006, the results of behavioral research on FSWs in China revealed that the majority of FSWs were in their teens and twenties, unmarried, unemployed prior to engaging in the sex trade, or grew up in rural regions, and were a floating population (4). According to a survey conducted in Vietnam, more than half of FSWs under the age of 29 work as full-time prostitutes (5). Dandona et al. studied 6,648 FSWs in 13 Indian states and discovered that 75.6% were between the ages of 20 and 34, 74.7%

were uneducated, 30.7% were divorced or separated, and rural women began engaging in sex trafficking (6). The average age of rural women was much younger (21.7 years) than that of urban women (23.9 years). According to a survey conducted in Enugu City, Nigeria, the average age of 135 FSWs was 26.95.5 years, 46.7 percent had only completed elementary school, and 55.6 percent were unmarried (7).

Additionally, FSWs' work hours differ by country and location. Bucardo et al. conducted a study of FSWs in Mexico and discovered that their average tenure was five years (3 months to 14 years) (8). According to a survey in India, 51.3% of FSWs had been involved in sex trafficking for two to five years (9). About 60.7% of medium and low-grade FSWs in China had worked for less than two years (10).

Causal Inferences

Economic Considerations

Economic reasons alone, without a doubt, play a significant role in why women participate in prostitution. According to a survey conducted in Denmark, 85% of FSWs are for financial gain (11). Study conducted in China have revealed that the primary reason women enter the sex trade industry is for financial gain, and poverty and a lack of employment opportunities force them to seek financial gain (4). Around two-thirds of India's 5,498 mobile FSWs are acknowledged to be engaging in sex trading for economic gain (12). In Victoria, Australia, 69% of women participate in prostitution for financial gain (3). Poverty, for a variety of reasons, can "draw" women into the sex trade, much more so when the trade provides for their survival and is a viable source of income (13-15).

Factors of Employment

In Africa's Nigeria, 61.2% of FSWs earn their income through prostitution (16). According to Russian research, the primary reason women enter the sex trade business is a lack of work possibilities (17). In Beijing, China, more than 70% FSWs earned more than 3,000 CNY per month, whereas more than 70% of comparison female with the same age, education, and social background earned less than 3,000 CNY per month. As can be shown, participation in the sex service sector delivers a higher rate of return under the same conditions (18).

Attracted

Many individuals are drawn to entering the sex trade market on their own. Saggurti et al. studied 5,498 mobile FSWs in India and discovered that 9.4 percent of respondents entered the market independently (12). According to a survey conducted by Devine et al., 13% of FSWs answered unequivocally that they entered the sex service sector for both pleasure and profit (9). They are not talking about sexual pleasures, but lifestyle pleasures such as like-minded men and women congregating in one location where having fun is their primary objective and the experience makes them happy. Ingabire et al. conducted focus groups and in-depth interviews with 70 FSWs in Rwanda, Africa, and discovered that 8.6% of FSWs entered the sex trade industry due to the lure of commercial sex work, which includes timely financial remuneration, independent economic conditions, and work joy (19). While these women also encountered some de-

gree of disruption, their reports indicate that they chose to participate in sex trafficking in part. An interview with 367 FSWs and discovered that 2.5% of FSWs entered the sex trade sector in order to have sex (20). In Chicago, USA, some women like the job's flexibility and autonomy as well (14).

Cultural Traditions

Women frequently perform as sex workers in India as a result of religious beliefs and old customs, such as the Indian habit of "slave of the gods". Before they reach puberty, some females become temple dancers and give sexual services for the rest of their lives (21). Blanchard et al. interviewed 1,588 FSWs in India and discovered that 26% had entered the sex trade business as a result of the "slave of the gods" habit (22). Sex labor related to traditional Indian rituals has become more popular in recent years (23). In Taiwan, contracted teenage FSWs are descended from the cultural history of lower-class families stretching all the way back to the 18th century's early pioneers. When the girl reaches the age of seven, her parents will either sell her directly to a brothel or to an intermediate family, who will then sell her to the brothel. Parents sell their daughters for a variety of reasons, including survival, emergency necessities, and repayment of gambling debts (24).

Being a Victim of Human Trafficking, Coercion, or Deception

According to certain sources, some women enter the sex profession as a result of compulsion or violence. This is a frequent finding in Indian research and is frequently related to human trafficking (25). In a survey of 1,137 FSWs aged 18-25 in Andhra Pradesh, India, 50.5% of women joined the sector through human trafficking (26, 27). A survey of 580 FSWs in brothels across four western Indian states revealed that 24% of respondents were trafficked into the profession, with the majority of these women being from neighboring Nepal and Bangladesh (28). Commercial FSWs in four Indian states showed that 17.7% of FSWs were coerced or misled into engaging in sex work by people they knew or did not know (29). Accordingly, 13% of FSWs reported being coerced and duped into the sex service sector, with 76% being duped by people they trusted such as relatives, neighbors, and husbands (30).

Additional Factors

McClarty et al. (31) noted that some women intentionally participate in sex trafficking not to earn money, but to go against established societal standards. However, even when women are trafficked into the sex service sector, they actively seek better lives and work prospects in cities and other countries, and some women enter the sex trade after being dumped by their lovers and developing a vengeful attitude towards men (32). Hwang and Bedford said that some teens in Taiwan are motivated to enter the sex service by curiosity and risk-taking (24).

Predisposed Factors

Disruption of the Familial or Financial Support System

Females growing up in a damaged or dysfunctional home setting, such as single-parent families (parental divorce, parental death,

or incarceration), broken relationships with parents, or parental desertion, are examples of disruption of family support networks. Financial support network disruptions include forced exits owing to financial constraints, unemployment, and so forth. A family's disintegration is frequently followed by an economic catastrophe. For instance, the loss of a significant labor force in a poor family invariably results in financial restrictions; similarly, economic downturns frequently result in family dissolution. Family or economic concerns have persistently dominated the causes of female prostitution, and practically every study on the causes or motives of female prostitution has come to the same result (33).

The results of a focus group discussion and in-depth interviews with 70 FSWs in Rwanda indicated that the majority of women begin their tales with disturbances to their regular lives, implying that familial and financial support disruption is the primary reason women begin sex work (19). In British teenage FSWs, deficiencies in different elements of children's development, such as family breakup, family strife, parental abuse, and neglect, may serve as future motives for girls to participate in sex work (34). Devine et al. conducted a convenience survey of 220 FSWs in a city in India and discovered that 45% of the individuals were employed for commercial sex to fulfill their own and their families' basic requirements (9). The cited reasons included chronic poverty, parental death, and family desertion, divorce or widowhood, spouse unable to work, spouse addicted to drug usage, and so on.

Network Interpersonal

Women joining the sex trade for the first time rely heavily on networking (35). Cobbina and Oselin (36) examined the reasons for FSWs entering the industry during their adolescence (18 years old) and adulthood (19 years old) in America and discovered that 40% of adolescents "formalize" the sex trade, an environment in which they describe growing up and thinking of sex as a normal job. According to a poll conducted in Chicago, USA, peer behavior has a significant impact on women's decisions. When girls often observe individuals around them earning money by selling sex services, they know at an early age that sex trafficking might be a future vocation (14). Personal interviews with 70 FSWs in Rwanda, Africa, revealed that 25 of the study subjects described being exposed to sex trafficking, the majority of whom worked as maids or were dependent on sex workers prior to becoming FSWs. Twenty-eight people stated that they worked in bars where sex trafficking was prevalent, and eight people stated that they had friends and peers who were involved in sex trafficking (19).

Abuse of Substances and Domestic Violence

Substance abuse is defined here as abuse by a parent or caregiver, a spouse, or one's own drug and alcohol usage. In the United States, 67% of FSWs grew up in households where one or both parents were addicted to drugs or alcohol (2). Long-term exposure of children to this harmful environment and behavior is detrimental to their physical and mental development. Fifteen percent of women in Nagaland, India, use the sex trade to feed their drug or alcohol addictions (9). Murphy interviewed American street girls and discovered that drug usage was not only a

factor in their entry into the profession, but also in their continuing employment (37). Additionally, a study of street FSWs in the United States discovered that 65% of women who began sex trafficking in adulthood (age 19 and older) cited drug addiction as a motivating factor (36). Domestic abuse is another factor that contributes to women entering the sex profession. About 40% of married women cited domestic abuse as their primary reason for engaging in sex trafficking, 31% cited their husband's alcoholic addiction as a cause for being unable or unable to work, and women were forced to labor to earn money (21).

Sexual and Physical Abuse

Sexual abuse during childhood can damage an individual's perspective, impairing self-awareness and emotional capability. Sexual assault can result in low self-esteem, anxiety, despair, drug misuse, fleeing from home, interpersonal issues, and a variety of other mental and physical disorders that may operate as risk factors for women getting involved in sex trafficking (38). In the United States, studies have revealed that FSWs have a higher prevalence of childhood sexual assault (40%), and childhood sexual assault appears to be a clear indicator of teenagers involved in sex trafficking. Accordingly, 60% of women who begin employment as adolescents do so in order to reclaim control of their lives and sexuality. Childhood injuries such as sexual harassment, rape, incest, and physical abuse are quite frequent among these women. Frequently, they opt to flee their homes in order to escape this circumstance (36). In a study of Canadian teenage FSWs and childhood sexual assault, 73% reported having been sexually assaulted as children, compared to just 29% of the overall population (39). Sexual abuse in childhood doubles the likelihood of women engaging in sex trafficking compared to women in general (40). Ingabire and colleagues found that almost half of the FSWs polled had suffered sexual or physical abuse (19). Hwang and Bedford examined the variables that influenced Taiwanese teenagers' decision to become FSWs. Among the 49 teenage FSWs, 36 reported experiencing domestic physical abuse, 28 reported experiencing sexual abuse, and 81% reported experiencing domestic violence on a significant or very serious level (24). Sexual assault and physical abuse violate the victim's body and mind without their will, frequently ruining children's psychological and economic safety nets and putting women in an extremely vulnerable situation.

Delinquent Behavior

School difficulties (e.g., absenteeism, truancy, fighting, frequently hanging out with undesirable peers, etc.) are referred to as poor conduct, which can eventually result in runaways (41). A study of Japanese high school students discovered a strong correlation between the offering of sexual services and antisocial conduct (42). In addition, while detained for various offences, wayward girls may learn to engage in sex trafficking (43, 44). Thirty-one of the 49 adolescent FSWs in Taiwan had a history of smoking and drinking, eleven had a history of drug use, eleven had a history of fighting with classmates, forty-nine were frequently absent from school, twenty-eight were sexually active prior to prostitution, and thirty-three were fleeing home. Running away from home is a critical event that encourages females to engage in the sex trade when they first begin (24). Cobbina

and Oselin noted that one of the possible motivations for kids to enter the sex trade business is bad school conduct (36). Early sexual abuse and inadequate education might cause girls to flee their homes, and that fleeing increases the likelihood that they will engage in harmful behaviors, such as providing sexual services (45). Compared young FSWs to typical girls with similar living circumstances and environments and discovered that the former were more prone to reporting running away behaviors (46). According to a study of Canadian adolescent FSWs, the primary reasons for their choice to flee home were a need for autonomy and a want to belong (47).

Conclusions

Economic motivations, work circumstances, being attracted, affected by cultural conventions, being trafficked, coerced, or tricked are the primary reasons for FSW employment. Women may get involved in sex trafficking for a variety of reasons, including disruption of familial or financial support networks,

substance misuse, marital violence, exposure to prostitution by others, sexual or physical abuse as a child, and poor academic performance. Due to the fact that factors are strongly linked and intersect, it is difficult to isolate their individual impacts, and the problem of causation is complex. While the majority of FSWs may be exposed to a variety of negative stimuli and influences during their development, such as parental substance abuse, physical violence by caregivers in childhood or domestic violence by husbands after marriage, as well as prostitution and visits by relatives or friends, the impact on women's bodies, psychology, and behavior should not be underestimated. While economic motives play a significant part in why FSWs work, it should be emphasized that owing to the growth of the social economy and the openness of people's beliefs, there are also a large number of individuals drawn to prostitution. Even women who are coerced into the sex trade have some consenting aspects, and when given the option to quit, some women prefer to continue delivering sex. ■

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