

Assessing the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Kathmandu Valley's Entertainment Sector

Yashoda Upreti
MA Child Development,
Tribhuvan University

Abstract:-

➤ Aim:

This study aimed to understand the driving factors that lead to commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), the conditions they face in their workplaces, and their compulsions to work in entertainment sector of Kathmandu Valley.

➤ Methods:

A mixed method of quantitative survey design (N=78 girls) supported by qualitative techniques was applied. A survey included 87 CSEC girls and conducted two focus group discussions. The quantitative and qualitative data were cleaned, analyzed, and presented.

➤ Results:

The study outcome has revealed that economic factors, lack of education, and inadequate skills were factors for leaving their place of birth to associate with CSEC. Lack of awareness, financial hardships, and uneducated parents living in remote locations of Nepal were other factors making them prone to work as CSEC. Inadequate access to the resources to address the unmet financial and family needs remained other factors pushing the children into CSEC. The physical, psychological, and emotional impact of their association with CSEC is significantly prevalent without having proper redress mechanisms and structures to address the root causes. The safety mechanisms, protection measures, and prevention actions at the source are additional remedies to be in place.

➤ Conclusions:

Over 90% of the CSEC (N= 78) girls wished for rehabilitation with adequate support for vocational training, livelihood, and education facilities in place. Study findings strongly recommend immediate actions to address these unmet needs.

I. INTRODUCTION

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) define Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) involves adults exploiting minors, both girls and boys under 18 years old in exchange for money or other forms of compensation. It also identifies CSEC as a serious human rights violation and a form of economic exploitation

comparable to slavery and forced labor, classifying it as a crime against the minors involved. This exploitation is a pervasive issue both domestically and internationally, taking many forms such as brothels, sex trafficking, mail-order brides, sex tourism, pornography, prostitution, stripping, lap dancing, and phone sex services. Among these, the most prevalent forms of CSEC are sex trafficking, child pornography, and child sex tourism (Women's Support Project, 2014).

Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is prevalent in South Asia, with varying estimates of children involved in prostitution. In India's major cities, the number ranges from 270,000 to 400,000 (UNESCAP, UNICEF, & ECPAT International, 2001). In Nepal, child prostitution is spreading, particularly in urban areas and along highways. One survey estimated that 800 girls work as sex workers in Kathmandu. However, the exact number of male and female children involved in the entertainment sector, especially in CSEC, remains unknown. Estimates, such as those from the National Centre for AIDS and STD Control (Global Fund Proposal 2009), suggest there are 30,815 commercial sex workers in Nepal. Bellamy (1998) found that 50% of these workers were under 18, while more recent research by Shakti Samuha (2008), a Nepali NGO, found that 33% were under 18, with 11% being 15 or younger. Over the past decade, Nepal's adult entertainment industry has grown rapidly, with erotic dance bars, cabin restaurants, massage parlors, *bhatti pasals* ("local liquor shops"), and guesthouses often serving as fronts for child prostitution. Many of these girls come from neighboring districts of Kathmandu and the *Tamang* and *Dalit* communities.

Nepal has ratified the Child Rights Convention (CRC), and the International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions 138 on the minimum age for work, 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, and 29 on Forced Labor. Additional child labor policy frameworks include the National Planning Commission Interim Plan on Child Labor (2007/08-2010/11), the National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking, the Poverty Reduction Strategy (#10 PRSP), and the Child Labor Master Plan (2004 – 2014) that prohibits all labor below 14, all hazardous forms of labor below 16 and all unconditional forms below 18. Significant policy developments also include the bill on bonded labor and a comprehensive Child Labor (Prohibition and Regularization) Act – 1999. Various government institutions are responsible for transforming these policies, plans, and legislation into action.

The Labor Relations and Child Labor Section of the Ministry of Labor, Transport and Management (MoLTM) is responsible for the legal enforcement of child rights and child labor. In addition, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has in place policies concerning “free and compulsory” education up to grade eight and enhancing the relevancy and appeal of schools through the “Child-Friendly Schools” program. These policies and programs are especially relevant to child labor issues. The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW) and its Central Child Welfare Board (CCWB) as well as its District Child Welfare Boards (DCWB) headed by Chief District Officers are also relevant to the needs of child laborers. This ministry works with the government’s Women and Children Service Centre (WCSC), known as the Women’s Cell, in all 75 districts (MoWCSW, 2008). The role of the WCSC is to respond to the social and legal needs of women and children who are victims of a crime or are taken into custody by the police. A recent development relevant to the protection of the CSEC is the establishment of the Monitoring Action Committee (MAC), established by a Supreme Court decree that requires government officials to respond to the abuses of workers in the adult entertainment sector and respond to the public registering incidences of law infringement (Supreme Court Nepal, 2009).

The growth of sex tourism for child sex abusers, including pedophiles, has been increasingly noted in Sri Lanka, India, and Nepal, catering primarily to demand from foreign tourists. A 2010 Terre des hommes (TdH) Foundation study highlighted an estimated 16% to 33% of the females involved in the entertainment sector are under the age of 18 years. The lack of sound methodologies and indicators to conduct comprehensive research to compile quantitative data associated with abuse, exploitation, and neglect has limited the availability of systematic quantitative and qualitative data. This study was conducted to understand and explore the journey and vulnerabilities of the girls facing CSEC felt relevant to generating needed information on CSEC.

II. METHODS AND SAMPLING

This research employed a survey and exploratory design, evaluating the socio-economic conditions and general characteristics of the respondents (sample). This assessment included factors such as current situation, economic status, health status, age, caste/ethnicity, education, behavior at entry, satisfaction with current life, earnings, accommodation, and marital status of the girls. Data collection was conducted through consent, questionnaires, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Of the estimated 2,000 girls in the Kathmandu Valley, 78 were surveyed. Qualitative data were gathered using semi-structured interviews, and two FGDs were held with 20 participants. The study adhered to guidelines recommended by the Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC), ensuring ethical standards such as confidentiality, anonymity, verbal consent, and voluntary withdrawal without providing reasons. Spreadsheets were utilized for data analysis.

III. PUSH FACTORS TO JOIN CSEC

➤ *Lower Socio-Economic Background as a Push Factor.*

The lower socio-economic strata, Girls from ethnic nationalities, and districts of surrounding areas of Kathmandu Valley have more prevalence in the participation of CSEC. The lower socio-economic strata, Girls from ethnic nationalities, and districts of surrounding areas of Kathmandu Valley have more representation in the CSEC. 41% of respondents were 17 years old, and 39% represented 18 years old. 11% reported 16 years of age, whereas 8% of girls were between 10 to 15 years of age. The CSEC is engaged in this profession in the early stage of adolescence period. 40% of the respondents represented the Tamang community. Chhetri (15%), Newar (13%), and Dalits 12%. In the remaining, 5% of Brahmin, 5% Sherpa, and 10% other ethnic nationalities were reported. While looking at the district of origin, 26% of respondents are from Nuwakot. Likewise, 17% are from Sindhupalchok, and 12% are from Dhading. 6% percent of participants represented each from Lalitpur, Makwanpur, and Bhaktapur districts. Kavre and Sindhuli were the districts with 3% of respondents. 20% of the CSEC were from other districts of Nepal, and a few were from India.

➤ *Dysfunctional Family Background Aggravated the Situation.*

Not in a majority, but 20% of respondents outlined that their mother was either dead or abandoned by their fathers. Equally, 31% of respondents reported that their fathers were either no more or living alone. The status of death or being a single parent might be one of the pushing factors for them to be in CSEC. In total 46% of respondents were orphans and had to rely on a single parent. The separation or divorce of parents also led to a dysfunctional family background to many respondents. Parental support and protection were also not available.

➤ *Financial Hardships were Reasons for Pushing the Girls out of their Home.*

Their family's financial hardships have contributed a lot to pushing them to join the CSEC. Two-thirds (67%) of the respondents came from a background where their parents lived with substantial income from agriculture through using their lands or borrowed land. The earnings from agriculture were insufficient to meet the survival of a family for the entire year. The low cash flow of the family can be a well-understood push factor for the CSEC. 49% of respondents outlined that their parents were in debt. 36% of families of the respondents were not indebted, and 15% of respondents were not aware of the financial situation of the family.

A 12-year-old girl studying in grade 5 said she is here to collect money to continue her education. Her mother said, if you are doing this job for the survival of us, there is nothing wrong with it. I want to continue my education. One day, I will get a good job that will bring a smile to my mother's face (FGD Participant, Kalanki).

"I have a boy child of age 3. My husband left me. I need to take care of my child and myself. I got married to him at the age of 13. As I did not have my mother. My stepmother pushed me to get out of my home. I was engaged in this sector at the age of 12. I gave birth to my child at the age of 15. After getting pregnant, my husband started to beat me. He used to tell me that I was a prostitute and blamed the baby for belonging to somebody. I visited the police cell in Kalimati on several occasions, The police did not do anything, and nothing changed for me. I asked my husband to give me a citizenship certificate, but he denied it (FGD Participant, Kalanki).

➤ *Illiteracy of the Parents and Caregivers.*

The higher education of parents lowers the chances of pushing their children to CSEC and vice versa. Educated parents have more income opportunities and develop a culture of supporting their adolescents to continue their education. Two-thirds of parents of the CSEC are found illiterate or just being able to read and write. Only 8% of the parents have above eight grade studies. The outcomes signify that the illiteracy and low level of awareness of the parents of respondents were push factors for the CSEC.

➤ *Lack of Access to Opportunities.*

As most of the respondents came from economically backward communities of remote and underdeveloped geographic locations, the access to resources such as education, livelihood opportunities, access to healthcare facilities, and guidance from the parents or seniors are also pushing factors for the CSEC to come to Kathmandu. Over 70% of girls were school dropouts. 89% of respondents could only read and write, whereas 11% were illiterate. Indeed, 33% are continuing their school education. 32% of girls had only received up to five grade education. 27% of respondents completed the primary level of education. 13% of the respondents were literate, and 23% of respondents had completed eighth-grade or higher education. The respondents were unaware of the resources for income generation, capacity development, and other empowerment opportunities in their home locations. They don't see any opportunities or alternatives within their community. They only saw the opportunity to come to Kathmandu to get out of the problem. In such situations, they had to trust every person who approached them to fulfill their basic survival needs.

➤ *No Previous Skills or Experiences Required in Entertainment Sector Jobs.*

The skills enhancements are interrelated to these Girls to make them aware and able to enhance their own dignified lives. In the entertainment sector, there no requirements of an academic degree, certificate, or skills are required. The primary qualities are to see the youthful, compulsion, and shake natures so that they could mobilize them as per the need and demand. In terms of job profiles, 51% of the respondents were waiters. 10% of girls served as dancers, and 7% as singers. 6% of the girls were captains or managers. Out of the remaining, 26% of the respondents worked as a guest relations office, cleaner, and dishwasher.

In general, the above-mentioned jobs have no pre-required training and skills.

IV. SITUATION AT THEIR WORKPLACE

➤ *Reasons for Choosing the Job.*

For 64% of the respondents, the job was easy to find and relatively easy to do the assigned work. They had no prior skills or training for other job sectors. 15.38% of respondents had chosen the job as their parents were also in the same field.

'I have two younger sisters and one brother. My mother lives in the remote village of Gorkha. My father lives with his second wife and doesn't look after his first wife and the children. We had limited earnings from the farmland that were not sufficient to survive even for half a year. So, came to Kathmandu hoping to get a job. Unfortunately, I did not have any experience or skills in any job. I couldn't find any job at that time and started to study in grade eleven. One day, I was approached by one of my friends. She took me to the Dance bar where she was working and asked her owner for a job. I got the job as a waiter and received 4000 thousand rupees monthly. Now, I am taking tailoring training at an NGO service center. I have completed six months of basic and taking the advanced course. I have a plan to be an employee of a tailoring shop to gain experience. Then, I will open my shop in the Samakhushi area (FGD Participant, Sundhara).'

➤ *Pre-Knowledge of the Field*

Knowledge and awareness play a vital role in preventing victimization. The girls and their families mostly received information on the possibility of joining the CSEC sector from friends, parents, relatives, and brokers. 51% of respondents get the work through their friends. 12% of girls came with their parents, 10% traveled with their relatives, and 8% came alone. 19% of them found other distant people to come and work in the CSEC. Out of 78 respondents, 11 respondents have confirmed that their parents and friends have taken money from their employer in return for sending them to their respective establishments as workers. Sixty-two girls did not pay any amount. Five girls were unaware of such arrangements. The status of work before entering the CSEC was unknown to 71% of the girls. 10 % of the respondent were not pre-informed about their job role and earnings. Out of 78 interviewed, only 19% were found aware of their work before they joined the work.

At the age of 15, she came to Kathmandu from the remote village of Dhading. Her parents sent her to a distant relative called "Fupu-maternal aunt". She was told that she would get a job at a beauty parlor with an earnings of NPR 10,000 per month. Now she is working at a massage parlor on a percentage basis. She receives 60% charges per client from her owner (FGD Participant, Thamel).

The participants shared that having the temptation of a good job, good food, and dress like the actress in the film were out of many ambitions that attracted them to this profession without knowing the details of the service they need to carry out. Most of them traveled with friends and relatives to Kathmandu without having proper knowledge about the city and work before they migrated and faced problems at their destination. Knowledge and information about the work and services was low before leaving their houses.

➤ *Insecurity of Job.*

CSEC sector has no stability to secure longer-term and regular jobs. The study outcomes suggest that this is not their first job. 85% of the respondents had worked before in various sectors. While splitting the data, 40% were in their job for less than three months. 22% did not cross six months, and 23% are working less than a year. The researcher looked at the duration of their employment. Only, 15% of the respondents continuously worked for two years or more. Respondents were relatively new to the business and accepted the jobs due to the financial obligations.

➤ *Hectic Work Schedule but Limited Income.*

The working hours are not many for most respondents. 56% of the respondents had to work for 4 to 8 hours per day. 26% of girls were required to work 9 to 10 hours per day. 18% of them responded that they were forced to work 11-12 hours. The findings reflected that 44% are doing more than 8 hours a day. Despite long working hours, 90% of the respondents outlined that their monthly income is less than 8'000 per month. As per Nepal's labor law, the minimum salary is NPR 13'000 per month, but the respondents are getting as per the standards. 50% of respondents notified that they keep the income with themselves. The owners seem suspicious that they may leave jobs without prior notification. 21% said that they had to give to the employer as a security bond to continue their job.

➤ *Payment is often Delayed.*

As per the survey, the payment system and process were found smooth and timely for all. 68% respondents reported of receiving their salaries every month. 18% of them are receiving every quarter only. Daily wage receivers are 9%. 5% of respondents receive advance payment. On the contrary, FGD participants outlined delays in monthly payments. The girls are not receiving their salary on time. The girls should wait for up to three months on many occasions. A few of them had to ask the police to interfere with the delay of their payments. In case of late payments, their monthly cash flow has been badly affected. They have responsibilities and wish to support the children and parents, however, the CSEC girls have limited earnings and financial stability to fulfill their obligations. Any risk-taking behaviors such as prostitution or any other illegal work cannot be denied in such circumstances to manage their expenses.

'It is too shameful I cannot manage the tuition fees for my son's education on time. I have to wait for two months to

get our payments on many occasions. In such situations, I work for tips only (FGD participant, Sundhara).'

➤ *Earned Salary goes into Expenses of Relatives and Savings.*

19% of girls surveyed mentioned their earnings go to their parents, 5% of them give to their sister, and the remaining 5% said they give their earnings to their boyfriend or husband. The girls could not save any money out of their earnings. 72% of the respondents outlined that their income is merely sufficient to support the family, and they have challenges managing their basic needs. 51% of girls are aware of the benefits of savings for the future, but they cannot save as all the monthly income goes to their expenses.

➤ *Exploitation and Abuse are Common.*

Three respondents have reported that CSEC had to face sexual harassment at their workplace. 39% of the respondents reported abuse and sexual harassment. 21% of respondents have economic hardships, and 9% were forced to work extra hours without additional payment. Respondents also shared behavioral, psychological, and health complaints. 8% of the respondents had sleeping problems. Other 8% of the respondents reported health problems. 12% of respondents had no issues. The researcher assessed their experience of abuse. 39% reported sexual abuse and harassment. The impact of psychological and emotional abuse was felt by half of the respondents. Physical assaults and neglect were felt by 22% and 8% of the respondents respectively.

The protection of rights and prevention from abuse are expected by the owner in any job or company. The study outcomes did not signify this direction. Only one-third of respondents confirmed that their owners are friendly and approachable. Nearly two-thirds (66%) of the respondents notified that the owners were rude, aggressive, or abusive. The safety and protection of the CSEC have seemed compromised due to the obligations to work for the salary. Customers of CSEC were primary abusers, over two-thirds of respondents reported. Local people, mainly the boys, also abused them, 16% reported. 13% of the respondent had faced abuse from their employers. 28% of the respondents said that they had reported the abuse. 33% of respondents never reported, and 39% accepted the abusive behaviors without any other choices. In the FGDs, the girls shared that they reported the abuse to close relatives or the owners. No one could solve their problem. The vicious circle of abuse persisted and prolonged until they became involved in the CSEC sector.

FGD participants confirmed that they were not aware that such violence needed to be reported to the police or authorities. The respondents were found sad, feeling hopeless about their future, and often frustrated. 41% of respondents reported a feeling of helplessness at work. Similarly, 22% of them felt frustrated, and 19% of them felt confused. Surprisingly, 13% were found happy at their workplaces.

➤ *Health and Mental Health Situation are also Alarming.*

The health complaints and health conditions of the respondents were also not positive. Most of the respondents said that headache is the most suffering health problem for them. Out of the respondents, 34 girls faced headaches, and others complained about backache, stress, chest pain, joint pain, and sexual and reproductive health issues. During the sickness period, 23.1% of respondents were cared for by their parents. 13% of girls reported that they seek support from their friends. 28% of the respondents have no one to support and should take care of themselves even if they become sick.

➤ *Level of Satisfaction on their job.*

It was relevant to understand whether the respondents involved in the CSEC sector were satisfied with their jobs. The respondents of this study outlined that they preferred not to continue their work if they had other alternatives. 7.7% of respondents in this survey wished to continue their current job. 33% of them desired alternative jobs. 59% of the respondents desired to return to their homes and continue with alternative income-generating opportunities.

➤ *Financial Pressure for Survival and Support to the Family.*

85% of the respondents had worked before in various sectors. The respondents outlined that they worked previously in Brick Kiln, stone quarrying, domestic helper, and other helping professions. Many started their career in similar sectors, such as khaja ghar/cabin restaurants, massage parlors, and dance bar/dohori restaurants. Out of 78 respondents, 56 girls stated they needed to support their family. In the FGDs, they outlined the need to financially support their family due to poverty, illnesses, and other mandatory expenses for the studies of their siblings. Economic deprivation was the main distress for them to suffer from chronic dissatisfaction or the abusive nature of their jobs. However, the respondents shared the knowledge on the possibilities to get out from CSEC sector through empowerment and self-reliance.

A girl aged 16 continued her education in grade 9 at Kapan. She joined morning school. She helps her mother in running a "Chatpate and Panipuri" shop. On the side of it, there is a small stall of "green vegetables" business during the daytime. Before they ran the business, she used to work at KhajaGhar at Jorpati. She sometimes shared her frustrations while working at Khajaghar. She was always worried about her work due to the fear of stigma and discrimination. Now, she can run a small business with the support of an NGO and has a good income to manage her family expenses and educational expenses. She consults with a psychosocial counselor regularly (FGD participant, Sundhara).

Another girl aged 14 came to Kathmandu from the remote village of Dolakha. Her father left when she was at the age of six. She is the eldest child and has two siblings. Her mother has poor health, and she has a problem with a stone on the gallbladder. The doctor suggested for an operation. She decides to come to Kathmandu for work to manage resources for the operation. With the help of a neighbor, she started to work in a Dance bar. She lied to others as she worked at one of the hospitals in Kathmandu. A few years later, she was able to manage her mother's health treatment and brought her mother and siblings to Kathmandu. She wants to continue the school education of her siblings and herself. With the support of NGOs, they managed to run a small tea shop with bakery items. She continued working at the Dance bar until the shop ran smoothly. Her mother expanded her business by adding green vegetables and toys. She felt her mother and the house owner suspected of her work when she left the job at the dance bar. She passed grade 12 and learned computer skills with the help of an NGO. She found a job as a cashier at the superstore (FGD participant, Sundhara).

➤ *Desires and Needs to get out from the CSEC*

The respondents shared their future ambitions and visions in this survey. One-third of the respondents (38%) would like to continue their study if support is available. The other one-third of participants have no choice but to leave the job, but they wish to find an alternative job if possible. 28% of the respondents would like to stay with their family and start any alternative income-generating opportunities. 7% of the respondents wished to have income-generating (self-employment) options, and 2% of respondents would like to seek other alternatives for their survival. A few girls shared that there are opportunities outside of CSEC, but someone has to support us. One of the FGD participants shared,

'There is a girl who sells spices in the street and manages her life with dignity. Her life was difficult before, and she was living frustrated and abused like us without any future (FGD Participant, Thamel).'

Another participant stated,

'I know a girl who runs a tea shop and continues her education in the evening. If you have supportive people and someone is there to listen to you, you don't need huge money to change your life. We can change your life and be happy with our earnings even through a small initiative (FGD Participant, Thamel).'

The survey outcomes suggest that the CSEC are looking for better options. If any support available, they have ambitions and vision to restart the choices rather than being unsatisfied and exploited in the CSEC sector.

V. DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The economic, political, and sociocultural factors that affected the lives of girls in rural areas of Nepal and pushed them to join CSEC. The main push factors for girls joining the CSEC sector are profoundly related to the weak economic background, ethnic minorities living in rural and underdeveloped settings, and dysfunctional and uneducated family backgrounds in the study area based on relationships among and between caste hierarchies, ethnic groups, different caste groups, and different classes.

Kara (2009) outlined that poverty, inequality, lack of protection means, and dysfunctional family support environments are the major stress factors that lead to the risk-taking profession like the CSEC sector. The study outcome confirmed that over 80% of the CSEC girls came from economically downtrodden, weak family support settings and represented lower strata of ethnic minorities. As explored in other studies, social and economic factors were verified as the main push factors for girls to be involved in CSEC (Kara, 2009; Maiti Nepal, 2010; NHRC, 2017). The geographical origin of the CSEC also verified that the girls from underdeveloped and remote districts of surrounding areas of Kathmandu Valley were mainly associated with the CSEC sector. Parents' level of education, awareness, skills, and economic capacity was unable to protect and nurture their children. Consequently, girls were pushed to accept the faith in CSEC for survival. Weak protection mechanisms, lack of awareness, dropouts from the formal education system due to poverty, and peer and family pressures to earn money were other reasons to join the CSEC. The earlier studies of ECPAT International (2016) and TDH (2010) have also outlined protection aspects and socio-economic determinants of CSEC.

This study also confirmed that most girls join the sector through their friends and peers. Some parents and relatives bring their children into the sector. They joined the CSEC due to 'an easy getting and easy doing perception' as the job did not require experience and a higher degree. Lower economic conditions are one of the push factors for the Girls. Poor protection system and mechanism at the source, dysfunctional family, no or limited access to resources for skills development and opportunities for income generation at the source, no awareness and limited knowledge about the city and job, child-headed family (responsibility of dependents survival), the temptation of a better life, are other pushing and pulling factors into the sector. Responsibility towards the family and themselves is another reason, which is also associated with the low economic condition of their family. The Girls need to support their family in kind or cash. Most of them receive far lower salaries (below 4000 Nepali rupees monthly) and do not get paid on time.

Protection, safety, well-being, and support at the workplace are another concern for the CSEC girls. The CSEC girls face abusive behaviors at their workplace, such as physical abuse, mental, emotional, sexual abuse, etc. Sexual abuse and verbal and physical abuse have been raised as a key issue in the workplace (Epstein & Edelman, 2014). In the survey, 39 girls faced sexual abuse at their workplace. 22 girls reported physical abuse and 50 girls shared psychological and emotional abuse at their workplace.

Out of 78 respondents, 50 girls were abused by the clients. Ten girls faced abusive behaviors from their employers, and twelve girls reported abusive behaviors by local boys. 22 Girls have reported the case to the employer, family members, and friends/coworkers, but no cases were filed against the abuser. No one has reported it to the police, or any unit municipality branches due to fear and lack of awareness. Their clients are the abusers, but employers also exploit them. Lack of reporting mechanisms of the abuse and fear of reprisal is another major concern for the CSEC girls. Girls are not aware of the protection and services from the district administration office and the district women and children office.

As an alternative, 54% were interested in jobs after having some skills out of the entertainment sector. 42% out of 78 were interested in vocational skills. 8% were interested in income-generating businesses. 22 girls out of 78 wished to continue their education. Skill enhancement is one of the needs to sustain life with self-respect. Employability helps to mitigate economic problems and supports moving toward the overall human development of the girls.

The non-functional family background, low economic family background, lack of sustainable income in the family, and inadequate support system to protect their rights and dignity at their source are the main factors leading to pushing them into this profession. While the girls joined the CSEC, the process was not smooth either. Many had to pay the money in the process of joining. Workplace-related sexual, physical, and emotional exploitation has been found hugely experienced by the CSEC girls. The income out of the work is limited, and there is no financial security for the future. With such pressure, the physical and psychological health of over half of the interviewed girls significantly deteriorated. Restoring the dignified and respectful lives of these Girls and capacitating them to make responsible decisions for their lives and regain trust to start a new life outside of the CSEC is crucial.

As expected, 92.3 % of the CSEC girls are unhappy and dissatisfied with their situation, work, and working conditions and wish to withdraw from this sector if any viable options in terms of economic, skills-oriented, and continuation of further study are available. Support interventions in fulfilling their future ambitions and immediate needs are a prerequisite in helping the girls from CSEC to withdraw and rehabilitate in their own families and society (Frederick, Basnyat, Aguetant 2010).

This survey study supported by a qualitative understanding of the CSEC girls, with 78 respondents in Kathmandu valley, could conclude that the socio-economic determinants are the major push factors for the girls from low-economic and underdeveloped geographic areas to join the vulnerable occupation as CSEC. The projected six major pathways of determining factors of the CSEC are economic determinants, assessments of the resources, skills, knowledge, and awareness, familial and social responsibility, and weak protection-related elements.

There are many limitations of this study. The study aimed to survey the Girls available only in Kathmandu Valley. The survey was conducted with the Girls who felt comfortable responding and sharing their personal information. The sample size is not fully representative of the population. Two FGDs were only accomplished due to the privacy and availability of their time. The qualitative aspects are not fully representative of the sample. The quality of the information is directly dependent upon the openness and honesty of the informants. The participants may have given the socially desirable answers and hidden the reality. The participants may not have disclosed all information due to fear, stigma, and possible discrimination that was difficult to verify. The findings of this study should consider these caveats.

The study recommends addressing those barriers and opening opportunities for the CSEC to come out of this profession where most of the CSEC are living with multiple challenges not only limited to psychological, legal, health, economic, social, and familial problems. The following recommendations are made to the concerned governmental, non-governmental, private institutions, owners of the services, and individuals to act upon in supporting the girls working in the CSEC.

- CSEC-related legal policies and provisions are to be effectively implemented and monitored.
- Alternative employment and part-time or full-time education opportunities have to be provisioned.
- Specific programs targeting the CSEC for their reintegration, skills enhancement, and livelihood are required to support them in getting out from the CSEC sector.
- There is a need to launch a specific comprehensive support program to address the ongoing challenges and withdraw the girls from the CSEC sector
- The identified push factors at the original geographical locations have indicated that the socio-economic and education-related facilities are inadequate to prevent the girls from pushing to the CSEC sector. The authorities and government bodies at the local level need to initiate comprehensive initiatives to protect the girls at the source.
- Provide income generation training followed by the skill development components for self-employment so that they could find better alternatives for their survival with a dignified life

- Media can play a vital role in raising awareness at the central and local level on the situation and consequences of the CSEC girls to reduce social stigma after their return.
- Civil society and NGOs need to focus their initiatives on such marginalized and unprivileged groups to prevent the incoming of girls.

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