

Abstract:

The sex industry in Nepal has witnessed a massive resurgence, largely due to the expansion of the entertainment sector in the last decade. It is frequently featured in the national media, often with sensationalistic headlines. However, there is only limited research available on the perceptions of support agencies' efforts in dealing with sex industry in Nepal. This chapter explores the approaches taken by different agencies in Nepal to intervening in the sex industry. The data for the chapter are derived from semi-structured interviews with donor agencies, government offices, I/NGOs, and other anti-trafficking networks. The findings of the chapter delineate that the rights of women and girls to work in a safe and healthy environment have been largely neglected in Nepal. Despite several attempts to regulate the sex industry, the practices employed by support organisations are often limited to controlling measures (rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration model). Such measures often bound up in the choice/coercion and innocent/savvy dichotomies. The chapter emphasises the importance of looking beyond these dichotomies and addressing the labour exploitation and other human rights violations that women and girls are facing in the Nepalese sex industry.

Beyond dichotomies: Exploring responses to tackling the sex industry in Nepal

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Introduction

“If a girl would like to work as a dancer or a sex worker, it is fine—she has the right to do so. However, she should be able to perform in an environment free from exploitation, and there should be no compromise when it comes to issues relating to her health and safety. We run awareness programmes: we tell them it is a highly risky job; we tell them: ‘be safe’; and [we] talk about their rights” (Interview with Ravina, NGO officer working with sex workers, April 2014).

This statement articulates the concern that inadequate protection of women and girls working in the sex industry has led to the violation of their rights to work and obtain necessary healthcare and social respect. Regulation of the sex industryⁱ is envisaged as a way forward in several countries (Armstrong 2010; Chapkis 2000). The organisation and regulation of the sex industry is a highly debated issue in contemporary Nepal and is frequently featured in the national media, often with sensationalistic headlines. The sex industry in Nepal has witnessed a massive resurgence, largely due to the expansion of the entertainment sector in the last decade. This has resulted in an unprecedented rise in a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international NGOs (INGOs)ⁱⁱ in the sex industry, with a range of programmes and intervention strategies. The government’s attempts at addressing the issues facing the entertainment sector have led to the enactment of several regulations in recent years. In particular, two documents are worth mentioning (both of which are meant to regulate and protect the rights of women and girls in entertainment sector): the *Guideline for the Control of Sexual Exploitation among Female Workers in Dance and Bar Restaurants and the Like Business*, (2008) and the *Code of Conduct for the Night-time Entertainment Industry* (2009) (NHRC 2010).ⁱⁱⁱ However, there is little evidence to indicate the extent to which these

regulations have been put into practice. Such uncertainties in tackling the sex industry in practice are also experienced in other countries. For instance, Gangoli and Westmarland (2006) note the problems of enforcing sex industry regulations in countries such as India, Pakistan, and Moldova. In the context of Nepal, this problem has been further complicated due to the fact that the sex industry overlaps with certain trafficking phenomena. In this chapter, I show how this situation has led to tensions and dilemmas when addressing the vulnerabilities of sex workers and identifying trafficked victims in the sex industry. The remainder of the chapter is organised as follows. At the outset, I briefly discuss the existing literature on regulating sex work. This is followed by an overview of sex work in Nepal, including the historical development of sex work, the connection between the sex industry and trafficking, urbanisation in the 1980s and the 1990s, and the expansion of the sex industry. The empirical analysis – which is based on semi-structured interviews conducted between 2014 and 2015, with 58 interviewees representing donor agencies, government offices, I/NGOs, and other anti-trafficking networks – focuses on the approaches taken by different agencies to intervening in the sex industry. Despite attempts to regulate the sex industry, the practices employed by support organisations are often limited to controlling measures (rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration model). Such measures often bound up in the choice/coercion and innocent/savvy dichotomies. Discussing the key factors at play in shaping the experiences of women and girls (for instance, the process of entry into the sex industry, working conditions, and the reasons for remaining in the industry), I argue that responses to the sex industry have been largely inadequate. I conclude by noting the importance of looking beyond the dichotomies and addressing the labour exploitation and other human rights violations that women and girls are facing in the Nepalese sex industry.

Regulating sex work

Much of the prior work in this area explores the interactions between sex workers, police, and support agencies in street-based sex work in developed nations (Armstrong 2017; Dewey and Germain 2017; Dalla 2006; Weitzer 2014). For instance, Armstrong (2017) argues that the relationship between police and sex workers takes place in a criminalised context and therefore is fraught with tensions. Consequently, sex workers are often isolated from available legal, health, and social services (Dewey and Germain 2017). Research conducted on street-based sex work in the US shows that the responses from the criminal justice system and social services are problematic since they penalise women for the choices and decisions they have undertaken in very restricted circumstances (Dewey and Germain 2017). It has been pointed out that the decriminalisation of prostitution would likely improve in the relationship between police and street-based sex workers (Armstrong 2017).

However, there is only limited research available on the perceptions of support agencies' efforts in dealing with the indoor commercial sex venues in developing countries (particularly in a context where there is a strong link between sex work and sex trafficking). Weitzer (2014) argues that an understanding of the geographical contexts plays an important role in this regard as sex work differs significantly from one context to another. Presenting the case of Nepal, this study adds to the existing debate on sex work. There are no specific laws that define or penalise sex workers or prostitution in Nepal (Godwin 2012).^{iv} As I discuss later, some legal provisions have actually codified prostitution as a form of exploitation. Given these ambiguities in the legal framework, and considering the historical trajectories of sex work, the case of Nepal provides a unique setting to provide a nuanced understanding of the responses to the sex industry in developing countries.

Sex work in Nepal

Historical Overview

To understand the responses to the sex industry, it is useful to first explore the historical roots of prostitution in Nepal. The historical roots of prostitution in Nepal are, as stated by Richardson et al. (2009), cemented by the dominant Hindu value system. This system has reinforced the country's traditional patriarchal society and contributed to institutionalised prostitution in the country. Historically, the sex trade in Nepal has been confined to particular caste groups – *Badi* and *Deuki* – which are at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. For instance, in the *Badi* caste (untouchable Hindu caste), children are forced to work as prostitutes from early puberty by their parents to generate income (Ghimire 1994). In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *Badi* women and girls were often recruited as professional dancers, singers, and *Keti syams* (housemaids) to offer entertainment and sexual services to the Rana rulers,^v religious leaders, and landlords (Sangroula 2001; Cox 1992; Kara 2012). As a consequence, prostitution eventually became a means of survival for the *Badi* community, especially after the demand for singing and dancing declined in later years. Cox (1992) states that the market of *Badi* prostitution witnessed a significant rise after the fall of the Ranas in the 1950s. In the *Deuki* tradition, young girls from very poor and socially disadvantaged families, mainly from south-west Nepal, were offered to temples by their parents so as to fulfil their religious obligations (Ghimire 1994). Having been offered to serve in the temple, these girls were deprived the right of getting married or obtaining education. Many of these girls embraced prostitution as a profession since they had few alternatives for survival in the transition from childhood to adolescence. Although the practice of the *Deuki* was abolished later in the 1990s, *Deuki* women and girls continued to be deprived of many rights, including

the right to education and marriage, all of which made it much harder to abandon prostitution and return to normal living (personal interviews).

Historically established connection between the sex industry and trafficking

The sex industry in Nepal differs from many other developing countries in that there is a close connection to cross-border trafficking (Cox 1992). In the aftermath of the Rana regime, young girls who were once recruited to entertain the rulers were trafficked to various Indian brothels (Samarasinghe 2008; ILO-IPEC 2002; Sangroula 2001). In fact, by the 1960s there was already a high demand for Nepalese girls in Indian brothers. The sex trade evolved into a lucrative business and a large number of brokers were involved in trafficking illiterate girls and women from villages and marginalised caste groups to brothels, luring them with the promise of opportunities for a better life and employment in big Indian cities. Young women and girls who had been involved in the *Badini* and *Deuki*, and girls from marginalised caste groups in western Nepal (including Tamang, Magar, Sherpa, Kami, and Majhi), were particularly prioritised for sex trafficking (Samarasinghe 2008). The sex trade flourished further in the 1970s with the establishment of large criminal gangs and well-established links connecting the Indian sex industry and Nepalese recruiters (Sangroula 2001; Ghimire 1994; Terre des Hommes 2003; NHRC 2008). As a result, discourses on trafficking in Nepal were constructed, predicated on the assumption that it is primarily an issue of ‘buying and selling of girls in the sex industry’ (Sanghera 2005; Samarasinghe 2008). Such historical trajectories have influenced the responses to the sex industry, which makes the case of Nepal stand out in comparison to other developing countries.

Urbanisation of the sex industry in the 1980s and 1990s

Since the 1980s, so-called ‘urban prostitution’ (Worthen 2011) has become distinct in Nepal. The emergence of this form of prostitution is directly related to the expansion of the entertainment sector in the country and the promotion of commercial sex-based industries such as dance bars, *Dohori* restaurants,^{vi} cabin restaurants,^{vii} and massage parlours. Such an expansion of sex-based activities has further contributed both to the domestication and expansion of the sex trade in Nepal. The country experienced a wave of rural-urban migration in the 1990s due to the escalating Maoist armed conflict, which culminated in 2005 after the monarchy was abolished and the country became a federal state. The 1990s was also marked by the country’s falling international trade (mainly the decline of carpet and garment exports to the West), thereby accumulating huge budget deficits and stifling economic growth (IIDS and UNIFEM 2004; NHRC 2008; 2010). A large number of workers once employed in the garment and carpets industries shifted to the entertainment sector as it was the only alternative left to them. Various studies (Malik et al. 2009 and personal interviews) show that, in the process of adjusting themselves to the entertainment sector, many of these workers were eventually plunged into the sex industry.

Further expansion of the sex industry

Today, the domestic sex industry has expanded in various forms—ranging from bars and guest houses to tea shops and different types of restaurants (including cabin restaurants), both in urban and semi-urban areas.^{viii} Prior studies claim that workers engaged in the entertainment sector are subject to increasing sexual and labour exploitation (NHRC 2008; Frederick 2012). The structure of the Nepalese entertainment sector is constructed in such a way that, once the young girls and women enter this sector, most of them end up being engaged in sex work (as discussed later in the chapter).^{ix} These workers face widespread sexual abuse (which is

institutionalised in the entertainment sector), stigma associated with the entertainment sector, and meagre salaries for the hard and exploitative work. Without clear regulations to protect against these problems, it is unsurprising that women and girls end up into street-based sex work, which is arguably more dangerous (Armstrong 2017; Dalla 2006). The expansion of the sex industry provides a useful context for the analysis of empirical findings. Before moving on to explore the key factors that have shaped workers' experiences in the sex industry, I provide an overview of the contextual background and the approaches taken by different organisations to tackle the sex industry in Nepal. This will contribute to an understanding of why the responses to the sex industry in Nepal have remained problematic.

Findings

Approaches to intervening in the sex industry- The 'Rescue' 'Rehabilitation' and 'Reintegration' model

As mentioned earlier, sex trafficking and the sex trade are so closely intertwined in Nepal that national policies and programmes relating to the sex industry have been developed with a view to deterring trafficking activities rather than addressing the violence, exploitation, and other harms associated with the sex industry. The approaches used by different organisations to intervene in the sex industry focus on control measures informed by abolitionist discourses. This can be observed in several enactments, for instance the National Code of the 1980s, the 1986 Human Trafficking (Control) Act—including its revised version, which was issued in 2007 with a view to prohibiting the slave trade and human trafficking (IIDS and UNIFEM 2004; FWLD 2014). These legislations have in fact codified prostitution as a form of exploitation.

The issue of trafficking for the purpose of prostitution in Nepal came to international attention in the mid-1990s, after 128 Nepalese girls were rescued from brothels in India. This

rescue mission was a joint effort of the Indian Government and Nepalese NGOs (Pradhan 1996). This rescue mission also impacted the way local NGOs were dealing with those who were assumed to be victims of the sex trade. Given that they had to prioritise immediate shelter and relief to these victims, many of these NGOs started looking at international resources. Some NGOs even made an appeal for international support at The Stockholm World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in 1996 (Pradhan 1996). Such an attempt at internationalising sex trafficking resulted in a proliferation of anti-trafficking organisations in the country supported by international donors (Crawford 2010). The ‘Three Rs’ – rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration^x – has been one of the most important areas of interventions since then.

At present, more than 100 NGOs work in collaboration with government agencies and donors in order to combat trafficking to the sex industry in Nepal (as well as cross-border and international trafficking) (IIDS and UNIFEM 2004).^{xi} There are nineteen UN agencies, INGOs, and other international agencies (e.g. UNDP, UNICEF, ILO-IPEC, PLAN International, Save the Children Alliance, Asia Foundation, and World Education) offering financial and technical support to facilitate interventions in the sex trade, including project to rescue/rehabilitate the victims (IIDS and UNIFEM 2004). However, very little is known about how the financial support is being used (Crawford 2010). A study by the Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (2004) states that money spent on anti-trafficking initiatives in Nepal in 2001 (including controlling the sex trade) exceeded U.S. \$2.5 million. It is unclear, however, whether the money has been spent on the ‘target group’ or has been used for other purposes.

Police raids at the behest of local and international organisations engaged in the rescue and rehabilitation of sex workers are quite common across countries (Ahmed and Seshu 2012). The effectiveness of rescue and raid programmes targeted particularly on women and girls working

in the entertainment sector has been widely debated in Nepal. Some of the rescue workers representing I/NGOs that I interviewed seemed to be convinced of the positive impact that police raids could have in protecting sex workers. For instance, an INGO officer I interviewed remarked: ‘police raids have certainly helped regulate the closing time of restaurants/bars and control sex activities’ (Manu, April 2014). However, most of the rescue operators, mainly those involved in developing programmes in the entertainment sector have questioned the significance of such raids, as they tend to take little consideration of the impact that such interventions could have on women and girls. This has been well documented in several other countries (e.g. Ahmed and Seshu 2012; Segrave et al. 2009), and is also evident in the case of Nepal, where police raids have resulted in more harm to women and girls in the sex industry. For instance, an NGO officer stated: ‘Police raids have led to more negative consequences in the sex industry. I am aware of many cases in which the police officers who rescued the girls and women through raids have brought them back to the same place [a bar or restaurant]. Most of the police officers are already bribed and they undertake raids in the sex industry just to show the public that they are doing something to control sex activities’ (Gita, August 2015). The adoption of the ‘abolitionist’ approach – as seen in the practice of police raids, for instance – have contributed to concealing sex work in Nepal.^{xiii} The failure of rescue and reintegration programmes was highlighted during the interviews. For instance, an NGO officer noted the following: ‘Out of 100 girls who were reintegrated after the raids, two have returned to their families and the others are back in the same sector [entertainment]’ (Ravina, April 2014). The programmes being offered in Nepal have therefore appeared inadequate in terms of mitigating the risk of sexual and physical violence against women and girls working in the sex industry. Mentions are made that the programmes designed to help women and girls working in the sex industry should therefore carefully assess the factors – such as the process of entry, working

conditions, economic conditions, and stigma – contributing to such exploitation and vulnerabilities. Some of these factors are explored below.

Process of entry and working conditions

The process of entry into the entertainment sector is subtle. Initially women and girls are recruited in the entertainment sector as waitresses, dancers, and singers. The actual intention of preparing them for sexual services is never disclosed. The transition into sex work is, however, not straight forward and may take considerable amount of time. In many instances, the process starts in rural areas where women and girls are approached by an agent or a middle man (*dalal*). For instance, women and girls and their families are promised employment opportunities and better education opportunities. An element of ‘deception’ is usually involved in this process. A police officer during an interview shared with me a job advert in which women and girls are encouraged to apply for ‘a lucrative employment in a dance bar in the city with a good salary and an opportunity of getting an education’ (Ram, August 2015). Once trained, some of them are given the opportunity to go to Middle Eastern countries and continue performing similar activities, but with higher salary and in better living conditions.

Chapkis (2000, 184) argues that whether legal or illegal, those employed in third-party-controlled sex work encounter ‘special challenges in their efforts to exercise control over their work’. Such is also evident in the case of Nepal, where workers in the entertainment sector are often exposed to various other forms of exploitation. For instance, they are forced to work long hours, usually at night, with low wages, and adverse working conditions. Moreover, they are victimised by both exploitative working conditions and frequent arrests and abuse they are subject to by the police (Maiti Nepal 2010). Some minors are even given hormonal medicines so as to make them look mature (older) and avoid questions about their age. Women and girls are often forced to maintain their physical appearance because their wages are determined by

their physical appearance. A government officer stated: ‘the lighter the colour, the more the wages – this is a simple fact’ (Prem, August 2015). There are also cases in which women and girls working in the entertainment sector have been indebted in the process of maintaining their living standards. These women and girls are not allowed to abandon the sector without paying the debts, thus leaving them with few alternatives other than to accept foreign employment. The way Nepal’s sex industry operates is therefore rather unique.

These women and girls working in the entertainment sector are the most at risk of being victims of exploitation, but are the least protected due to the confusion of sex trafficking and sex work. Some of those I interviewed from the government and I/NGOs strongly believed that these workers should be considered victims of sex trafficking since they are subject to deception and exploitation. Others were of the opinion that ‘freedom’ is a key factor and that this is a sufficient criterion to determine the status of a woman or girl as trafficked or not. An NGO officer summarised her view about ‘choice’ stating: ‘the girls working in dance bars have flexible working hours and are not concerned by the bar owners. They are free to roam during the daytime with friends’ (Ravina, April 2014). It was revealed during interviews with government officers that law enforcement authorities often believe women and girls working in the entertainment sector enter into sex work by their own ‘choice’ and should not be seen as sex trafficking victims. Such complexities in defining and understanding sex workers are also evident in developed nations. In the case of the US, Farrell and Cronin (2015, 211) argue that, despite law enforcement officers receiving training on how to identify human trafficking cases, there is still confusion about human trafficking and prostitution, and therefore requires different types of law enforcement responses. Delivering support in Nepal has therefore been marred by conflicting practices and tensions between different perspectives. In such circumstances, clear categories of who are innocent (if they are duped) or savvy (eager to try their luck) are constructed that facilitate an implementation of the protection of certain women

and girls in the entertainment sector. This corresponds to the work of O'Brien et al. (2013,71) stating that 'in attempting to create a blameless Madonna, these depictions have created a narrative that ignores women who choose to work in the sex industry (but who are also exploited or trafficked)'. As I show below, reasons to stay in the sex industry has, in many situations, been determined by factors such as self-stigma and money. The next section discusses the impact of these factors on women and girls in sex industry.

Reasons to stay: self-stigma and money

There appear to be at least two underlying reasons for women and girls to continue in the sex industry: self-stigma and money. These women and girls often hold the perception that once they enter this profession, they cannot get out of it or work anywhere else. This further encourages them to stay and accept the kind of work they do. They tend to develop self-stigma, which hinders them from considering returning to the community and having a normal life. Some interviewees told me that it takes a considerable amount of time for these women and girls to realise that they have been trapped and that they are bonded.^{xiii} In addition, by the time they realise that they have been trapped, they have become accustomed to an extravagant lifestyle, which they find rather difficult to surrender. Self-stigma and money (as well as other material gains) have therefore become dominant factors in encouraging victims to continue as sex workers. Women and girls face various structural constraints that contribute to their decision to be involved with in sex work, namely poverty and unemployment. This is also echoed in other countries (see Gangoli and Westmarland 2006), with Asha Nepal (2006) and Maiti Nepal (2010) arguing that structural and individual limitations provide the impetus for the entry of women and girls into the sex industry. Employment opportunities for women and girls are in fact limited in Nepal. According to the Economist (2011), income inequality in Nepal is the highest in Asia, overtaking countries such as China and the Philippines. Limited

employment opportunities have forced many women and girls to undertake whatever jobs are available to them. A large number of women and girls have selected the entertainment sector since it appears to be the best available option. Referring to Rajbhandari (1998), O'Neill (2001,160) states:

Because there are limited resources in these villages and no employment opportunities, illiteracy, social unconsciousness, and social acceptance of multi-partner sexual behaviour have all contributed to the migration of girls into prostitution, though unknowingly and reluctantly.

An NGO officer during an interview expressed the dilemma in addressing the economic circumstances of sex workers: 'For example, they [sex workers] stay with a guest they [and they] get Rs.250 in one day; they might have 5-6 customers. Therefore, once in this business, they are used to generating money in a rather easy manner. It is really challenging to motivate them to withdraw from their work' (Sushma, April 2014). On the whole, the realities of sex workers in –practice are extremely complicated since there are several factors which explain why women and girls remain in the sex industry (Busza 2004). It is important to understand not only the underlying causes that encourage women and girls to choose the sex industry, but also their lack of awareness of the consequences of being sex workers. In fact, the way the government and I/NGOs have emphasised rescue and rehabilitation missions has, in some ways, reproduced the narrative of 'innocent victim'- which is counter to the very essence of the principles of human rights.

There are, however, a small group of support organisations I interviewed that outlined an alternative by suggesting the importance of adopting a 'regulatory' approach (to promote and protect the rights of workers in the entertainment sector), as opposed to an 'abolitionist' approach. But, despite the fact that the guidelines on the operation of the entertainment sector (mentioned at beginning of the chapter) are in place, the agencies assigned to implement them are unable to do so due to limited resources. Therefore, they are unable to identify those vulnerable to violence and exploitation in a timely manner.

Conclusion

The analysis of the responses to the sex industry in Nepal reveals a perceived overlap between the sex industry and sex trafficking, as seen in various countries. The rights of women and girls to work in a safe and healthy environment have been largely neglected due to several factors: the historical trajectories of sex work, conflicting laws and regulations, and the adoption of practices based on the ‘abolitionist’ approach. The programmes being offered in Nepal have appeared inadequate in terms of mitigating the risk of sexual and physical violence against women and girls working in the sex industry. Responses to tackling the sex industry become more productive when efforts are made to move beyond dichotomies like choice versus coercion and innocent versus savvy. Careful consideration should be given to such tensions while developing and executing programmes for regulating the sex industry and protecting the rights of sex workers. The support agencies involved in developing responses need to listen to the women and girls working in the sex industry. The wanting to promote the well-being of those working in the sex industry should focus on the socio-cultural and historical dimensions that have driven women and girls into the sex industry and increased their vulnerabilities. Armstrong (2017, 571) argues that ‘the provisions of rights can afford sex workers greater agency and control in a context in which they are typically understood as inherently disempowered’. There is also a need for further research demonstrating the effectiveness of ‘regulatory’ approaches to protecting women who are already in the sex industry. In many South Asian countries, including Nepal, there is an ongoing debate about the need for decriminalising prostitution/sex work to ensure that sex workers ‘fully enjoy legal rights to health and safety at work’ (Godwin 2012,7). For instance, a recent study on the assessment of the vulnerability of young women working in the entertainment sector concluded that ‘there should be a policy in place to decriminalise employees in this sector’ (Maiti Nepal 2010, 60). If this is the case, Nepal may also follow the model of decriminalisation in New Zealand which,

according to Armstrong (in this volume), ‘could easily be achieved in other countries if there is a political will to listen to sex workers and recognise the value of their expertise’. It should be noted, however, that this may face specific difficulties in Nepal as the country is not ‘equipped to effectively regulate the industry or to address the violence, health and labour problems that accompany a sex industry’ (Frederick et al. 2010, 62).

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Endnotes

ⁱ The terms 'sex industry' and 'sex work' are not 'limited to the act of "sex", but also [refer] to various forms of direct and indirect sexual activities' (Hardy et al.2010, 3).

ⁱⁱ I also refer to both types of organisation with the acronym I/NGOs.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Guideline requires all businesses belonging to the entertainment sector to register in the District Administration Offices (DAO). Furthermore, the Guideline has prohibited sexual exploitation of workers and other forms of harassment. The Code of Conduct emphasises the provision of identity card and a work contract, as well as declaring minimum wages for workers in the entertainment sector. To implement these regulations, a Monitoring and Action Committee (MAC) has been established by including representatives from various government offices such as: the Chief District Officer (CDO), police officers, officers from the Nepal Women's Commission, and the Women Welfare officer (NHRC 2010).

^{iv} The constitution of Nepal 2015 has ensured the rights of citizens to practice the profession they wish to engage in. Sex work therefore, as an act itself, is not a criminal activity in Nepal. However, very often, sex workers are arrested and prosecuted using the Public Offences and Penalties Act of 1970 (Godwin 2012).

^v The Ranas were a feudal family who called themselves ‘the Kings’ and their regime lasted from 1846 – 1951 (Sangroula 2001).

^{vi} *Dohori* restaurants offer live performance of duet songs (Maiti Nepal 2010).

^{vii} These are restaurants which offer food and drinks, as well as sexual services, and which include an eating space as well as some cabins separated by wooden frames or a curtain where sexual services are provided (NHRC 2010).

^{viii} In 2010, it was estimated that approximately 2600 female sex workers are working in Nepal. Approximately 20 percent of the sex workers are street-based and 40 percent were associated with the entertainment sector (mainly cabin restaurants, dance bars, and massage parlours) (HSCB/NCASC 2011).

^{ix} It should be noted that this structure may well be found in other countries also—thus Nepal would not necessarily be unique in this regard.

^x The rescue and rehabilitation refers ‘to a process by which brothels are raided by the police or NGO workers, women are removed from brothels (rescued), and then placed in a rehabilitation facility’ (Ahmed and Seshu 2012, 154). Reintegration refers to a process through which the women and girls are re-united with their life, family, community, and even to create a new life in another place in society (Sangroula 2001).

^{xi} Some of the major NGOs include: ABC Nepal, Maiti Nepal, Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN), Shanti Rehabilitation Center, the Women Rehabilitation Center (WOREC), SAATHI, HimRights (Himalayan Human Rights Monitors), the Center for Legal Research and Resource Development (CeLRRD), Shakti Samuha (the only survivor’s organisation), and the Legal Aid and Consultancy Center (LACC), among others (IIDS and UNIFEM 2004).

^{xii} Prior studies have delineated the implication of street-based prostitution on women’s health. For instance, HIV is common among street-based FSWs in Kathmandu valley. Almost 4 percent of street-based sex workers suffer from HIV (NCASC 2015).

^{xiii} The term bondage is ‘the condition of any person whose liberty is unlawfully restricted while the person is coerced through any means to render labor or services [...] including those who enter the condition because of the lack of reasonable alternative’ (Kara 2012, 31). The term ‘debt bondage’ is commonly used by counter-trafficking organisation which means that the women owe money to the trafficker for travel, produce authentic or fraudulent documents or helping them find jobs (Dewey 2008). Dewey (2008, 132) however argues that ‘debt bondage does not necessarily indicate a lack of agency or even a woman’s perception that she has been unfairly treated by the individual who keeps her earnings’.