

# Prostitution Going Spiral: The Myth of Commercial Child Sex

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## Abstract

Prostitution is a worldwide popular and valid occupation. The sex-buyers are available across the globe in order to meet their sexual need, the basic biological need in various countries and so there are found brothels in galore amount at different topographic sites in the earth. This profession induced men and women are in sad socio-economic and health and nutritional condition varying in different countries. The study aim was to access these states in South Asian developing countries (i.e., the demographic subdivision Bangladesh). The study was conducted to assess the causes and consequence of child sex in South Asia as a sex trade at local brothels in Bangladesh. The quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to analyze and interpret the data applying snowball sampling method. About 36.67% family conflicts and divorce, 20% unemployment and 16.67% peers' pressure were the big forces to turn the child into child sex worker. The respondents were abused physically (16.66%), sexually (16.66%) and psychologically (36.67%). The study was recommended to take a collaborative action to all the stakeholders to create awareness to the family and society to eclipse these sorry tales.

## Keywords

Commercial Child Sex, Prostitution, STDs, AIDS, Dhaka City, South Asia

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## 1. Introduction

Prostitution is the business or practice of engaging in sexual relations in exchange for payment or some other benefits [1, 2]. Prostitution is sometimes described as commercial sex and variously described in the literature as "sex-work", violence against "women" or "slavery" [3, 4]. The root meaning of "prostitute" implies a transaction [5]. It follows that a prostitute performs some kind of sexual activity in exchanging for money. Prostitution cannot exist without customer who objectively and dehumanize themselves, the prostitution and human sexuality [6, 7]. Work is any sexual performance carried out by a person for payment of certain amount of money or in exchange of goods and service. Child

Commercial sex worker is the use the child in sexual activities for remuneration or any other form of consideration [8, 9].

Children who engaged in commercial sex work by many reasons such as running away from home, child abuse and neglect, psychological and emotional difficulties, family-related risk factors, child-specific risk factors, socio-economic related risk factors, environmental-related risk factors, poverty, personal life style and illiteracy [10, 11]. Children engaging commercial sex works have its own consequence such as physical like victimization on the streets: beating, rape and murder, crime like delinquency and contact with the juvenile-justice system, health concern like HIV infection and other sexually transmitted disease and

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psychological disorders including depression and risks of suicide and substance abuse [12-15].

The children involve in commercial sex work experience negative effect. Sex work has been identified as the core group for remission of HIV/AIDS and STD; thus, that face discrimination throughout the world [16, 17].

Child prostitution is growing in urban area of Bangladesh mainly in the capital city Dhaka, the number of children victimized in committal sexual exploitation (CSE) is increased at an alarming rate. Numerous children migrate from rural areas in order to scope poverty. There are different types of child commercial sex work such as working on the street or alcohol houses working, in rented house/beds and working in rent places for chat & drugs [18, 19]. Children according to international NGOS, child prostitution was aggrading problem particularly in urban areas. According to NGO report 60 present of present exploited in prostitution were the age between 16 and 25 underage girls worked as hotel workers barmaids, and pervasive poverty, migration to urban centers early marriage HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted clause, limited educational and job portends aggravated the sexual exploitation of children [20-22].

The children often blamed lock family death poor education or unwanted pregnancy for driving them towards prostitution. Many of the child commercial sex workers had been victims of serious sexual and physical abuse, health and hygiene perils [23-30]. Almost half of the children said that they had been raped on the streets and at hired had fallen pregnant with some resorting to back strict abortions “the abortions were performed mainly by traditional medicine and in the street illegally” [31]. The majority of girls entering prostitution appear to have suffered prior childhood sexual abuse [32, 33]

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Study Design

The study was an epidemiological study

### 2.2. Population Selection

There were taken a total 30 children who were engaged in commercial sex work in Dhaka city.

### 2.3. Study Duration

The study was conducted from July 2014 to June 2015.

### 2.4. Sampling Method

There were employed non-probability sampling techniques specifically snowball and purposive sampling method to conduct the study.

### 2.5. Data Collection

A planned questionnaire was developed containing both the closed and open ended query to collect data through face-to-face interview with the respondents. The questionnaire was presented in areas far away from the sample areas and revised according to the feed back gained in the field level. The questionnaire was formed to obtain the relevant information considering characters, behaviours, attitudes and company with the perception of the respondents.

### 2.6. Data Verification

The questionnaire was checked per day taking the interview and gain these were carefully rechecked after collecting all the data and coded prior the entrancing into computer technology. The data was edited in case of sighting any discrepancy (doubt entry, wrong entry etc.).

### 2.7. Data Analysis

The data were processed to undergo statistical analysis using SPSS16 windows program.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. The Causing Factors of Child Commercial Sex Work

Table 1. The causing factors of child commercial sex work.

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage
Factors contributes to engage in commercial sex work		
Family factors (divorce, conflicts etc)	11	36.67%
Peer pressure	5	16.67%
Seeking better ways of living in city	6	20.0%
Socio-economic factor	6	20.0%
Others	2	6.66%
Living with		
Family	3	10.0%
Friends	15	50.0%
Alone	4	13.33%
Relatives	8	26.67%
Do you think your living resident place has contribution to engage in commercial sex work?		
Yes	12	40%
No	18	60%

According to table 1, peers-pressure (16.67%), seeking better life in urban area (20%), unemployment (20%), family conflict and divorce (36.67%) were the major causes that forced children to involve in commercial sex work. In addition, about 60% of the participant stated that their current resident places have no contribution to engage in commercial sex work while the remaining 40% of the participants stated it has contribution to engage in commercial sex work.

How resident Places can contribute its apart to engage in commercial sex work? Respondent has revealed that a

numbers of Bars and night clubs are bearing from the time to time in their resident places attracted children attention to involve in sex for commercial purposes. Having a liberal kind of sex related communication with bar women and other teenagers directly or indirectly bending children's and young adolescents' attention to engage in commercial sex work.

In addition to the quantitative data analysis, the investigators have used the qualitative data analysis. This is in order to support the quantitative information and evidences that was obtained from the participants. According to the semi-structured interview result, the majority of the participants believed that children are interested to engage in commercial sex work because of lack of job opportunities, family conflict, and family divorce, poverty & lack of clear information and knowledge.

The above statement clearly supported by the key informant who participated in the in-depth interview that,

“Conflict is a day to day job in my family, really I hate it, and so I am not interested to live with them. It is annoying.”

The second key informant revealed that,

“I am not happy on the act of my step father; he has attempted four or five times to rape me because hopefully he has unsafe sexual relationship with my mom. I morally tortured because of his act.”

### 3.2. Consequences of Child Commercial Sex Work

Table 2 showed that 100% of the participants agreed that commercial sex work has negative effects on the children's well being. It is also found negative consequence victimization in the street (13.33%), health problem (36.67%), social isolation (20%), anxiety and depression (20%) on the children. Moreover, the respondents were abused physically (16.66%), sexually (16.66%) and psychologically (36.67%) as the major adverse effect. As shown in the table above around 100% of the participants have concrete experience to use condom during their sexual intercourse with their sex partners. Moreover, about 90% of participants state that commercial sex works expose children to abuses at various levels while about 36.67%, 16.66%, & 16.67% of participants are experienced psychological abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse due to commercial sex work.

In addition to the above, a 16 years old key informant stated that,

“Male are selfish, look even they agree to have a short sex, but they are forced to have a full night sex by using their force in the private bedroom. If you are crying or shouting, no one can hear you. If you try to protect yourself from

being victimized, they can bitterly bit and seriously damage you. Even sometimes bad drinkers want to use sex without condom by using their force. Oh.... It is disgusting (tearing for a long time)...”

As a key informant explained her lived experiences as follows,

“Due to a multiple or forced sexual intercourse I have faced abortion twice in my lifetime, thanks to Almighty God I am HIV/AIDS negative. Really unbelievable for me.”

**Table 2.** Consequences of Child Commercial Sex Work

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage
Do you think that commercial sex work has negative consequences?		
Yes	30	100%
No	0	0%
Consequences		
Victimization on the street	4	13.33%
Delinquency and crime	0	0%
Health problem (exposing to STDs, HIV/AIDS, Unwanted pregnancy etc.)	11	36.67%
Social isolation	6	20%
Anxiety and depression	6	20%
Others	3	10%
With how many persons you have make sexual intercourse per day?		
With one person	11	36.67%
With two persons	7	23.33%
More than two persons	12	40.0%
Do you have any experience to use condom (women's or forcing sexual partner to use condom) in practicing sexual intercourse?		
Yes	30	100%
No	0	0%
Have you ever abused as the result of commercial sex work?		
Yes	27	90.0%
No	3	10.0%
If your answer in an above question is yes, what types of abuses you experienced so far?		
Physical	5	16.66%
Sexual	5	16.66%
Psychological	11	36.67%
Others	9	30.0%

### 3.3. Attitudes of Children Towards Commercial Sex Work

As indicated the above table 96.67% of respondents are agreed with having sex with different person can increase their daily and monthly income. About 46.67% respondents are neutral, 30% agreed and 23.33% disagreed with whether having sex with different persons can expose them to STDs & HIV/AIDS respectively. About 50% of respondents are ashamed on their current practice while 43.33% of the respondents are not feeling any shame on their current practice. Majority of the participants believe that it is possible to withdraw from commercial sex work if they obtain another job (60%) of the respondents' solid position to

withdraw from commercial sex work while the remaining respondents face difficulty to decide on it. Around 53.33% of the respondents agree, 36.67% disagree and 10% neutral on whether engaging in commercial sex work is a private issue or not respectively.

**Table 3.** Attitudes of children towards child commercial sex work.

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage
Having sex with different persons can increase my daily/monthly income?		
Agree	29	96.67%
Neutral	1	3.33%
Disagree	0	0%
Having sex with different person expose to STDs, and HIV/AIDS?		
Agree	9	30.0%
Neutral	14	46.67%
Disagree	7	23.33%
I feel ashamed when I think my current conduct /practice		
Agree	15	50.0%
Neutral	2	6.67%
Disagree	13	43.33%
Commercial sex work is immoral and unethical conduct		
Agree	14	46.67%
Neutral	4	13.33%
Disagree	12	40.0%
It is impossible to dropout commercial sex work because base for my life		
Agree	6	20.0%
Neutral	6	20.0%
Disagree	18	60.0%
I do not care about other persons or society because it is my private issue		
Agree	16	53.33%
Neutral	3	10.0%
Disagree	11	36.67%
I never hesitate myself/my current practice because it is my job		
Agree	19	63.33%
Neutral	4	13.33%
Disagree	7	23.33%

### 3.4. Mechanisms to Handle Child Commercial Sex Work

Awareness creation on the effect of child commercial sex work, creating a job opportunity for children & creating advance educational opportunity for children in rural area are critically emphasized means to overcome the problem. In addition, fulfilling educational facilities (i.e. exercise books, textbooks, pens, pencil and bags) and preparing lunch meal for children from the low-income family the other direction to overcome the problem. Creating awareness on child labour, child trafficking and parenting style are also the suggested direction to overcome the child commercial sex work.

“Look it creates a big job opportunities /source of income for us, so why I leave my job. Even you know I can obtain 500-600BDT/ pair sex with my customers. However, if I get

better job, trust me without any doubt I will leave it. Unless and otherwise it is my life..... (in a smiling face),” Lubna 15 years aged key informant.

## 4. Discussion

There were many a study to indicate that economic, family conditions, psychological factors, socio-cultural factors and family level of per-income is considered as a pushing and pulling factors of child commercial sex work [34, 35]. Similarly, the current study in Dhaka City reveals that lack of awareness, lack of educational facilities and access, peer pressure, looking better life in the cities and the socioeconomic factors are the major causing factors.

Children postulant sex posed to physical torturing, psychological and social problems. Besides the problems above children prostitution are highly vulnerable to STDs and HIV/AIDSs, victimization, sexual abuse (unwanted pregnancy), & social isolation. Similar with the current study, the previous study shows that child prostitution are exposed to psychological, social, physical and sexual abuses [36, 37].

Though the participants attached the practices of child commercial sex work with economic advantages, the majority of the participants have negative attitudes towards commercial sex work. Almost all participants have interest to withdrawal from their current practices if they can get opportunities of other alternative jobs. The current findings have strong similarity with the previously conducted research study [38, 39].

Studies conducted shows that family, society, government, social organizations and religious institutions are responsible to overcome the problems child prostitution. Community mobilization, awareness creation, avoiding child labour and child trafficking are suggested mechanisms to handle the problems of child prostitution. Similar with the previously conducted researches the current findings also confirms the previous study [40-42]. The 1/1 nutrition counselling [43] can be a very effective tool to overcome their existing health, nutritional and behavioural problems in the scientific branch of nutritional epidemiology and health science.

## 5. Conclusion

Children are forced to engage in commercial sex because of family related factors, peers' pressure, socioeconomic factors, poverty and lack of enough education and job opportunities. Commercial sex work highly exposes children to victimization, STDs/ HIV/ AIDS, sexual abuse, physical abuse, psychological torture, anxiety and depression, social isolation and developing low self-confidence. Child

commercial sex workers have great interest to change their current practice if they can get other job opportunities. Advancing education access and facilities, creating awareness, creating alternative job opportunities and social, physical and psychological supports are critical directions to handle children based commercial sexual work.

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