

State of Prostitution in Kathmandu and Child Involvements

More than 10,000 girls and women are involved in prostitution in Kathmandu. Several studies have already been undertaken to identify the health risks that these children and youth engaged in prostitution are exposed to, but none of them have integrated any research on trafficking. Although there are no laws that explicitly prohibit prostitution, pimping is not legal in Nepal.

Socio-economic Characteristics of the children and youth engaged in prostitution

- The proportion of children (≤ 17 years) engaged in prostitution in Kathmandu is relatively high (18.7 %). Compared to other sites, the proportion of children is significantly high in the street-based prostitution.
- Out of the sample of 440, 43 % belong to the Hill ethnic communities (Gurung, Magar, Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Lama and Sherpa) followed by the Chhetris (33 %), Brahmins (9.8 %) and Newars (9.8 %). This finding challenges earlier perception that Chhetris, Brahmins and Newars are less involved in prostitution.
- Interestingly, half of the respondents can read and write. Educational attainment (59 %) among them compares favourably with the national average for females (35.4 %)⁴. There is, however, a very high percentage of children who drop out after completing or during the primary school years. Parents/ guardians' disagreement/family problems (54.4 %) and economic difficulties (42.9 %) are the major reasons for not attending schools among children and youth engaged in prostitution.
- Both children and adults involved in prostitution in Kathmandu also undertake a variety of jobs, such as working as waitresses (52.4 % of children and 52.8 % adults), masseurs (12.2 % of children and 24.3 % of adults), and operating petty shops (2.4 % of children and 4.2 % of adults) to supplement their income.
- In some cases, husbands' silent consent in the trafficking/sexual exploitation of their wives has been identified. More than half of the children and youth engaged prostitution in Kathmandu are married and three-fourths of them are mothers. A sixth of the children engaged in prostitution are married, and 14 % of them became mothers before they reached the age of 18 years.
- Some establishments that provide jobs to young girls under 18 years of age as waitresses and masseuses in Kathmandu seem to have developed a sophisticated mechanism of concealing the reality that these girls are also involved in providing sexual services.
- Out of the 440 respondents, 81 % (358 – 82 below 18 years and 276 above 18) are employed as waitresses and masseuses. Many of them also provide sexual services in the establishments. Moreover, 75 % of them are on a monthly fixed salary, which gives them less negotiating power vis-à-vis control over the income earned through prostitution, which normally is paid according to the number of customers. Of these 75 % who are paid by their employers/dalals, 89 % feel that they receive less than 50 % of their actual earnings from providing sex services.

- The girls enter the sex trade at an early age. More than a fourth of the children were involved in prostitutions before they turned 15 years of age. Among the adult sex workers, 3.4 % entered the business before they were 18.
- Two distinct patterns of recruitment have emerged – so-called long-distance trafficking and short distance trafficking. The first relates to trafficking from outside the Kathmandu Valley, and the purpose is not necessarily sexual exploitation. Short distance trafficking occurs within the valley, where force and abuse are involved, and the motive, in all cases, is exclusively sexual exploitation.
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- Not surprisingly, most of the girls who entered the prostitution on their own free will stated economic hardships and family breakdown as the reasons for entering the sex trade and most of them entered using friends (63 %) to find a job.

Study by Youth Forum Nepal with primary data under the ILO-IPEC project Trafficking in Children - South Asia (TICSA),

REALITY BITES

Total No. of Massage Parlours in Kathmandu Valley	170
Massage Parlours in Thamel	110
Massage Parlours in Valley 3 year ago	85
Massage Parlours likely to increase by double in one years	

Masseurs are treated here girl or woman only.

Total Masseurs 170 Parlours × 4 person = 680 or 700

Unmarried Masseurs are 20 % = 140

Married Masseurs are 80 % = 560

Out of Married Masseurs: (Categorization on the basis of children)

Masseurs having one child are 30% = 175 (30% of 560)

Masseurs having two child are 70% = 385 (70% of 560)

Out of Married Masseurs: (Categorization on the basis of husband)

Masseurs with husband are 20% = 112 (20% of 560)

Masseurs without husband are 80% = 448 (80% of 560)

Indication of Prostitution with Massage Parlours

- Easy communication using slang: ie. *Sasaj, Kam Garne, Tyo Garne* etc.
- Same place sexual intercourse
- Easy availability of bed under the name of massage
- Prepaid term of payment
- Most-happened intercourse: till first ejaculation
- No pimp required for local people

Problems of Masseurs

- Low economic status
- Low physical health
- Lack of education
- Lack of proper counseling
- Always fear of Police Raid
- Regular payment for police personnel those who visit
- Exploitation by house-owner as they charge 200% more than normal renting.
- Use of dirty clothes i.e. they have a bath almost in 20 days or one month and do not clean their most-used clothes for months.

***Bhatti* (The Local Pub)**

Total No. of *Bhatti* in Kathmandu Valley = 300

80% of *Bhatti* runs also with prostitution = 240 (80% of 300)

Type of prostitution: Same Place Sexual Intercourse