

THE UNHEARD VOICES OF SEX WORKERS IN INDIA: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON
THE REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION BACK INTO SOCIETY

By

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ABSTRACT

The sex industry in India is full of tragedy, victimization and struggle, and embedded within in it all are the suppressed voices of women. The purpose of this research is to understand the experience, structures, process and policies that allow former sex workers to rehabilitate and reintegrate into society. When analyzing the structures, this research uncovered the resources and tools available to sex workers to reintegrate into society, such as learning a new skill, counseling sessions and becoming financial independent by obtaining a job. Understanding the victimization of sex workers through police brutality and stigmatization of sex work was fundamental to understanding the challenges of reintegration into society. This study was developed to give women who are in the sex industry an opportunity to share their stories, experiences and contribute to scholarly literature.

List of Abbreviations Used

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CRF	Critical Race Feminism
CRT	Critical Race Theory
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Viruses
ITPA	Immoral Traffic Prevention Act
IPC	Indian Penal Code
INR	Indian Currency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RLA	Red Light Area
TF-CBT	Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy
WHO	World Health Organization
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS

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Chapter 1 Introduction

There is a saying my father always shared with me: “You will only understand the people of a community by living and understanding who they are as humans and understanding their jokes and songs.” As a young child, I was intrigued by the division amongst people. Why was a certain group of people more significant to others in society? Just by living in India, I was exposed to this wealth of knowledge. I did not learn these things in a classroom, but I was aware of the injustices that surrounded me. As I grew up, I became aware it was these deep-rooted societal beliefs such as the caste system, gender inequalities, patriarchy, segregation, and the unequal allocation of resources that forced vulnerable peoples into oppression. This vicious cycle of inequality continues today, and it is further exacerbated by an ever-growing population and corruption within the political system.

I work with a charity called Chalice and in 2016 I took a one year leave to volunteer with some of Chalice’s partners in India. During the trip, I visited a brothel on the outskirts of Mumbai. While visiting the women in the brothel I could not imagine viewing the oppression and abuse women face on a daily basis. Having lived in Canada for most of my life, I have never been exposed to this spectrum of abuse towards women in India. While volunteering in the brothels, I was able to listen to their realities and challenges within a deeply patriarchal society.

This research has made such an impact on my life. Through this volunteer experience and getting to know the women, I watched them struggle in a society that views them either as a victim who needs saving or a criminal who is set aside in society. In both scenarios they are not considered to be citizens but tainted as a vulnerable and marginalized group. I remember feeling confused and a growing sense of anger and rage towards the treatment of these women. As an Indian woman, this research is close to my heart. Even though I was raised in Canada, I have the

privilege of coming from two worlds. I have always been keen to understand, from a holistic approach, how these inequalities among women in India specifically among sex workers are further exacerbated by the social determinants within a society.

As I identify as an Indian woman, I have firsthand witnessed the injustice and patriarchal structures that break down women's rights in India. This study was developed to give women who are in the sex industry an opportunity to share their stories, experiences and contribute to scholarly literature. Bookstorm (2019) quoted Gloria Steinmen "You can't empower women without listening to their stories." When you examine women's oppression within the sex industry, you realize that it is a problematic issue. What I learned during my volunteer experience helped me to realize that this issue is interconnected and integrates into every part of Indian society. As a researcher being raised in Canada, I understand that I am privileged, however, through this research, the researcher can showcase the voices of the women that are oppressed and victimized in society. Now equipped with new insight into the realities of sex workers, I had a better understanding and compassion towards the women I encountered during my research study.

In 2016, during my visit to Virar, India, I visited a brothel which was divided into different sections depending on which state the women originated from. We talked to a woman, who at first was very shy, timid and did not feel comfortable talking to us but as time flew passed she began to open up about the challenges she has faced in her lifetime.

She had been sold into the sex industry by her family when she was just a young teenager. She was HIV positive, had three children from random men who used her as a service and she lived in a tiny one-room structure where her children witnessed their mother being repeatedly sexually abused. This was her tragic reality. She never experienced love, compassion

or belonging from anyone she encountered. All she knew was sex work and to give herself to whoever obtained her service. Everyone is equipped for struggles in their lives, we all go through them, but everyone is also worthy of love and belonging. I noted that because sex workers continue to face violence, trauma and abuse daily they find it difficult to love or care or trust anyone. Their voices and agency become hidden because people and systems around them suppress them and make them believe that they have no worth in this world. For women who are constantly reminded that they are a burden to their family and society, this correlates with their sense of worthlessness and they begin to conform to societal and social norms. Even while being in the brothels, these women are surrounded by madams, pimps, clients and a society who remind them of their sense of hopelessness and worthlessness. This constant sense of derogation creates low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness and normalizes violence and ostracization within society.

Through these experiences and this research, I genuinely want to understand and share the stories of these women. Albert Einstein stated that “If you can’t explain it simply you don’t understand it well enough.” Through this research, I hope to take a complicated issue and simplify it so that people will be able to digest it and become more aware of the realities for these women.

There are many challenges within the sex industry that stem from poor socio-economic structures and inadequate services on the individual level to the poor implementation of policies that protect women on the national level to the deep-rooted gender biases and traditions on the societal level. The purpose of this research is to understand the experience, structures, processes and policies that allow former sex workers to rehabilitate and reintegrate into society. It is essential to understand the multi-layer factors and the challenges sex workers face while working

in the sex industry. When analyzing the structures, this research will uncover the resources and tools available to sex workers to reintegrate into society, such as learning a new skill and becoming financially independent by obtaining a job. As well, this research will identify other resources such as counseling sessions to assist the women in understanding and healing from their ongoing trauma. Understanding the victimization of sex workers through police brutality and stigmatization is fundamental to understanding the challenges of reintegration into society. I will also investigate the efficacy of rehabilitation centres in empowering and providing agency for sex workers

1.1 The Sex Industry Globally

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines sex workers as “women, men and transgendered people who receive money or goods in exchange for sexual services, and who consciously define those activities as income generating even if they do not consider sex work as their occupation” (WHO, 2002, p. 2). The WHO defines exploitation as being “coerced or deceived into providing sexual services and treated as commodities by criminals. They are forced to work very long hours for little or no pay, threatened with violence if they do not comply and are often debt bonded to their trafficker – being told they have to keep working until the alleged debt is repaid” (WHO, 2002, p. 8). These individuals who are being exploited are stripped of their dignity and their human rights. For many women around the world, sex work is a choice they make themselves. However, for many women in third-world countries like India, there may be multiple social factors that force women into the sex industry and therefore they become exploited. In the past, the term “human trafficking” was used in reference to the kidnapping or enslavement of people (Misar, Mahal, and Shah, 2000). However, over the past years, the word trafficking has evolved into different categories. The United Nations (2002) defines:

“Trafficking in persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”

A person who is trafficked may have been emotionally, sexually, and/or physically exploited. Poverty’s breakdown of social infrastructures and heightened gender inequalities makes the perfect environment for agents to recruit young women and children for the sex industry (Chattopadhyay & Mckaig, 2004). For some agents, lack of opportunity and extreme poverty creates a fertile environment for traffickers to lure young women into cities where the sex industry is thriving. In many countries, aesthetically the sex industry can look very different. Some brothels look very similar to slums, traditional practices such as the Devadasi system. However, sex tourism has evolved and seeped into society so that now it can be found in public places such as train stations. Since buyers can pay for these commodities, women are very easily bought for a significantly low price. Poudel (1994) implies that while the sex industry is prospering in countries like Thailand, the Philippines, India and Nepal,, these countries also suffer the highest rates of HIV/AIDS spreads amongst their growing population. The media has captured the stories of women who are kidnapped and tortured within the sex trade industry and has deemed brothels as sites of torture and exploitation (Loomba and Lukose, 2012). These stories and reports have painted an image of torture and exploitation by pimps, madams and

clients and these images have classified them as villains and have painted the women as either voiceless victims or criminals of society.

1.2 Sex Industry in India

Asia has become the nucleus for the sex industry, including sex tourism. The sex industry has become a high-stakes business, with huge profits for brothel keepers, pimps, procurers, recruitment agencies, airline companies, hotels, travel groups, marriage bureaus and many others (Huda, 2006). The sex industry in Asia is often glamorized by including different ethnicities. It is the power of obtaining submissive women and children that make trafficking profitable to its consumers hence making the sex industry a lucrative business where multiple agents can make a profit. The sex industry in India is divided into different sections, such as brothels, escorts and street sex work. Street sex workers are the most vulnerable to abuse; these women solicit clients on the streets, in parks and other public areas. An escort is when clients contact sex workers by phone who provide a service in hotels. Most escorts have a high-end clientele and are therefore less likely to be abused. Women in brothels are either trafficked or exploited and they live in a certain area and are explicitly dedicated to providing services. In this thesis, I will be focusing on women working in brothels. In the majority of these segments of the sex industry, women are sold and trafficked to the major cities in India. Huda (2006) states that a new definition from the Indian government under the *Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act* (ITPA) describes sex work as ‘sexual exploitation’ or abuse of persons for commercial purposes.

The sex industry in India is full of tragedy, victimization and struggle, and embedded within it all are the suppressed voices of the women. Magar (2012) believes that “constructing sex workers as victims relinquishes the opportunity to allow sex workers in the rehabilitating center to overcome structural barriers” (p. 624). There are different degrees of empowerment or

oppression; however, sex workers are unable to achieve justice when society paints them as victims or deviants. One of the ways to break away from these images of marginalization and victimization is to analyze the experiences of women in India who have been rehabilitated out of the sex trade industry and are in the process of reintegrating into society. In Mohanty's article (2000) "Under the Western Eyes," the author implies that women in the third world are labeled as 'powerless', 'exploited' and 'sexually harassed' among economic, legal and social discourse. This representation of women in the third world as underprivileged, marginalized and stigmatized prevents them from reintegrating into society.

Even though the sex industry has been tainted with this image of women being powerless, the formation of the raid and rescue model might transform the images of women in the sex industry. Raid and rescue models are key aspect of government interventions to address human trafficking. The raid and rescue model and the rehabilitation of women in the sex industry look different in every country. Magar (2012) defines raid as law enforcement officers entering a brothel or a space that is occupied by the sex industry. In most scenarios, law enforcement officers enter the brothels unannounced and remove the survivors from the brothels violently. Bandhyadhyay et al. (2009) state that law enforcement officers never take the time to understand the issues and feelings of the rescued and instead violate their rights. Magar (2012) defines rescue as the removal of a person affected by human trafficking from trafficking situations, such as people coerced to work in the brothels. Magar (2012) defines rehabilitation as a process where survivors are taken to a space to be free from physical, emotional, and social impacts which is a result of the exploitation they face in the sex industry. In these centers survivors will receive psychological counselling, economic assistance, legal assistance, shelter and socio-cultural redemption. Bandhyadhyay et al. (2009) state that rehabilitation programs

are vital in assisting the return of survivors into their communities. Women coming out of the sex industry are often placed into rehabilitation centers. In these centres they receive individual counseling sessions which can span several months to years, in addition to training sessions that provide them with new skills that they can use to find more sustainable job opportunities to support themselves and their families. “Rehabilitation centers to which sex workers are sent vary greatly, with reports of some safe homes described as "jail like" by sex workers” (Stanton, 2015, p. 40) This research addresses a gap in scholarly literature. As there has been academic attention towards rehabilitation centers for sex workers that focus solely on counseling sessions, researchers have identified the rehabilitation process as harmful and further victimizes and stigmatizes women who have been rescued from the sex industry. There are limited studies that primarily focus on how the combination of counseling and training sessions may have a positive or negative effect on taking women sex workers out of the sex industry and reintegrating them into society.

The rationale for this research study is to shed light on the oppression women in the sex industry face daily. This research will highlight the multi-causal factors or reasons why women enter the sex industry and the challenges they face to leave the industry. Although this research study will not be able to directly benefit the participants within the timeframe of the project, I hope the long-term indirect outcomes create potential avenues for recommendations that can empower women rather than criminalize and stigmatize sex workers in India.

1.3 Research Question

This research has been driven and structured by the following research question: Which factors facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of former sex workers back into society?

Objective

The main objective of this research study is to identify the social structures, processes, and policies that enable former sex workers to rehabilitate and reintegrate back into society.

Other objectives

This research has four sub-objectives, which connect to the objective and the research question.

1. To examine the challenges and barriers sex workers experience being rescued as a consequence of raids and rescue operations.
2. To identify the services and resources that are available to sex workers.
3. To analyze the challenges and barriers former sex workers face reintegrating back into society.
4. To investigate the components of effective policies or legislation that can protect women who leave the sex industry.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

As mentioned above, this research will address a gap in the literature; however, some literature and studies have addressed various components and factors of why women would enter the sex trade industry. In this chapter, I will highlight existing studies that provide insight into the multi-causal factors of women's participation in the sex trade.

In understanding women's experiences in the sex trade, it is important to have an intersectional analysis that recognizes issues related to Indian culture, tradition, gender and the caste system (social class). It is essential to discuss how intersectionality affects women in the sex industry. Crenshaw (1989) coined the term intersectionality as a framework that investigates how multiple interlocking social entities such as sexuality, gender, race and class, can be shaped through power and privilege, affecting people and their identities in a community. It is these intersections of different social categories which can produce irrational discrimination and further stigmatization within society. Hopkins (2017) argues that intersectionality is an approach that focuses on the different axes of the social classification of oppression rather than focusing on single axis. By ignoring these social categories as researchers, we fail to comprehend the complexities and further fail to recognize the realities. Reid et al. (2017) emphasizes that analyzing the multi-causal factors or entities allows social categories to become constructed, fluid and flexible; these social processes and structures are embedded into society. Through this understanding, we can break away from the irrational distortions of biased beliefs and understand the identities of marginalized groups.

This chapter will demonstrate how the intersections of culture, specifically Indian culture, gender, social caste, education and poverty, shape the experiences of sex workers in India. All of

these are multi-causal factors that force women into the sex industry but also challenge and create barriers for women who want to leave the industry.

2.1 The Multi-Causal Factors That Lead Women into the Sex Industry

To understand the sex industry, there several factors that affect how women are coerced into it. These multi-causal factors include discussions regarding victims of a patriarchal system, gender and hierarchy system in India, women's social poverty and the anomaly of women's education in India.

2.1.1 Victims of a Patriarchal Society

India is a patriarchal society where traditional practices play a part in women's vulnerability associated with violence. The Good Practice Guidelines (2019) states that violence against women is a universal problem occurring in every culture. Violence against women is a very complex issue because women are considered second-class to men (Panini, 2001). In many societies, gender violence is due to the patriarchal societies where men impose with impunity male authority and control. This authority and control are sustained by the deep-rooted culture of submission of women (Gangoli, 2007). This constant submission of women encourages men to abuse women in society. Sanders and Campbell (2007) argue that women in the sex industry commonly lack social and moral approval from society and therefore become highly vulnerable to various forms of violence perpetrated by police officers, clients, pimps and other sex workers. Mohanty (2000) argues that women from the global south are labeled as 'powerless,' 'exploited' and 'sexually harassed' among economic, legal and social discourse. The labeling of women can further stigmatize and leave them vulnerable to violence or forced sex, leading to health issues such as urinary tract infections and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. Even

worse, violence can lead to death. A report by the WHO indicated that there are 1.3 million people who die each year due to sexual violence (Williams, 2013).

In a patriarchal society where gender disparities are common, people within the society become accustomed to violence. Kumar and Vlassoff (1997), Bose (2012), Rammonhan (2004) and Vlassoff (2013) argue that most of the discrimination against women does not arise from governmental structures of society. Instead, patriarchy and subordination of women are sown into tradition, family structures, and every social part of society. In India, the culture of male domination is embedded into a person from birth. As soon as a child has been born, families prefer male children to female children. Kambhampati and Rajan (2004) analyze that within Becker's framework of investing in your future and maximizing utility, they argue that parents will commit to investing in a male child to maximize the wealth of a family. In India, there are more complexities of being female because not only are you a burden on the family, but you are also viewed as property. Panini (2001) argues that in some families, they believe that giving birth to a girl child is considered to be a curse to the family. This ideology is rooted in the Hindu religion as well. Vlassoff (2013) states that in some Hindu scriptures, "The son is a boat of salvation, a light in the highest heaven. A wife is a comrade but a daughter misery" (p. 2). When a girl is born, she conforms to her binary roles and is her father's property. When she is a teen, she is sold to another family through the dowry system. When she wants to become a mother, it is her responsibility to produce a boy child for the family, and then when she is a mother, she becomes enslaved through solely caring for the future generation. Even though many areas of India have progressed, in many rural areas these traditional views unfortunately still exist today. Many women in India are not conscious that they are being victimized or being subordinate to men. This is the way they have been brought up and how generations of women have been

raised. Through these traditional views, women are unable to stand up for themselves since they conform to these cultural beliefs that are so deep-rooted in society. Patriarchal interests are guiding women's lives.

Families sell their girl children into the sex industry because they receive a large monetary amount to maximize their family's wealth. With this understanding, women in the sex industry who state that they have entered the industry willingly or do not want to leave are suffering from false consciousness or a manipulated reality (Sen, 2003). Once they are sold into the sex trade industry, yet again they are under someone else's control - male pimps or female madams (who have been abused by pimps in their time spent in the brothel). Sex workers, especially in India, who consider themselves free, are controlled and influenced by patriarchal values. Through this manipulation, they are unable to recognize their oppression and suffering (Gangoli, 2007). Additionally, women in the sex industry are unable to find solidarity or a voice within the sex industry because men in this industry have cultivated a culture in which these women become each other's competition, and it's through these narratives, created by men, that women become voiceless and victimized.

This oppression and victimization of women in India are further exacerbated when you analyze male privilege dominance within traditional social and religious structures such as the caste and Devadasi systems. Through patriarchal structures, the caste and Devadasi system has allowed men to dictate and further victimize women in society.

2.1.2 Gender and Hierarchy Systems in India

Complex and rigid systems such as social hierarchy structures have always dominated society in India. Within these social hierarchical structures, females have always been subordinate to men. The subordination becomes even more severe as you move down the social

system. The gender disparity gap becomes significant; to the point where women in the lower social systems become the marginalized group in society. In this section, it is essential to define and discuss the caste system in India and discuss women's oppression in the caste system, and how it leads to women's participation in the sex industry.

The caste system is entrenched in Indian society, dividing the nation into different levels of status. The caste system has a rich historical significance in India. It originates back to the Vedic period 1750-500 BCE (Bharati, 1976). During this period, the caste system initially comprised three significant classes in society- the Brahma, who were considered priests; the Kshatra, who were considered rulers or fighters; and Vis were considered the common people (Dattagupta, 1994). The caste system evolved into four significant orders that segregated society - the Brahmana, Rajanya, Vaishya, and Shudra (Borick, 2014). Brahmins were considered priests; the Kshatriyas were the warriors and kings, Vaishyas were the landowners, and Shudras were day laborers (Dattagupta, 1994). These particular branches within society were associated with divisions and order, which indicated their status within society. Therefore, the Brahmins were considered the highest and purest people within society, while the Shudras were the lowest people within society. Over time, the social system evolved into further segregation of people by adding sub-castes, especially within the Shudras' lowest caste system. The Shudras were further segregated into different branches, such as the Dalits and the untouchables. Even within the untouchables, there is further segregation amongst the people.

The Center for Human Rights and Global Justice stated that India's caste system is descent-based and hereditary in nature (Avert, 2017). It is a characteristic determined by one's birth into a particular caste, irrespective of individuals' faith (Avert, 2017). Therefore, people who come from a higher caste enjoy their rights and have the least amount of problems, while

the lower caste are burdened with the most duties and have limited rights. The caste system is maintained through social ostracism, stigmatization, and discrimination within society.

Dattagupta (1994) defines the caste system in three ways: "1. Hierarchy, 2. There are detailed rules that ensure each group is separated and 3. The division of labor and interdependence which results from it" (p. 30). This form of social segregation engages the notion of the superiority of the pure versus impure.

Initially, the caste system was developed to emphasize purity, privilege and involved ritual services. However, it has evolved into a traditional structure rooted in violence and the segregation of the people in India. The caste system in India represents a conventional system of rigid social stratification into groups defined by lineage. The caste system is considered to be substantially discriminatory amongst the people of India. The caste system dominates housing, marriage, employment, education, general social interactions and is linked to poverty, helplessness and the lack of support for the poor (Borick, 2014). Villages in rural India are segregated depending on which caste people belong to; for example, the houses at the front of the villages are much bigger and made with bricks, and as you travel through the village, you can notice the houses becoming smaller and made with scraps or straw. Dalits and the untouchables are discriminated against from birth. Due to their vulnerability, they are ostracised, raped, sexually harassed and assaulted within their own communities by people from higher castes or by police officers.

As mentioned above, India is infused with religious and traditional social structures and systems such as the caste system that positions women in a situation where they automatically are subordinate to men from birth till their death. Subordination comes in different forms, such as exploitation, oppression, physical and psychological violence (Kakar, 1981; Miller, 1981).

Even though women generally are oppressed in India, there is a significant difference between women in the upper castes and lower castes. Since the caste system is rooted in ideologies of purity, women in the higher castes are considered to be purer than women in the lower castes. Therefore, women and men are unable to marry each other from different castes. It is forbidden for women from a high caste to marry men in a lower caste. However, it is a little more tolerable for men from a high caste to marry women from a lower cast because of the culture that tolerates women's dominance and authority. When a woman gets married, she is automatically confined to traditional family roles, and men in society dictate these roles. However, Miller (1996) argues that women from the high caste have been able to move away from being engulfed into those traditional family roles because they had access to mechanisms such as education, family wealth, family influence, or even political support.

Women in the lower caste are at the mercy of their family, either selling them (through the dowry system) to a man from a higher or the same caste. Gangopadhyay (2019) argues that men from the higher caste would display dominance and authority to divest any dignity or honor of women who belonged to a lower caste. He further stated that one's superiority is portrayed through inflicting violence against their wives from a lower caste. In the circumstances such as these, women are considered to be the most vulnerable within a community. Mahey (2011) states that in some communities, it is believed that "even the killing of a Dalit woman is explicitly justified as a minor offense for the Brahmins: equal to the killing of an animal" (p. 150). In a male-dominated society, women from a lower caste such as the Dalits and untouchables suffer unimaginable oppression, not only through the caste system but also through gender discrimination. There is no escape.

When a society has strong cultural traditions combined with the strong influence of religion and poverty, more people are pressured into the sex industry. Religious practices in India are the main cause of the majority of India's social problems. Religion and cultural traditions are embedded into every social problem and construction of social policy. Mahajan et al. (2013) have stated that many Brahmins believed that women are born with several imperfections in ancient Sanskrit texts. They further state that many Brahmins believed that women lack wisdom and leadership (Mahajan et al., 2013). Due to this belief, women are considered lower-class citizens and are not necessarily given the same opportunities as men.

Women, primarily in the lower caste system, might not have inherited or had ownership of land or financial independence; therefore, when families are unable to find means to support their families, prostitution is often the only way to survive. Miller (1996) states that the sex industry is a major resource in supporting the economy of the lower caste. Additionally, families who come from the lower caste system tend to sell their daughters or wives into the sex industry to gain financial stability. Whether a woman is being kidnapped, sold, misled, or is unwilling to enter into the trade, the sex industry is an exploitative business, which forces, burdens, and further marginalizes the women of the lower caste systems.

The Devadasi system is a religious practice where parents sell their daughters to temples; the daughters are dedicated by a ritual marriage to serve deities (Ramanaik et al., 2014). This requires the girl to become a prostitute for the upper-caste community members (Khanna, 2015). These young girls are then sexually exploited by priests of the temple and temple worshipers and forced into sexual activities that result in their infection with HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Mahey (2011) states that after being exploited in their childhood, as women they are then sold into brothels, where they are further abused and often die of HIV/AIDS. Devadasis are mainly

girls from the lower caste whose parents deem them a burden to the family (Shingal, 2015). In many low caste communities, this practice is dominant. When a society has strong cultural traditions combined with the strong influence of religion and poverty, more people are pressured into the sex industry. Due to the high rates of poverty, for many parents selling their daughter to either a brothel or a temple seems to be their only choice.

2.1.3 The Social Poverty of Women

Since the caste system is deeply rooted in society and affects women in the lower castes, it is essential to analyze the factors that place these women in such a vulnerable position they are forced to enter into the sex industry. "We look at the lives of the poor and are sure, just as they are, that something is wrong. They are targets of structural violence" (Farmer, 2009, p.142). Poverty is not only a significant determinant for women to be coerced into the sex industry in India, but it is also a major catalyst for women to continue to participate and a challenge for them to leave the sex industry.

Vanwesenbeeck (2017) states that an estimated 40% of India's population lives in poverty. This means 40% of the population lacks essential needs such as food, water, education, health care and shelter. Poverty creates disparities within existing power imbalances between men and women and therefore increases the vulnerability of those marginalized groups such as women. In a patriarchal society such as India, women are a marginalized group that faces constant violence and gender persecution, which is amplified in the social, economic, and political systems. Chattopadhyay & Mckaig (2004) state that poverty is often cited as the root and growth of the sex industry in India. In Indian society, women are poorer than men and this is a major factor in women entering the sex industry. This form of structural violence has forced women into this profession to afford necessities for themselves and their families. In the process,

women are labeled as victims or criminals; they become carriers of infectious diseases and are further stigmatized in society.

Due to high rates of poverty, women are more easily trafficked from different states in India. "The sex industry is illegal in India. Yet nongovernmental agencies estimate there are two million sex workers, most of them pushed into the trade by crushing poverty. Many are infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS" (Lee, 2008, p. 15). Poverty is an economic barrier that forces young girls living in a patriarchal society to meet the demands of the patriarch. They end up having to drop out of school and join the sex trade to substantiate the family income. Most women entering the trade come from rural parts of India, where unemployment is drastically higher than in the cities. When the women are being bought into the cities for employment reasons, they realize they make more money in the sex industry than working as a maid. "The sex industry provides a larger amount of income for urban areas. In New Delhi alone, \$2 million is the annual profit of the sex and brothel workers" (Dolson, 2014). There are a few cases where women migrate to bigger cities such as Mumbai to work for cheap labor in places such as garment factories or as housemaids. However, within these spaces, the working environment becomes dangerous to the point where women are abused and often raped. Subsequently, many of these women are exploited and then sold into the sex industry. "Clients may refuse to pay for sex if they have to use a condom and use intimidation or violence to force unprotected sex. They may also offer more money for unprotected sex" (Sinah, 2017, p. 12). The use of intimidation and violence leaves women no option, especially since they need to provide for their families and are in the brothel owners' clutches. Most of these women stay in the sex industry due to the high rates of unemployment. These women receive more money working in the trade than working in an office, as a housemaid, or in a factory.

Poverty not only forces women into the sex industry, but their future offspring fall victim to intergenerational prostitution. Intergenerational prostitution is when parents involved in the sex industry sell their children into the industry. It occurs in every brothel - the younger the girl, the higher the parents' earnings (Dolson, 2014). As mentioned above, women in the sex industry tend to justify their need to continue working in the industry because of the financial incentives while working in the trade. Therefore, women grow their families in the industry, and some employ their children because coercing their children is seen as a means to avoid living in complete poverty. The sex industry becomes a hereditary occupation, passed on from generation to generation. As a result, the dynamic of a family changes, where everyone, including the men in the family, becomes involved in the sex industry. The husbands and sons tend to become pimps or agents for their wives or daughters. There have been many scenarios where young girls who have been sold into the sex industry grow up to become madams.

One issue with intergenerational prostitution is it has become very normalized; women conform to the idea that they are meant to be trafficked, they are meant to live in poverty and are meant to be marginalized. Families become trapped in the vicious cycle of intergenerational prostitution, leading to poverty issues within society. Most of these generations that are born into the sex industry lose hope in ever having a future. The normalization of working in the sex industry forces people to not choose, and their children are denied access to quality education.

2.1.4 The Anomaly of Women's Education

High rates of poverty and intergenerational prostitution make it very difficult for families to prioritize their children's education over forcing them to work or forcing them to enter the sex industry. In this section, I will discuss how lack of quality education is another multi-causal factor that leads women to enter the sex industry.

A lack of education about HIV/AIDS is the by-product of women lacking general access to education in India. This lack of quality education prevents women from gaining valuable knowledge and skills that would enable them to make cohesive independent decisions about their wellbeing and future. Williams reports that in 2008 of children not in school, "62% were girls; they made up two-thirds of the illiterate between the ages of 15- to 24-year-olds. Two-thirds of those not in school were from those lowest in the caste system, tribal groups and Muslim communities" (Williams, 2013). The majority of educated people come from the upper castes, and young children from the lower castes are not given the same education opportunities as others.

Mahey (2011) states that the main reasons for the low literacy rates among women from the lower castes is because of extreme poverty. Factors affecting this include the inability to pay for private schools, the lack of access to education in the rural areas, the privatization of schools and colleges, the ostracization lower castes face by the higher castes and the demand for an increase in the dowry for educated girls. The probability of girls being forced into the sex industry is much lower when girls are educated and living in environments where education is a priority. The United Nations Programme on HIV and Aids (UNAIDS) mentioned in a report "that education protects women and young girls from falling into the traps of HIV/AIDS" (Sidibé, 2013, p. 31). Through education, women are empowered and well-informed about unhealthy lifestyles that could expose them to being vulnerable and force them into the sex industry. Some girls are compelled to drop out of school at a young age so they can supplement the income for their family. "The profession of sex workers in India is conspicuous due to the lack of quality education. In India, of the 2 million women in sex work, 25 – 30% are minors"

(Sen, 2003, p. 85). These high rates of dropout can expose and lead them to be vulnerable to the sex industry, as this trade requires limited academic achievement.

Even though it is imperative to understand these factors, it is critical to discuss how the overarching law victimizes and criminalizes women in the sex industry and therefore normalizes police brutality against sex workers. This stigmatization can be further witnessed within other sectors of society which includes the health care system.

2.2 Laws Related to Sex Workers

Even though it is essential to discuss the multi-causal factors that shape the experience of sex workers in India, such as patriarchy, gender, social caste, education and poverty, the analysis on the justice system and laws in India, will further detangle and address how India's constitution further marginalizes and deters sex workers from reintegrating into society.

Despite India's constitution having sections about gender equality and women's rights, international human rights, and several international agencies such as the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (which promotes health and human rights) and a plethora of laws to protect women, women's rights in India are still being violated. Misra et al. (2000) state that rights violations have sometimes been committed by the very institutions that created the policies to protect women from violence. The legal system in India is plagued with corruption and politicians who drive their own interests instead of protecting citizens. The conflation of the different kinds of abuse, such as rape, prostitution and battering are common problems that government legislation is unable to protect women from (Huda, 2006). Due to the poor implementations of laws, there are several overlapping groups from lower castes, tribal population, HIV/AIDS infected, disabled people and sex workers who are unfortunately not

protected and do not receive benefits such as education, health, or other indicators and aspects of freedom.

Even though Prostitution is legal in India, there are several limitations and restrictions that question whether prostitution is legal in India. Nanjunda et. al (2020) state that prostitution in India is legal but other acts such as pimping, running brothels or forcing people into the sex industry are illegal. The ITPA states that prostitution is permitted, it is not permitted in public places. Therefore, prostitution is only legal in the private sector. The most recent amendment took place in 1986, it stated that sex workers may be criminalized for providing services in exchange for money. When analyzing the ITPA law, it portrays this picture that prostitution is illegal. This issue lies with how India's sex industry is formed, women are considered victims because there is an element of them being forced into the industry. Other Feminists and researchers such as Nanjunda et. al (2020) argue that sex work can be a good and rational option for women, when it comes to the case study of India, it makes it difficult to completely decriminalize sex workers. The component of exploitation is embedded into the sex industry in India making it very difficult to support and protect sex workers.

The majority of sex workers are forced into the profession when they are minors; often, they are manipulated or do not give their consent, thereby becoming vulnerable to sexual violence and economic exploitation (Chattopadhyay and McKaig, 2004). In an article by Swendeman et al. (2009), Veshya Anyay Mikti Parishas sex workers collectively stated that among 300 brothels in the state of Maharashtra, India, nearly half of the women entered the profession at the age of 16 and under, and around one-tenth had entered at the age of 13 years old or less. Due to gender biases, generalization, and poor implementation of laws, governments

have failed to punish traffickers, pimps, and agents who solicit children, young girls and women into the sex industry.

The position of sex workers as victims or delinquent remains unaddressed and unchanged within the justice system in India. Even though the principle of gender equality is engrained into the Indian Constitutions and further invests in the state to adopt measures to empower women, this does not trickle down to the rural areas, and it is not further implemented amongst women in the sex industry due to the fact they are stigmatized within society. Loomba and Lukose (2012) state that women who are poor or labeled as deviant or immoral are constantly being ignored and neglected from the democratic boundaries of the judicial system. Many women who live in the rural parts of India, women who are not considered citizens, and women who work in the sex industry are considered even further marginalized. Women who do not fit into an image of family and marriage values which has been created by societal standards have less access to change the democratic system and exercise their rights as citizens.

2.3 Police Brutality against Sex Workers

Police enforcement wields immense power and authority over sex workers, particularly when sex workers are criminalized, but since this is a systemic issue, it stems from the policies, laws and practices that are implemented within society. Police repressions of sex workers are complex as they exploit their power which inculcates this culture of fear. This culture of fear allows for sex workers to fall through the cracks of the health care system and other social safety nets, making them further susceptible to violence, stigmatization and isolation. Law enforcement agencies misconstrue the ITPA and instead criminalize sex workers instead of traffickers. Therefore, sex workers are forced to pay heavy fines to the court system and their lawyers, and some are unfortunately imprisoned (Jayasree, 2004). The authoritarian tyrannies allow for

individuals such as police officers, lawyers and judges to misinterpret the ITPA and therefore criminalize sex workers instead of traffickers, pimps or clients.

Police enforcement in India is full of corruption and fueled by bribes and deception. Minority groups such as sex workers fall into the clutches of police officers in India, especially when there is a stigma attached to them. Many sex workers endure constant name-calling and humiliation, including at times being stripped or beaten in public. In a 2004 study by Jayasree it was noted that the majority (90%) of individuals arrested in brothels under the ITPA were women sex workers, while only 10% were brothel owners, pimps and clients who were also technically breaking the law. In many areas in India, police officers often fabricate evidence against these women. The majority of these women are unable to post bail for themselves, and therefore are under the mercy of law enforcement agencies. These women endure tremendous amounts of violence while being arrested and while detained in police stations. The majority of these women are raped and beaten. Decker et al. (2014) state through extorting fines and information, police officers abuse their power; this often occurs under threats of arrest, physical violence, and gang rape. Despite regular, even daily, police raids, deaths within brothels often go unresolved or undetected.

2.4 Dignity and Respect in the Health Care System

Since the majority of sex workers endure higher levels of violence from police officers, pimps, madams and clients, most of these women are constantly struggling with suicide, sexually transmitted diseases, terminal illnesses, and deep-rooted suffering such as the stability of their own mental health. Shahmanesh et al. (2009) define these injustices as the silent epidemic in India. Stigma and discrimination are prevalent in the health care system. Stigma can affect health in several ways, and which can be illustrated amongst sex workers. In countries like India, health

care facilities are readily available for people. However, if a person is from a marginalized group, they will most likely be unable to access those health care systems because of the stigma attached to them.

The health care system further victimizes sex workers as negative attitudes among healthcare staff prevent sex workers who are infected from disclosing their status or from seeking treatment.. This negative attitude displayed by doctors, nurses and health staff as a result of the caste system and the perceived impact on the profitability of private health institutions due to the optics of treating the lower caste, has created fear among women infected and affected with HIV/AIDS. Fear, anxiety and denial associated with HIV/AIDS can be attributed to traumatic experiences they have faced within health care facilities. Rennie and Behets (2004) further emphasize that 180 million people will require HIV/AIDS testing every year. This stigma can also reinforce fear among sex workers. By bestowing blame on a certain segment of the population that are considered different, health care workers justify their own behavior and are condoned by the privileged. Kermode et al. (2005) concluded in a study that medical practitioners delayed treatment and, in many cases, isolated patients and even denied them treatment. The study proved that some medical practitioners informed patients regarding the misconception that HIV/AIDS is untreatable; these misconceptions were based on the fact that staff would get infected if they treated an HIV/AIDS patient (Kermode et al., 2005). Unfortunately, due to stigma and discrimination in the hospitals and clinics, sex workers living with HIV/AIDS will ignore their health to maintain their income.

While I was volunteering in Tamil Nadu, India, we visited a former sex worker's home, and she was clearly in a lot of pain. We finally convinced her to go to the hospital, and when we arrived at the hospital, through the doctor's questions and examination, he determined that this

woman required surgery right away. The doctor collected her blood work and prepped her for surgery. While the nurses were prepping her for surgery, the doctor found out that she was infected with HIV/AIDS. Without even allowing her to change back into her clothes, the doctor and nurse chased her out of the hospital. The pain and shame that this mother endured that day takes away from her voice, her access to health care services and agency. It is reactions like that which create a stigma against vulnerable groups such as sex workers.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework

Despite the global and national emphasis on gender equality being a fundamental human right and a significant component to the empowerment of women, there are still several countries such as India that follow a long history of colonialism, oppression and a legacy of violence that continues to surface especially amongst gender-biased practices. India has faced colonialism and continues to struggle within a patriarchal society. This has left women in a vulnerable position within society. Razack (1998) argues, “it is vitally important to explore in a historically and site-specific way the meaning of race, economic status, class, disability, sexuality, and gender as they come together to structure women in different and shifting positions of power and privilege” (p. 903). Since being involved in the sex industry is considered to be a criminal act, little attention has been paid to the women involved in the industry and those who are being rehabilitated out of the sex industry and reintegrated back into society.

Standpoint theory is another theory that focuses on the perspectives of women. Hartsock (1983) implies that standpoint focuses the viewpoint, status, and perspective of women from a critical viewpoint. Hartsock (1983) further states that this theory focuses on the viewpoint a woman holds based on their demographics, social status, and sexual orientation. It is through this viewpoint or the collective knowledge, the marginalized groups are able to challenge the status quo. Even though this theory focuses on women, marginalized groups and slightly focuses on intersectionality, it uses the person’s motivation to critically analyze their viewpoint. Anderson (2000) states that we cannot assume that women have privileged access to understanding their oppression. Specifically in the sex industry women struggle with identifying they are oppressed since they have been coerced into the industry at a young age and therefore their perception is altered since they interact with oppressive entities such as traffickers, brothel owners and violent

police officers. In this research study, it is important to understand that women in the sex industry do not have the option to understand if they are oppressed and it is through the Critical Race Feminism theory, it offers a voice to women of color and through analyses and understanding their stories, we are able to better understand the realities.

Using Critical Race Feminism, the researcher argues that constructing a counter-narrative from the stories of the women offers a viewpoint of a different reality and resistance to push against the narratives to the women which society has painted as criminals or victims. Through this theory, the researcher will be able to explore gender oppression within India which leads women into the sex industry, and issues these women face to reintegrate into society. The researcher will use Critical Race Feminism to understand how sex workers are systemically oppressed by mainstream society.

Critical Race Feminism (CRF) is a by-product of the Critical Race Theory (CRT). Scholars such as Verjee and Butterwick (2014) have argued that women of color were not heard under the CRT and feminists' umbrella of theory. CRT focused on the notions of race and marginalized people, but unfortunately it did not provide a complete framework to analyze the narratives and realities of women of color. A commonality between CRT and CRF is that both these perspectives focus on the discrimination against an oppressed individuals or group and how it can be analyzed within a larger society (Arch, 1990)

3.1 Critical Race Feminism

“Critical Race Feminism (CRF) is an embryonic effort in legal academia that emerged at the end of the twentieth century to emphasize the legal concerns of a significant group of people - those who are both women and members of today's racial/ethnic minorities, as well as disproportionately poor” (Wing, 2003, p. 30). The emergence of the CRF has shifted the

dialogue to include women of color who are constantly being faced with gender and racial oppression that is embedded within the fabrics of society. In the past, several researchers associated CRF with Black Feminist Theory, but as it evolved it expanded to include all women of color, mixed-race feminists, and white feminists who are engaging in critical race analyses (Montoyo, 2006). CRF can allow feminists to move beyond the black and white binary by including those who do not fit on either side of the spectrum. CRF, as proposed by Wing (1997), states that it brings women to the center of analysis rather than in the background of research. This theoretical framework challenges gender biases and norms, emphasizes the women who are being oppressed in society and allows it to break away from gender and social hierarchies. CRF sheds light on the lives of women who have been ostracized in society based on their race, gender, and class, thereby revealing how all of these factors interact within a patriarchal and oppressive system (Wing, 1997). Berry (2010) states that CRF puts emphasis on the issues of power, oppression, and conflict. Women struggle with gender discrimination and oppression at different stages of their lives.

3.1.1 Oppression within society

Wing (2007) states that international law has completely failed to address and challenge gender discourse within the private realm of family structures. Patriarchy is a learned belief, and the idea of fostering patriarchy among young boys and enforcing the idea that women are inferior continues to grow within family structures. “Power is subsumed under culture, and oppression is reduced to a symbolic construction in which there are no real live oppressors who benefit materially and no real oppressed people to liberate. In effect, minorities are invited to keep their culture but enjoy no greater access to power and resources” (Razack, 1994, p. 898).

Power is constructed within society. Even within Indian society, the justice system consists of males holding power. The notions of patriarchy are for men to dominate in every section of society from the national level of government and all the way to family structures. Within Indian society, power is interwoven into different sections of society, and oppression has been socially constructed over generations, and therefore oppression against marginalized groups such as sex workers has become a normalized aspect in society. On the other hand, for sex workers, the longer they stay within the sex industry, the more dependent they become on the social structures which creates a paradigm where being oppressed is a norm because of the stigma attached to sex workers within the fabric of society. Even when sex workers are being rescued from brothels or from the streets, there is some form of oppression or violence (physical or psychological abuse) that women endure from police officers, staff from rehabilitation centers, or society in general. Hua (2003) states that women have been demoralized and painted a negative representation in society.

3.1.2 Offers a Voice to the Vulnerable

CRF is one of the most appropriate feminist perspectives that gives both voice and agency to oppressed women in society. When it comes to analyzing the realities of sex workers around the world, most researchers focus on the oppression and vulnerability of the marginalized groups in society. Through this process, society focuses on the power imbalances and disregards the voices of the marginalized group. Within the sex industry, scholars have focused on the oppression of women within the sex industry and the negative repercussions of rehabilitation centers and argued the need to address structural issues that force women into the sex industry. Throughout all that research, the narratives and realities of the women are ignored. Therefore, women lack autonomy and empowerment because society addresses these women as powerless.

Eyben (2011) explained the word empowerment was defined as power, participation, capability, autonomy, choice and freedom. Empowerment is obtained through women being able to achieve the capacity to make decisions for themselves and have control over their own lives. CRF allows investigative ways to create sisterhood and empower women. Kabeer (2005) implies that the perceptions of empowerment for women can be recognized that a woman's environments social norms can redesign the meaning of empowerment. Even when women are rescued from the sex industry, the notions of empowerment are tainted mainly because their lives have been dominated by male figures. A brothel owner may directly shape a woman's notions of empowerment and sisterhood, as his actions can limit her opportunities and freedom. Their notions of sisterhood do not exist because of the strong sense of patriarchy within the society. Outside the industry, societal norms can permit dominating behaviors by male figures that facilitate the systemic structural inequalities between men and women. It is these cultural beliefs about gender biases that allow or limit social interactions between women coming out of the sex industry and the public, which then creates a narrative of sex workers being weak or powerless.

3.1.3 Storytelling

Mohanty (2003) analyses the notion of power in depth. She states that women are characterized as victims of male violence and that all women are portrayed as powerless. Mohanty (2003) further points to the idea of divisions between men and women; this segregation possesses a privileged position for men, while women are seen as oppressed. Through the dismantling of unjust hierarchies, traditional systems, and systemic institutions, women are able to challenge the various forms of social, economic and political oppression. Batliwala (2002) argued a radical approach to transforming power for women. She urged a shift in ideology and

transformation of institutional structures, which is pivotal in breaking state-sanctioned violence and envisioning social change.

CRF acknowledges the narrative and storytelling are important components of empowerment and advocacy. It is through this narrative and storytelling that we change the view of women coming out of the sex industry from powerless women or victims to empowered women. Butler (2016) states that “counter-stories are particularly central to feminist thought because the views of women of color, particularly their views of dissent, are often suppressed.” These narratives that come from the women challenge the structural oppression and break away from the traps of unjustified segregation. The narratives shared by these women may expose an alternative reality, different from the narrative that is portrayed by society (Butler, 2016). Verjee, & Butterwick (2012) support Butler by stating that such stories of the truth can determine who gets to speak, be heard, or be valued in society. Locating and showcasing the voices of marginalized women from the sex industry challenges patriarchal systems, which can relate to power and become responsible for distorting the representation of women within their families, communities, and societies.

Sultan (2012) implies that patriarchy is a system where women are inferior to men; the subordination takes place in various forms - discrimination, disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression and violence. The stories the women share, not only provide these women with an agency but also provide them with an identity. Verjee & Butterwick (2012) states that such narratives provide individuals with a sense of identity within their families, communities, and institutions. This collective sense of identity creates a sense of sisterhood and solidarity amongst women who are facing similar challenges and experiences. CRF advocates for centering the women in the middle of the research. Through the lenses of CRF, researchers will

be able to analyze the complexities of the realities of women leaving the sex industry into rehabilitation centers and then reintegrating into society. By dismantling the gender barriers in the sex industry and engaging women who have faced these realities, they become sounding boards and support systems for one another.

3.1.4 Critical Race Feminism within the Sex Industry

CRF will allow this research to use a multi-dimensional and holistic approach that considers analysis from different sections of society that condones and incites oppression of women. “At its most basic level, critical race feminism needs to locate the origins of violence against women beyond the individual pathologies reflected in intimate domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence, by locating such manifestations in the larger power imbalance between the genders which perpetuate male hegemony” (West & Bowman, 2019, p. 40).

Women involved in the sex industry are faced with several barriers that consist of systems of oppression that are partially responsible for misrepresenting women coming out of the sex industry as outsiders. Crenshaw (1989) defines the term intersectionality as the antecedence of the concept of an ‘interlocking system of oppression.’ Crenshaw further elaborates that “interlocking systems of oppression can be described as an analogy to a traffic light, where ‘oppression’ or ‘gender discrimination’ can flow not only in one direction but it may flow and overlap one another” (1989, p. 20). It is through the concept of intersectionality that researchers are able to analyze the ‘real world’ problems or realities of women coming out of the sex industry. Crenshaw (1989) states that the concept of intersectionality focuses on shedding light on visible experiences of people who have faced several forms of oppression without disintegrating those experiences through exclusions and identifying the interlocking social

structures. It is through these systems of oppression that women are branded a form of identity that represents them a certain way, and it is through these misrepresentations that women coming out of the sex industry are not given equal opportunities or access to resources such as healthcare, education or employment opportunities. Verjee & Butterwick (2012) state that CRF places power relations at the center of the discourse on gender, race, class and all forms of social oppression. They also argue that “anti-essentialist in nature, it involves the examination of the intersections of social oppression and how their combinations play out in various settings” (p. 10). Butler (2016) states that anti-essentialists argue that there is not just one uniform female perspective. Women coming out of the sex industry may have entered it for various reasons. While poverty is the main reason why many women to enter the sex industry, there are many other reasons, including being sold into the industry at a young age by family members, or having taken up the trade by choice. Everyone has a different background and therefore there is a need to listen to their stories in order to offer them the best treatment/rehabilitation.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Qualitative

The choice of qualitative methods is influenced by the focus of this research, which seeks to examine the experiences of female sex workers in India who are currently in the process of rehabilitating out of the sex industry and reintegrating back into society. A qualitative method is the best fit for this research because it does not focus on numbers but forces researchers to analyze the words that are being used within the data collection process. This method unravels the thoughts, behaviors, opinions, emotions and ideas of participants. With this research, qualitative methods will allow the researcher to conduct a deep dive analysis on the experiences of sex workers in India.

Jackson et al. (2007) defines qualitative research primarily as the understanding of experiences of human beings in an interpretive approach. Qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Aspers and Corte, 2019). This research method emphasizes empirical evidence or material such as case studies, personal experiences, life experiences, historical texts and observational notes from the field. Evidence is collected through direct observations, open-ended surveys, focus groups, in-depth interviews, oral history, participant and ethnographic observations (Hammarberg et al., 2016). It is the analytical process of the empirical evidence that disentangles and sheds light on the realities of individuals in society. A qualitative method is used to comprehend people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes and behaviors, which generates descriptive data (Kalra et al., 2013).

A qualitative method emphasizes the importance of analyzing the interaction of variables in natural environments. Campbell (2014) states that qualitative research identifies characteristics that include the natural environment. It uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic, analyzing emerging data rather than predicted data. Qualitative research can

better present multi-dimensional and descriptive factors of and within societies. Lapan et al. (2012) emphasize that qualitative data can often be extended to people with similar characteristics like those in the study population, gaining a rich and complex understanding of a particular social context or phenomenon. Qualitative research does not just focus on one entity but emphasizes social factors that contribute to the participant's experience.

Using qualitative research methods on groups of individuals that are ignored and vulnerable in society, such as former sex workers, may help affect societal change. Placing pressure on politicians to remove anonymity amongst the hidden population will help change perspectives and attitudes. Researchers highlight the realities of the participants and give their experiences a sense of recognition and importance, which can contribute to the empowerment of the participants.

Fraser (2006) implies that many researchers who use a qualitative method prefer to use interviews because it moves beyond analyzing statistics that lead to generalizations. The interview process has the potential to validate the knowledge of ordinary people, especially people who are vulnerable and often overlooked in research projects. It is through this process that several new frameworks and theories have been constructed and based on the people who are vulnerable and ostracized in society.

In a qualitative study, there are several methodologies that can be clustered under the qualitative umbrella. Polkinghorne (1995) states that the narrative methodology refers to a qualitative research design in which stories are used to describe human actions. This study will be conducted within a narrative methodology. The narrative methodology is a useful tool to uncover and unravel the experiences and history of a group of people. It is through this analysis, as researchers, we are able to understand the circumstances of a group of people that has been

neglected within society. Through the data collected and the analysis, researchers are able to discover the power of agency within the participants. These stories do not only unveil the experiences of these participants, but there is a deeper understanding of the influence of cultural and traditional views. As the narrative methodology is qualitative in nature, the data collection and analytical methods will be keeping with this methodology. Consequently, since narrative methodology is about storytelling, my chosen data collection method involves interviews that are essentially about storytelling. I have chosen an analytical framework that is a narrative analysis that is in keeping with storytelling.

4.2 Narrative Methodology

"People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which, their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study" (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006, p. 375).

Narrative methodology is an overarching umbrella that can be utilized in different social and scientific fields. It captures and amplifies the personal and human experiences over a certain period of time and takes into account the relationship between the research, the participants and the cultural context. Polkinghorne (1991) states that he saw the narrative as a process that used the story to make sense of life events and put them into the context of the social, cultural and historical fabric of life. McAlpine (2016) emphasizes that all humans tell stories which fabricates a plot about their lives with a beginning, middle and end, which also can be translated to the past,

present and future. Through this process, individuals can interpret past experiences into meaningful learnings. Riessman (2008) implies that narratives provide a window into the construction of an individual's identity, and through this process, individuals develop who they have been, who they are presently, and who they hope to become. The storyline that develops allows individuals to interpret the events and understand the realities of the individual.

Polkinghorne (1998) further defines narrative as "the kind of organizational scheme expressed in story form and contends that this can refer to the process of making a story, to the cognitive scheme of the story, or to the result of the process also called stories, tales or histories" (p. 13). A narrative methodology allows a researcher to understand the realities and experiences of their participants. In this research, the narrative methodology will be fundamental when capturing the stories of female sex workers, staff and advocates through the interview process. Through the interview process, the narrative methodology becomes a fluid part of the interviews because this research creates a space for female sex workers to share their challenges, successes and stories.

Lieblich et al. (1998) categorized the narrative methodology into four different categories: holistic-content, holistic-form, categorical-content, and categorical-form. The holistic content understands the meaning behind an individual's stories, and the process involved in interpreting the data can be complex (Ollerenshaw and Creswell, 2002). Participants that share their stories in research interviews are considered abstract, and it is the responsibility of the researcher to discover themes and piece the stories together to create an understanding for a group of people. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state that holistic-content analyses field text such as transcripts and observational notes, allowing the restoration of raw data into a narrative that provides insight and further exploration into a subject. The way data is collected during

interviews allows participants to convey their personal stories without filters, and they may be able to share a part of their lives that may not otherwise be discussed within the household or society.

Many researchers collect data from their participants and neglect the influence the experience has on the participants. The outcomes for several researchers consist of a reasoned analysis, which has logical proof and a controlled reality. Larson and Sjoblom (2009) state that stories are constructed by multiple voices and different identities; these narratives give us access to these identities that create individuals and allow us to give a voice to minority and discriminated groups. Narrative methodology captures the impact of the experience through the voices of the participants; they are captured in their stories they share of their realities. Narrative methodology helps make sense of the ambiguity and complexity of human lives (Ollerenshaw and Creswell, 2002). This methodology is a way to systematically gather, analyze and characterize people's stories, which challenges traditional and modernist views of truth and reality (Clouston, 2013). Through this methodology, the realities of participants are placed at the center of the analysis and allow an area for agency and change. Fincher (2012) states that a narrative may act as a source of understanding and may provide insight into decision-making or the process of transfer of knowledge. Through the participants' stories, the narrative becomes a vital instrument to communicate and disclose information to the readers. Wang and Geale (2015) construct narrative as a methodology that showcases and analyses the present real-life experience through the stories of participants and constructs of an individual's and community's identity. It is through this process that narrative methodology further amplifies the voices of the marginalized and vulnerable in society.

4.2.1 Stories in Society

Moreton-Robinson (2000) implies that the narrative approach creates knowledge that has long and rich histories of utilizing storytelling as an instrument for understanding and acceptance. The art of storytelling has been embedded in our history and different holy books such as The Quran, The Torah, The Tipitaka and The Bible. These holy books consist of short stories or parables that present an underlying meaning to the readers. Philosopher Ludwig Wittgensteing (1953) emphasized the art of storytelling is not just telling stories to people but it is also the way in which people share their stories. It is the way speakers communicate with the listeners that shape the meaning for the listeners (Wittgensteing, 1953). Through this analysis, the perspective of the person telling the stories is imperative.

For many researchers, it is difficult to make sense of another person's reality. The shape of a story helps us to establish knowledge about how people have constructed events and experiences in their lives (Etherington, 2011). It is this knowledge that is constructed and characterized by multiple voices and perspectives (Etherington, 2011). When telling a story, the storyteller takes the listeners through a journey of the past, which may involve significant events, and there often has a moral component embedded into the story. Holsein and Gubrium (2011) state that while some researchers will focus more on the plots, characters, environment, and themes, other researchers will emphasize their study on the structure, functions and language being used between the participants and the researcher during the storytelling process. These different interpretations of the narrative methodology are not considered right or wrong but should be chosen based on the participants.

4.2.2 Relationship between Researcher and Participant

In narrative research, it is essential to understand the relationship between the researcher and participants. It is through this methodology that all parties - researchers and participants - will learn and change their perceptions of each other. The researchers and participants in this process examine the meaning of the stories and therefore enhance the analysis in the research study (Creswell 2007). In some scenarios, participants may feel uncomfortable discussing their stories with strangers, and therefore it is essential to build relationships with participants. Depending on the vulnerability of the participants, at times, stories may also seem rehearsed or unfamiliar depending on the way the participants narrate their stories.

Due to the vulnerability of the participants, they are given the space and freedom to articulate their realities without feeling ashamed, judged, or inadequate. (Fraser and MacDougall, 2017) Therefore it is essential for researchers to create a safe space and take the time to ensure that participants understand some background about the research study. For this study I wanted participants, to be in a safe space. Building this relationship before the interviews began can help facilitate dialogue as participants. I wanted participants to feel they could openly share about their experience and break away from the complexities of working in the field but speak for themselves and provide clarity about the challenges they face on a daily basis.

During the interviews, I was aware that even though I was born in the same city many of the participants call home, there was still a sense of privilege because I was raised in Canada and received a quality education. Reid et al. (2017) state that researchers are in a position of power to translate and interpret the data they collect. Reid et al. (2017) further state that they are constantly checking in on their own power and privilege while trying to establish great rapport and to genuinely portray the experiences of the research participants. Researchers are trying to

recognize their own privilege by constructing a bridge over the privilege to connect with their participants by being empathetic and humane. Researchers try to create this space to humanize all experiences and emphasize that everyone deserves to be heard, seen, connected and feel valued in life. With the participants in this study, I began the interviews by asking simple questions such as their favourite food or favourite Bollywood movie. These questions helped many participants feel that they were not being interviewed but instead having a simple conversation with another person.

The relationships between researcher and participants can evolve over a short period of time. In situations where researchers build on the feelings of connectedness, caring, empathy and equality, participants can become open to developing a relationship. Minister (1999) implies that researchers who use a narrative interview should study the socio-historical context of the participants, construct a bridge of trust, be prepared to respond to different communication styles, demonstrate compassion and sensitivity and pay attention to the emotions of the participants. Fraser (2004) emphasizes that it is essential for researchers to pay attention to gaps, silences, hesitations, as well as what is said. "Silences, breaks, laughter, humor, pauses, false starts, and uncertainties in the narratives may represent the emergence of multivocality and counter-narratives" (Fraser, 2017, p. 6). If participants are flooded with questions, statements, and presumptions, they are likely to feel threatened, and they may fabricate the narrative or stop talking altogether. Reid et al. (2017) state that researchers must constantly check back with their research participants to navigate through sensitive issues. As well, if participants feel threatened or scared, they will produce responses to fit your own perceptions of their experiences. This can become a very negative experience for research participants because they will realize that you are not interested in heeding to their experiences but instead, you are interested in validating your

own interests or biased thoughts. Reid et al. (2017) imply that researchers must be willing to hear and understand the responses from their research participants even when it opposes the researcher's expectations or biases. The way researchers ask the questions, listen for responses and interact with the participants is essential to collect rich data (Polkinghorne, 2007). Depending on these factors, participants will decide how much information they would like to share with their researchers. Fraser and Mac Dougall (2017) state that during interviews, most participants evaluate their own security and make decisions at the moment about what they will share. Women and children, who are considered to be the most vulnerable groups in society, may be less eager to share their realities, especially if they have been faced with trauma and violence in their life.

4.3 Sample Size

Three categories of participants were targeted for this study: female sex workers, staff at the Savera Training Center Association and an advocate. In total 23 participants were interviewed: these participants will include 15 female sex workers, seven staff and one advocate. For this research study, three categories were chosen to showcase various perspectives of the sex industry and help understand the different components that affect women being forced into the sex industry and reintegrating them into society.

While the main purpose of the study was to gather stories from sex workers themselves in order to understand the mechanics of the sex industry and the services and resources the rehabilitation centre provides to women rescued from the industry, it was also important to gather other perspectives as well. The staff from Savera provide female sex workers an opportunity to abandon the industry and interviewing them can help understand the resources the organization provides to female sex workers. Advocates: that can provide insight on how the

laws affect sex workers in society. Even though it is essential to capture the stories of the female sex workers, it was even more critical to understand the laws that criminalize sex workers and the resources available to integrate them back into society.

Lapan et al. (2012) emphasize that qualitative data can often be extended to people with similar characteristics like those in the study population, gaining a rich and complex understanding of a particular social context or phenomenon. By creating saturated parameters for the participants and understanding their unique characteristics, the sample size provided a better contextual understanding of the research question. For this research, the sample size was practical and manageable, given the limited amount of time and resources available for this research. Given that this research study sought to analyze the process of rehabilitation for sex workers, it was necessary that the analysis focused on the voices of the female sex workers. Therefore, limiting the sample size enabled the researcher to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the data collected, which may not be possible with a large sample size. The research study highlighted the perspectives of the female sex workers in the rehabilitation center and their realities of reintegrating into society.

Female Sex Workers

The research was conducted in Mumbai, India. The reason for choosing Mumbai is because the researcher can speak the local language and familiar with and comfortable traveling around the city. Mumbai also is home to a large number of sex workers.

The female sex workers who participated in this study came from the red-light district located in Kamathipura, which is the oldest and second-largest red-light district in Mumbai (Gezinski and Karandikar, 2013). Although Mumbai is famous for its slums and busy streets, Kamathipura is known for its brothels and the life of sex workers in India. The majority of the

sex workers are trafficked as minors from rural parts of India or from neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh and Nepal (Jadav, 2017). India places patriarchy on a pedestal, making women and children the most vulnerable group in society. Since most of the female sex worker participants are considered a burden to their families, most of their family members have never invested in education or a career for the girls in their families. All the female sex workers that participated in this research study were illiterate. Some of the female sex workers had never held a pencil to a paper in their lives. Most of them were either forced or sold into the sex trade industry. The majority of female sex worker participants were either married (arranged or manipulated into marrying a trafficker), lost their husband to an illness, or were divorced. Since women in India are conditioned at birth to not have a voice, all of the female participants were susceptible to or experienced violence from their parents, husbands, madams, pimps, or clients. There are roughly 5,000 male, female, and transgendered sex workers in the brothels (Gezinski and Karandikar, 2013). The brothels are in sprawling suburbs in Kamathipura in the heart of the city of Mumbai.

The narrow lanes where the brothels are located are zoned by the regional and linguistic background of the sex workers. As mentioned above, the female sex worker participants come from different parts of India, which are unique in their own way. However, all the female sex worker participants were born and raised in poverty. The living conditions in Kamathipura are congested and deplorable for sex workers and their families. They have little access to basic needs such as food, education, hygiene, and healthcare.

The rationale for choosing female sex worker participants is because, throughout society, they have been oppressed and have never been given a voice. From birth, society has characterized them as a burden on a family or not considered equal to men. Therefore, by

choosing this group of participants, this study captured their voices and help readers to understand the challenges and difficulties they faced while entering, working, and leaving the sex industry.

Staff

The Savera Training Center Association is a non-profit organization founded in 2014 by Sachin Sopanrao Kamble, Seena Simon and Ryan Louis Berg. The organization is not politically or religiously affiliated. The Non-governmental organization's (NGO's) mandate is to assist former sex workers through the process of rehabilitation and provide them with a skill that leads them to sustainable employment and additional support systems that would assist them to reintegrate back into Indian society.

Savera Training Center Association is located near Kamathipura. Savera Training Center Association is an anti-trafficking organization working to reintegrate women who have been involved in the sex industry back into society through a process of rehabilitation. This organization provides women coming out of the sex industry with counseling sessions, workshops on life skills and provides them with a skills training session such as tailoring. Once they graduate from the program, the organization provides the women with a job in a company called Somerset Exports Private Limited. By stitching handbags for the US market, this company allows women to earn an income for their families and the company provides women with benefits such as health insurance. The goal of the organization is to partner with other local businesses so that artisans have a larger consumer base to sell their products. The organization is currently collaborating with Aruna Project Plan to sell some of the items.

Savera Training Center Association has 14 staff members and there are around 100 female sex workers that attend counseling sessions and training programs. The staff at Savera

Training Center Association are well-trained and qualified to assist these women in reintegrating into society. The staff consists of counselors, outreach staff, accountants, teachers for the training programs, an administrator and a director. The female sex workers in the rehabilitation center have not yet reintegrated into society and continue to work in the sex industry.

Even though this organization has only been open for two years, the staff have several years of experience working with women in the sex industry. Before working for Savera, the staff worked for other organizations that were based in Kamathipura. Their educational backgrounds range from a master's in social work to high school education. Even though the staff works exclusively with women in the sex industry, the organization continues to strive to create an equal gender balance in the workplace. At the time of this research, the organization had five male staff and nine female staff working in Savera.

The rationale for choosing the Savera staff as participants is because they have built a strong rapport with these women in the sex industry. To further understand the rehabilitation and reintegration process for sex workers in India, this research study needed to further analyze the services such as training centers and counseling provided to female sex workers. By interviewing staff members from Savera, the research study gained insight into the challenges staff members face assisting female sex workers as they rehabilitate and reintegrate into society.

Advocate

This advocate who participated in the study is based in Bangalore, India and is an advocate for women's rights. She has worked for several years for multiple civic and social organizations, implementing programs that assist the most vulnerable groups such as women and children. She has experience working on human rights violations, gender equality and education for children and women who have been victims of abuse and sexual assault survivors,

specifically those trafficked in the sex industry. Her career has further focused on rescuing women from the sex industry and providing them with witness protection, resources and access to justice such as legal aid.

The rationale for interviewing this advocate is because she has vast knowledge and has worked with several organizations that focus on assisting women in the sex industry. Throughout her career, she has overcome multiple challenges working with the police and the justice system in India. Her knowledge and experience will complement this research study very well.

4.4 Recruitment

As noted previously, in order to understand the services and resources the rehabilitation center provides to women rescued from the sex industry, 15 female sex worker and 7 staff members from Savera Training Center Association were interviewed, in addition to an advocate. Each interview took place in a private office and lasted no more than one hour.

Female sex workers

Female sex workers were recruited by the director of the Savera Training Centre Association at the request of the researcher. During weekly organized programs the director announced the research study and asked the women if they were interested in being a part of this research study. The director emphasized that participation would not affect their access to resources within the organization. Those interested in participating provided their names to the director. The director was initially directed to check eligibility against a list of criteria. Women were eligible to participate in the study if they had been a part of the Savera Training Center Association for over two years, they were above the age of 22, had received counseling while in the centre and were willing to honestly share their experiences and not manipulate their stories. If they were eligible to be a part of the research study, the director used consent forms to get their

consent and asked them for a date, time and place where they would be comfortable to meet the researcher for the interview as these women do not live in the training center.

For this research study, 15 female sex worker participants were chosen. The decision to recruit only 15 participants for this interview was largely based on time and resource constraints. The director of this program was able to choose 15 female sex worker participants because he is familiar with the women's backgrounds and has a pre-existing relationship with the women.

There were a few challenges in the recruitment of female sex worker participants. Since the organization has only been operating for two years, the director was unable to recruit participants who had been in the program for two years. Additionally, since these women were still working in the brothels, there were some days the women attended the training sessions, and some days they were unable to attend due to multiple factors. In this case, the program was catered to the women's schedules. There were some women that completed the program in one month, and there were some that completed the program in one year. Since the women are illiterate, it was difficult for the director to explain the full scope of this research study - most of the women agreed to be a part of the research study because they trusted his judgment. There was one participant who was hesitant to agree to participate. In the past, an individual had completed a similar interview, taken her picture and then sold it to the local newspaper. Many of these women had similar concerns with confidentiality and privacy. However, the director reassured them the researcher would be using pseudonyms in the final thesis and their pictures would not be taken for this research study.

Staff

To recruit seven staff members from Savera Training Center, the researcher had a general meeting with the staff and introduced the research study, which included the topic, purpose of

the research, confidentiality, risk and benefits. The researcher emphasized to all staff participants that their jobs will not be affected if they chose to participate in this study. The researcher gave each staff member a phone number and if they were interested in participating in this research study, they were able to call the researcher for a time, day and place where the researcher could conduct the consent and the interview. The staff participants would have constant interactions with female sex worker participants through conversations or providing them with training or facilitating workshops.

For this research study, seven staff were chosen. The decision to recruit only seven participants for this interview was largely based on time and resource constraints. The director of Savera Training Center Association was not involved in this process of recruiting the staff members to mitigate the risk of staff participants being pressured to participate in this research study.

Advocate

To recruit an advocate, the researcher developed a list of criteria to select someone with the appropriate qualifications. The advocate should specialize in women's rights, violence against women, or the rights of sex workers. They should have a degree in law or Indian politics and have at least three years of work experience to ensure they are knowledgeable in their field. It was essential that the participant did not have any association with Savera Training Center Association in order to offer an unbiased opinion.

Names and addresses of perspective advocates were obtained through local contacts with whom the researcher has worked in the past. Once the researcher received contact information, they emailed an invitation to participate in this research study. Once they indicated their

willingness to participate, the researcher arranged to approach them in person to go over the consent procedure and interview.

4.5 Ethics

Initially, when the researcher wanted to conduct their research in the sex industry in India, there were going to be multiple barriers while applying for approval from the Ethics Board. One of the hurdles the researcher anticipated was the collection of data from a vulnerable group such as sex workers. Many Indians are often suspicious of people coming from outside of India and people are often apprehensive about talking to researchers, especially researchers who are examining the sex industry through a social and political lens. Most participants are nervous to talk to someone from outside the sex industry in fear of their names and pictures ending up in the newspaper which could implicate them. For the ethics board, this was one of the biggest challenges to discuss in the ethics application. However, as a researcher, trust was built by being open and sharing research documents which indicated the research intentions. The researcher was able to build trust with the participants, specifically the female sex workers because I am from India. In addition, the researcher volunteered with other organizations in Mumbai related to the sex industry and therefore have experience working with sex workers.

In the ethics application the researcher mentioned that Savera Training Center Association has had experience working with researchers in the past and therefore they are aware of the sensitivity of the research and they were efficient in scheduling interview times and dates for the participants. In addition, the female sex workers and staff were scheduled to come to Savera every day either for work or for training. Therefore, the researcher was organizing interviews for 23 participants was effortless.

4.6 Data Collection

This research relied on semi-structured interviews as a means of data collection. Due to the vulnerability of this marginalized section of society, research question was answered through the female sex worker's narratives of their realities. Vaugh and DeJonckheere (2019) define semi-structures as a dialogue between the researcher and participant. Lapan et al. (2012) also emphasize that semi-structured interviews allow flexibility while conducting the interview since the interview will keep the researcher focused on gathering all the necessary data to answer the research question and objectives.

In this research study, utilizing interviews as a tool is essential to gather rich, detailed materials from the participants, specifically from female sex workers, because the researcher can allow the interview to transition to a conversation, where participants might be more comfortable sharing their stories. Conducting interviews is far more personal for the participants than conducting a questionnaire or focus group because the interviewer works one on one with the participants. For this research study specifically, interviewing the participants allowed the researcher to identify and analyze the personal and sensitive experiences and issues of the participants. Through the interviews, the researcher was able to listen to their stories and delve deeper into understanding the realities of working in the sex industry. For this research study, semi-structured interviews were conducted for all the participant categories, which included the female sex workers, the staff, and the advocate.

Even though interviews were guided by a list of questions, semi-structured interviews allow participants to have control over the conversation by allowing them to explore issues they feel are important. This approach allows the researcher to modify the questions and input comments during the interviews. Vaugh and DeJonckheere (2019) imply that this method allows

the researcher to explore and analyze the participant's thoughts, feelings and beliefs about a particular topic. Longhurst, R. (2003) compared semi-structured interviews to social interaction with no concrete rules one can follow. Semi-structured interviews allow for openness and empowerment of the participants as they are voicing their beliefs on a particular topic. Semi-structured interviews can be a powerful tool to capture the voices of the vulnerable; however, for a novice researcher this process can be intimidating and challenging, especially when there are power dynamics between the researchers and participants.

Fraser and MacDougall (2017) state that with qualitative interviews, most participants do not narrate a story, but instead, interviews are based on questions and answers. "Narratives can be linear with a beginning, middle and end or circular which means ending up in the beginning without a sense of resolution, and they may be thematically organized rather than temporarily organized" (Fraser and MacDouglas, 2017 p. 4). In most narrative methodologies, the participants are asked to narrate their realities through a story, either in one-on-one conversations or in a focus group. In one-on-one conversations, participants are asked to describe their stories in a variety of ways, either by responding to structured or semi-structured interviews or by engaging in dialogue with the interviewer. Texts are constructed from the told stories, and these texts are then analyzed using different analytical frameworks. According to Mccance et al. (2001), unstructured interviews have high rates of a participation because unstructured interviews allow participants to have more freedom to respond to the questions and create a story. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) expand further by recognizing that open questions are more likely to produce narratives from the participants. In qualitative interviews, the narrative and stories are not defined with a beginning, middle and an end that reveal the participants' experiences. Instead, the researcher questions the participants, and the participants weave their

stories and realities throughout their responses. Gubrium and Holstein (2009) define this process as a narrative reality. This term suggests that the environment in which the stories are told is as much a part of the participants' reality as the stories they share. This allows the researcher to analyze the participants' stories in an extended framework, with the intention to exhibit the realities of real people in a real environment through the canvas the participants paint with their stories.

During this research study most, participants chose to complete the interview in a private office space. There were two participants who wanted to complete their interviews in the brothel - which was a big room filled with beds and divided by thin curtains for privacy. Participants were ensured that they were aware of the sensitive and personal nature of the questions and responses and gently suggested a more private space to conduct the interviews. The day of the interviews was challenging as it was unclear what exact time the female sex worker participants would arrive for the interviews. Although the female sex worker participants suggested the time for their interview, some participants showed up two or three hours late due to multiple factors such as resistance from their madam to let them go to Saveria, lack of sleep from the previous night, caring for their families, or being sick. Before the interviews began, participants were asked simple questions about their lives to build a rapport. I was surprised by the fact that female sex worker participants were willing to be so open and share the trauma they encountered throughout their life. At the end of the interviews, a few participants asked if we could pray together.

Since the researcher is from India, most of the participants seemed to find it very easy and comfortable to speak to me. However, there were a few participants who were hesitant to speak to me, and I understood that my lack of experience working in the sex industry in Mumbai

and my identity as a Canadian were potential barriers to building rapport with the participants. One participant arrived in the interview intoxicated. I asked if there was another day, she would feel comfortable doing the interview since she was not feeling well. There were times I felt the staff were hesitant to respond to a question due to the fear of speaking against law enforcement officers or government. The researcher is now more cognizant of the factors and difficulties in building rapport with participants in a short time period.

As noted previously, a question list was used to guide the semi-structured interviews (See Appendix 1 for the list of questions). For all participants (female sex workers, staff and advocate), interviews were organized into three separate sections. The first section was structured to make participants comfortable by asking them questions about themselves, for example: “What is your favourite food, favourite movie?” The second section aimed to identify challenges participants faced within the sex industry. During the interview, female sex workers were asked: “What challenges do you experience during your reintegration process now?” The staff were asked: “What are some of the most significant challenges that Savera Training Center Association faces when engaging with a female sex worker that has been rescued from the sex industry?” The advocate was asked: “From your perspective, what are some challenges India faces to find solutions to protect women who are rescued from the sex industry?” The third section of the interview aimed to understand what changes could be implemented within the sex industry. During the interview, female sex workers were asked “How did you contribute towards bringing about change in your own life and did you meet your own expectations?” and “What impact have these resources made on your journey right now of reintegrating into society?” Questions to Savera staff, included: “What are the services provided to a female sex worker who have been rescued from the sex industry?” and “How do you think most people in the

community think about women rescued from the sex industry, rehabilitated, and then reintegrated into society?” Questions for the advocate included: “Do the rescue/raid models address any structural barriers that can provide solutions? If no, why?” and “What are some ways sex workers can engage in the local and national levels of structural interventions that can tackle the structural barriers?”

4.6.1 Confidentiality

For this research study, confidentiality was essential to ensure the respect and safety of the participants' identities, dignity, and privacy. Extra precaution was taken to ensure that privacy and confidentiality was maintained throughout this research study. The interviews were conducted in a private office. During the field research, the interviews were recorded with an audio tape recorder and then converted to interview transcripts in a Microsoft Word document. If participants were not comfortable with the recorder, the researcher would have used field notes. However, all participants were willing to be recorded during the interviews. All participants received pseudonym throughout the study to protect the identity of the people involved. Additionally, the consent forms state that participants could stop and remove themselves from the study at any time without penalty. However, all participants completed the interview.

4.7 Data analysis

As data was collected using a narrative methodology, it will be analysed using a narrative analysis, in keeping with the storytelling approach, this will allow themes and stories to be captured.

The data collected from participants was analyzed using a thematic analysis to answer the main research question. Boyatzis (1998) describes thematic analysis as an interpreter for those using both qualitative and quantitative analysis which will enable researchers who use different

research methods to communicate with each other. Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The goal of thematic analysis is to identify themes or patterns in the data that are essential to addressing the research questions and objectives. It is through the thematic analysis researchers are able to produce trustworthy and insightful findings amongst a group of participants that are marginalized and stigmatized within society. Thematic analysis provides a flexible approach for researchers to modify the data to provide a rich and detailed data set that compliments the research study (Braun and Clark 2006).

Once all the interviews were complete, interviews were transcribed verbatim for each participant. Once the transcribing process was complete, the transcripts were read rigorously to consider identifying the several meanings in the raw data. Significant themes were identified related to the research question and objectives, including sub-headings for each of the themes which arose from the research question and objectives. Interview transcripts were read by the researcher and responses specific to each sub-theme were highlighted. Highlighted responses were then copied into a Word document and sorted into sub-themes. Boyatzis (1998) defines a theme as a pattern that is retrieved in the data; at minimum, it describes and organizes possible observations, and at the maximum level, it interprets the characteristics of a phenomenon.

Organized data in each sub-heading was then interpreted using the interpretive, narrative approach. This approach allowed the data to emerge from the themes. The direct quotes that emerge from the themes are “primary scheme by means of which human existence is rendered meaningful” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.11). Braun & Clarke (2006) state that thematic analysis has two levels of interpreting the data; semantic is defined as analysis on the surface, and latent analysis is analyzing the data beyond what the data portrays to the researcher. A theme can

evolve at different levels. For this research question, latent analysis was used to identify the underlying stories of the female sex worker who have gone through the rehabilitation process and are on the path of reintegrating into society. It is through this process themes were merged from the participant's stories. These stories were then pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of their collective realities. Aronson (1995) states that these themes or ideas can be compared to puzzle pieces that must be individually analyzed but that each idea or theme fits together in meaningful ways when connected with one another.

Even though thematic analysis does complement this research topic, Nowell et al. (2017) state that the lack of literature on thematic analysis compared to that of grounding theory may leave researchers unsure on how to utilize this analysis in their research project. The lack of guidelines when using thematic analysis can lead to inconsistency in analyzing the data from the different participants in a research project. Braun & Clark (2003) state that even though thematic analysis is flexible and intelligible, this can lead the researcher to inconsistency when analyzing the data even further. However, for this research project, the thematic analysis will showcase the perspectives and characteristics of female sex worker participant's realities in India, and this will generate anticipated insights. Braun & Clark (2003) emphasize thematic analysis will express the overall story about how the different themes relate to the research question and objectives.

4.8 Ethical Issues

This research involved human participants that came from a vulnerable and marginalized section of society. There are three guiding ethical principles to contemplate when researching human subjects; respect of person, concern for welfare and justice (Dalhousie Ethical Code of Research, 2012). To conduct an ethical study with a marginalized group such as former sex workers, it is important to become familiar with the cultural context, such as community

priorities and perspectives along with knowledge of local, social, cultural and political aspects. It is essential to be aware of the power dynamics between researchers and participants, especially when interviewing a group of people who are constantly stigmatized within society.

"Maintaining a calm demeanor and a sense of humor was essential in handling the tenuous relationships with these women" (Sinha, 2016, p. 7). Initiating conversations of common interest such as birthplace, food likes and dislikes, local TV serials and Bollywood movies helps to build a strong rapport with the participants, which in turn breaks down power barriers and fosters a trusting environment to conduct the research. I was better able to create great rapport with the female sex worker participants when I volunteered with the organization two years ago. Since female sex workers and staff did not see me as an 'outsider' but saw me as an Indian woman, I was able to build fruitful relationships. While working in community centers, over time, I created relationships with the female sex workers, they trusted me and disclosed information about the realities they face on a day-to-day basis. Beaunae et al. (2011) state that it is through identifying unequal power dynamics between the researcher and participant that allows for the further development of sensitivity to participants and their realities. In this, I will identify the risk and benefits for each participant prior to any data collection.

Given the vulnerability of the participants and the sensitive nature of this research topic, there was a high-risk that participants may feel uncomfortable or anxious. These risks were mitigated through working closely with the staff at Savera Training Center's staff who have prior experience engaging, supporting and working with women who have been rescued from the sex industry. One-on-one conversations occurred in private rooms in a community center where female sex worker participants felt safe to disclose sensitive information. A counselor and staff member were available if support was required once participants disclosed sensitive information.

As well, participants were assured they had the option to refrain from answering any questions that made them uncomfortable and can withdraw from the study at any point.

Additional criteria were used when identifying participants for the study. Those above the age of 21 and who have been in the rehabilitation program for no less than two years were selected as they would have more experience being a part of the program. As such, it was more likely they would be willing and comfortable with talking about the challenges of being rescued, being in the rehabilitation center and reintegrating into society.

In order to ensure confidentiality, staff at Savera Training Center did not have access to the questions, audio files, transcribed interviews or any other data, despite assisting with the recruitment of participants, participants were reminded that although they shared sensitive and traumatic details about their experience, pseudonyms were used at the different stages of this research project to ensure confidentiality and protection of the participants from further stigmatization and violence. The participants' identities (female sex workers, staff and advocate) were only be known, recorded, and stored by the researcher. The researcher informed participants that every effort will be made to protect the confidentiality of participants. However, there is no guarantee that their identity will be protected completely.

Female sex worker

If female sex worker participant's identities were exposed, they could be further stigmatized within their communities, families, and society, putting them at risk for violence. The researcher mitigated the risk by explaining to the director that he should not discuss the name, address, location or other identifying factors with anyone, including other staff members.

Staff

If staff participant's identities were exposed, the staff could potentially lose their jobs for things disclosed during the interview. As such, staff their interviews were private and not shared with the director or other staff members. The researcher protected the identity of staff participants by providing them with a pseudonym and limiting the descriptions of their jobs.

Advocate

If the advocate's identity were exposed, they could potentially lose their jobs for things disclosed during the interview. Their interviews were private, and the researcher protected the advocate's identity by providing them with a pseudonym and limiting the descriptions of their job.

However, because this research is using a narrative methodology, it is vital to use direct quotations as they shed light on the voices and agency of female sex worker participants. Prior to interviews, all consent forms were signed which included permission to use quotations from the participants. In the consent form, the participants were advised that this research will use fake names to protect the participants.

Participants were also informed that the researcher would make every effort to protect their identities. All data will be stored on the researcher's personal computer, with both the computer and files on the computer password protected. The final copy of the thesis will be the only document provided to the organization.

The rehabilitation center is located 3 kilometers away from the red-light area (RLA). To mitigate the risk of the researcher, two staff members would accompany the researcher to the brothel. The researcher was aware and respectful of the cultural norms and traditions by wearing their local clothes, by acting in accordance to the culture, by treating all participants and different members in the community with utter respect and dignity.

4.9 Study limitations

This research had several limitations that impeded the finding of this study. During the recruitment process, the director had to find and ask female sex worker participants if they would like to participate in this research study. As the director of the Savera Training Center was involved recruitment process, his bias is present in the selection of participants. While it was necessary to the study to have the director recruit participants, as he had developed strong relationships with these women, this and this would be considered a breach in the privacy and confidentiality of the female sex worker participants as he is aware who the study participants are. The sample size of the participants was also limited due to the lack of financial and time resources. Therefore, the experiences and recommendations for this study cannot be generalized to the sex industry nationally or globally. However, the findings in the study do reflect the ongoing issues within these communities.

In addition, the location of the interviews was vital to allow participants to feel safe and protect their privacy and security. The interview location can affect the collection of data (Elwood, & Matin, 2004). During the process of scheduling the interviews, the female sex worker participants requested they be met in their homes which were located in the brothel. These participants wanted to meet in their homes because their pimps or husbands would not let them leave the brothel unless they had a good reason. To work around this hurdle, female sex worker participants were interviewed when they were scheduled to come to Savera.

Even though qualitative research requires interpretation, there are limitations. A qualitative researcher tries to capture and represent complex thematic phenomena within a large group of people. Sandelowski (1991) states that it is necessary to do an intensive examination of data to bring out the complexities that lie beyond the data, and unfortunately, that kind of detail

cannot be captured in a qualitative study. Even though interpretations in a study are essential, they can alter the results of the study due to personal and research bias (Hammarberg et al., 2016). However, in qualitative and quantitative methods, the data is analyzed, and the findings are construed to highlight the significance of the research subject. The findings of this research will not be used to generalize to wider society but only to provide insight into the experience of the sample size, which is the women in the sex industry in Mumbai, India.

Chapter 5: Findings

In the following chapter, data collected from participants (15 female sex worker participants, seven staff members from Savera and one advocate) through in-depth interviews will be shared to allowed us to better understand and determine the factors that facilitate or challenge the rehabilitation and reintegration of former sex workers back into society.

The CRF theory is embedded in this chapter of the thesis. This theory sheds light on the women who are oppressed in society. Society often supresses and further intensifies women who are marginalized in society. As you read the narratives below, you will understand the layers of oppression these women face on a daily basis while working in the sex industry and then being rehabilitated into society. It is through CRF theory that it offers a voice and agency to women of color and women who are marginalized in society. The narratives below, will identify how intersectionality plays a critical role for women in the sex industry. The female sex workers, staff and advocate discuss how poverty, gender, social status, education, healthcare, laws effect women in the sex industry.

In this chapter, pseudonyms will be used to protect participant's identities and maintain confidentiality. Staff members and the advocate will only be identified using "staff" or "advocate." Using pseudonyms provided flexibility for participants to feel like they could authentically be themselves and it allowed the researcher to portray their stories effectively and showcase the human dimensions of the participants in this research study.

Through this analysis, findings were summarized according to specific themes that are rooted in the data. The themes consisted of 1) The causal factors that coerce women into the sex industry; 2) violence against female sex worker within brothels; 3) The issues against the rescue and raid models; 4) The resources available for female sex worker to leave the sex industry; 5)

The access to health care services; and 6) The challenges to reintegrate into society. This chapter aims to unpack these themes through a narrative process, by showcasing the voices of the participants.

5.1 Coercion of Women into the Sex Industry

As mentioned in the chapter 2, there are several multi causal factors that force women into the sex industry in India. During the in-depth interviews, the female sex workers identified that social and economic determinants were the key factors that forced them into the sex industry. The female sex workers who participated in this study were between the ages of 22 – 65 years old. These participants entered the sex industry when they were between the ages 8 – 22 years old. As soon as the interviews began, most participants dove into the reasons why they were in the positions they are in today. Several participants echoed that poverty in their rural communities was an increasing pressure for these women to move to bigger cities like Mumbai in search of employment. Saira was a little embarrassed to speak about her past, she hesitated for a couple of minutes before she disclosed her truth.

“I was initially working in a steel factory but as you can see my hands are badly burned, I always knew I was never safe in the factory, but I had to work and send money to my family. In the factory the men would beat us, and they would sexually abuse some of the women. One of the men, told me I can make more money in another job, he wouldn’t tell me more details, but he said I needed to dress properly so he would buy me many things like clothes, jewelry, food, he gave me money to pay for my rent. One day he asked for his money back and I didn’t have that money. He threatened me and hit me to give his money back. He took me to the RLA and sold me there; he sold me for 40,000 INR. These men use the factory to recruit poor women and then they sell them to the RLA.”
(Saira)

A staff member from Savera articulated similar sentiments, where female sex workers are forced into the sex industry due to coercion of owing a debt. There was a lot of anger in their

voices when they shared about the women's realities and it was difficult because they recently started working in Savera.

“Sometimes these girls share their stories and some of them have horrible past. Most of the situations they come from the rural areas, they are not educated so when then are given an opportunity to find a job somewhere else they will take it.” (Staff)

The in-depth interviews also revealed that the participants fell into the trap of this industry because they were deceived by known people, which includes family members, husbands and friends. As mentioned in the Chapter 2, most female children are thought to be a burden to a family household since the family has to pay a dowry when the girls get married. Therefore, most participants mentioned they remember that as a young child their families neglected them, and because they were girls their families would separate them from the boys and sell them into the brothels. It was noted that they were sold at a high price because they were minors.

As Bhavani was sharing her story about being a burden to the family, she became very anxious. Her mood changed from being happy to this sense of hopelessness.

“My mother didn't like me and my sister very much. She would always beat us with sticks; my sister had scars on her face from the beatings. One day she took us to Bombay, and she met this lady in a house, she told us this is our aunty. She told us we will be staying with our aunty (madam) for a month. For a few days my mother stayed with us and then one day she left. The aunty told us she is gone back home she will return later. For one month this aunty (madam) fed us nice food and we slept in her house. One day, she told us that we had to start working and we can't live here for free. Since I was only 9, I couldn't work but my sister could work for the both of us. She made my sister wear short pants, a short tops and makeup. I started crying. These things we never even saw in our lives. The aunty (madam) told us that our mother sold us to her for 60,000 INR each. We couldn't even leave the area. Even to go to the toilet someone would come with us to make sure we didn't run away. The aunty (madam) told my sister, you get ready and attend customers you can stay here for one month. Once you make enough money in the month, I will put you on a train and send you back to your village. They promised us that. But my sister understood that we would be trapped here for the rest of our lives” (Bhavani)

Once girls entered a brothel, they were told that they were sold and needed to pay back the money. The customers they attended paid a large fee, especially if the girls are minors. However, only a small percentage of the amount paid went directly to the girls – most goes to the madams or pimps. Most participants worked in the brothels for years trying to pay back the debt they owed. There were a few participants who alluded that their own family members were well-known traffickers within this industry. However, at the time they were unaware they were traffickers since they blended into society. They would travel from village to village seeking young girls and fabricating promises that would never be met.

As Deepa shared her story, she expressed she felt betrayed and abandoned by her own aunt and even though the years had passed she had a lot of anger towards her aunt. She kept saying “I was just a little baby.”

“I was very little when I came to Bombay. I was maybe 8 or 9 years old. My family is from Bangladesh, but my aunt was living in India. So, one day she came to visit our village and she told my father that she is taking me to her village in India. So, I went with my aunt, we took the train. I woke up in the brothel. My aunt sold me for 2 lakhs. No one knew my aunt was working in this trade. I didn’t know hindi [the local language] so I couldn’t even ask for help from the police.” (Deepa)

There was another participant, Jalsa who stated that they were coerced in the sex industry by a random stranger. It took Jalsa some time to gain any trust with the researcher during the interview, she kept dodging the questions or changing the subject. At the end of the interview, she mentioned she was embarrassed that she trusted a stranger so quickly. So now when she meets strangers, she is very scared to share anything with them as she fears they will take advantage of her.

“One day, I was travelling back to my village and while I was waiting for the bus at the bus stop I met a middle age man and he said he knew my father very well. He asked me if I could come to his house to take care of his small children, but he said he would pay me. He promised he knew my family. He took me to a hotel, and he fed me food and then when we got back on the bus, I fell asleep. I don’t remember what happened to me. I

woke up and realized I was in Mumbai and he left me here. He sold me in the brothel. I was crying for two days and I just wanted to go home. Our culture is very conservative. I was feeling very shy. They told me when I finished getting ready, I will have to sit outside and wait for a customer and then attend a customer and they will give you money. I told them I wanted to leave but they told me once you pay off all this money then only you can leave. For 5 years I worked there and then paid off my debt. I went back to my village and there I found out my mother passed away before I could see her. My brother told me that I was dead to the family as well since they thought I abandoned the family. They still don't know what happened to me and I can't tell them either." (Jalsa)

In some of the narratives, participants stated that they were placed in an arranged marriage, where a man would come to the village and ask the family if they could marry the girl. The parents would agree not knowing the background of the men. Once the marriage ceremony took place, the men would take the girls to bigger cities and sell them into the brothels. These men would have multiple wives in the brothel. Even if the parents would find out about the situation, the women were unable to leave their husbands due to the stigma attached to being divorced and therefore would continue working in the brothels.

While Kajal was sharing her story, she became very emotional and frustrated that she was placed into this position. She continued to say she never had a choice.

"My father was a police officer and someone in the village bought a marriage proposal for me. So, my father agreed. So, when I got married, he sold me to the brothel, and I found out about his different marriages. My husband was not really good. My husband married 17 different women and I was number 13. I decided to stay in the marriage because people in my village would talk and they would blame me and my family if I left my husband. Whenever I used to attend customers, I would always cry and pray to God to end my life." (Kajal)

As shown, there are several multi causal factors that have and continue to coerce women into the sex industry in India. During the in-depth interviews noted, the female sex workers identified factors, such as coercion as a result of owing a debt, poverty, familial neglect and stigma both of a social and economic nature that played dominant roles in forcing them into the sex industry and keeping them there.

5.1.1 Violence against Female Sex Worker in the Sex Industry

When vulnerable individuals are coerced into the sex industry, this often damages their mental, emotional and physical well-being. This is aggravated even further when these individuals come from poor social and economic circumstances. While these women are violently being coerced into the sex industry, the violence continues to intensify among the pimps, madams and clients. Female sex workers are continually raped. This form of violence can break down a woman's identity and affect not only their physical health but also their mental health. The majority of the participants suggested that they were beaten with copper rods or with belts, stabbed with a knife and deprived of food and sleep. As Kajal was sharing her story, she showed her wounds and scars on her arms and legs. She covered them up with pieces of cloth because she didn't want to show people that she was abused.

“I was working for such a long time and I was abused by my madam. They would give me little food to eat and I would sleep only for a few hours. Even then they gave me bad words. For a year and half, every day they would beat me and all I would do is cry. Every day she would hit me with a steel rod, and she treated me horribly. It felt like I was in hell. I had to give her all my money and possessions.” (Kajal)

A staff member further stated that female sex workers were never safe in the brothels. They were beaten and some female sex workers were even killed if they did not do what they were asked.

“All night these women are working in the area in the night. They are mostly high or drunk or smoking and they do this all night. Their clients and madams/pimps beat them if they are not doing what they are told.” (Staff)

Riya indicated that there are many women killed in brothels and their cases were never reported to the police. As she was sharing this story, she began weeping in the translator's arms. The girl that was murdered was a close friend of hers.

“Just a month ago there was a murder; a girl was killed by her client. The girl had two children and she was 3 months pregnant. She was attending a customer and the customer was very, very drunk so when she asked him for the money, he became very angry and killed her.” (Riya)

Saira shared that their clients were as rough as the madams and pimps since most of them were drunk or high. It was noted Saira was finding it very difficult to share her story, she kept fidgeting and squirming in her seat.

“I had big kidney stones and I told my pimp, but he still forced me to have sex with a customer. We normally have to attend 10 – 15 customers per night. The customer was very drunk. When he came into the room, he was being very rough with me, and my skin tore that night. I told the customer to stop but he was so drunk.” (Saira)

The advocate stated that the abuse against sex workers is a systemic issue and that Indian culture has normalized the abuse of women in the sex industry.

“The full industry is driven by money, the victims are chosen because they are women, because they are poor, because they are uneducated, because they come from a lower caste and because they are financially dependent on someone else. Due to this conditioning of society and attitudes sex workers in India are mistreated, abused within different parts of society, the judicial system and within the brothels. It is through this systemic exploitation women in the sex industry do not have a choice and freedom to own their own money instead they are beaten.” (Advocate)

The violent and abusive reality of sex workers in the sex industry comes with, as has been shown, an additional level of threat to life. Physical, emotional, and mental abuse is seen to break down the ability of these women to fight back and leads to their submission as they feel that few or none other options are available to them. The methods used as shown from these stories, show the consistency of abuse, and the abusive control under which women within the sex industry in India are held from more than one ruling figure.

5.2 Raid and Rescue Models

The state’s approach to ending human trafficking in India is to implement the method of a rescue and raid model in several RLA. Marger (2012) defines the rescue and raid model as a

government intervention and therefore these operations are mostly carried out by police officers who are supervised and directed under the commissioner of the police. Marger (2012) further explains that a raid and rescue team enter into brothels unannounced and arrests all the women and girls by force. Ahmed and Seshu (2010) state that these women and girls are either placed into different rehabilitation centers, which are organized by NGOs within the area, or returned back to their original village.

Through this research, the female sex workers, staff and the advocate shared that the rescue and raid models are heavily reliant on inflicting violence onto the sex workers. Therefore, the rescue and raid model become ineffective and violates the rights of individuals in India. Kampathipura is divided into several lanes and the raids occur in a single lane per night. Female sex workers are dragged out of their homes, chased and rounded up. During this process, female sex workers are beaten and treated like criminals instead of victims who are being rescued.

During the interview process, Jalsa was resentful and addressed the issue of police brutality during a raid in the Kampathipura brothel.

“Once the police raid the RLA, we just run for our lives. If they catch us at the start of the month, they will file a case and keep us in jail for 3-6 months. If the police catch us, they hit us and take us to the police station and make us pay a fine. They even hit us as they have sticks. These are lady police officers only. Male policemen are not allowed to hit us.” (Jalsa)

A staff member from Savera recalled that police officers use hard interrogation tactics amongst the female sex workers and instill fear in these women. Therefore, when raids occur in the brothels the female sex workers run away from the police.

“The police officers abuse these women with bad words, they start screaming at them, they remove them out of the house by pulling their hair, and they make them very scared.

These police officers make these women feel like they are low kind of women in society. And then they will lock them up. They might even get beaten by the lady police.” (Staff)

As women are treated less like they are victims being rescued, and more like they are newly caught criminals. Efforts of the raid and rescue implementation has shown to be also a part of the perpetuating cycle of violence that the women in the sex industry are exposed too, deeming the implementation as both ineffective and a violation of their individual rights.

5.2.1 Police Brutality

Violence against sex workers in India is associated with the perception that they are criminals. Law enforcement use force such as physical torture, emotional abuse, sexual assault and economic intimidation against sex workers. These forms of violence are used to affirm power and control. This has led to further stigmatization of sex workers within society. Within this research, all participants including the female sex workers, staff and the advocate had high concerns regarding police intimidation and false criminalization within the brothel. Participants have further emphasized that if sex workers are unable to build trust with law enforcements, the people who are supposed to be protecting them not criminalizing them, it will be very difficult to build trust with anyone else once they try to reintegrate into society.

Bhavani indicated that once female sex workers are caught during the raids the biggest problem is not being placed in jails but police officers asking for bribes. Bhavani was very irritated and frustrated when she was sharing her story.

“The police raids are a big issue because they take us away and then we can’t make money. No, they don’t help because if they catch you, you will have to pay the 12,000 INR for the bond and then they will release you. In Bombay they will have to pay the bond and if the madam pays that means I am in more debt to the madam.” (Bhavani)

A staff participant further emphasized that participants have stated that police raids don’t actually ‘save’ female sex workers but instead they economically deprive them.

“The pimps and madams pay for their release and they tell the girls you owe us money since we paid for your release. So now you have to work more. Amongst the women there is a fear if they are caught.” (Staff)

The advocate indicated that law enforcement officers are very corrupt, especially when women are involved, and it is further exacerbated when it is a vulnerable group such as sex workers.

“In India, even if a woman has been raped, they don’t want to inform the police because they don’t even take it seriously. They won’t even file a case and register your complaint. So, if I am a sex worker, and if I go to a police station, how serious do you think a police officer is going to take a complaint that I am making against one of their own police officers?” (Advocate)

Another staff member shared that when police officers ask female sex workers for bribes, the money is going into the pockets of politicians in India.

“The main goal is to bring the women out of the RLA and not to fill the stomach of politicians. These police raids are benefiting the police officers and politicians more than helping the women. So many times, when I do outreach in the RLA, I witness police officers collecting money from these women. They have a business in the RLA, and they are profiting from it.” (Staff)

Sneha shared that being caught by police and paying a bribe leads to further abuse by their husbands. However, there were times when police officers would inform the pimps and madams that a raid would be occurring that night.

“I have been caught so many times and now I have to pay now 30,000. My husband use to beat me because I used to get caught, so somehow or the other when the raids happened I had to find a way to run from the police. One time when I was caught I had to spend 4 nights in jail because my husband didn’t want to bail me out. There were some days my husband knew there was going to be a raid and that is because the police officers would tell them. My husband had to pay a fee for that information.” (Sneha)

The advocate expressed that the sex industry is a massive business, and it is supported by politicians and big mafia groups.

“These police officers know about the brothels, hotels where the women can go, and the names of the pimps who make arrangements for women to take their clients who are owned by politicians and big mafias. They have all the information, but they chose to fill

their own pockets rather than helping these women. This is greed. When a raid occurs in the brothel, there are situations where the police officers inform the pimps and madams that a raid is occurring at this time.” (Advocate)

Another staff member observed that police officers inform pimps and madams when the raids will happen.

“There are informants who tell them [pimps and madams] when a raid is about to happen, and the police officers will tell them the day and time. Of course, the pimps and madams pay a fee for that information and then they tell the women to leave the brothel.” (Staff)

These raids do not occur during the daytime but take place during prime hours of business. Deepa recalled that the raids would occur between 2 am – 4 am in the night when the women would be working. Deepa shared that she was separated from her children for one week because of the raids.

“So, 4 times a month police would do their raids. The raids would normally happen between 2am-4am. One time, I was in jail for four days because I didn’t have enough money to for my bail. During one of the biggest raids, they caught 150 women.” (Deepa)

Vinaya suggested that if they refused to pay the bribe during the raids, the police officers would threaten the women to inform their families that they are working in the brothels.

“The police always threaten us with our families; they tell us if you don’t give me money your families will find out about you working in the RLA area.” (Vinaya)

This highlights further issues other than just violence and corruption with the system, but also includes the reality of the abuse of law enforcement on the women within the sex industry. Physical, emotional, mental, economical and social abuse leaves these women in a helpless, powerless and untrusting situation, as they remain perceived as criminals, further stigmatized and overlooked for their basic human rights.

5.3 Resources Available for Sex Workers

5.3.1 Sex workers obtaining a skill through an NGO

NGOs that provided services for sex workers especially in the rehabilitation process, generally only consist of counselling sessions. Even today there are only a few NGOs in the Kamathipura area that will provide a rehabilitation process of counselling and vocational training. In Savera, training sessions teach women tailoring. The program is divided into multiple modules. Within each module female sex workers are taught how to stitch different kinds of bags. The program is designed to fit the needs of the individual. Some women complete the module in 5 months, and some take longer than a year.

“Savera is like, a non-profit organization, so, like, so our aim is to do the outreach relationship with training and get them jobs and to see a transformation, or to see a reintegration, rehabilitation happening of the women. Before training, we do outreach. We go to the brothel and we, between the girls, talk to them with relationships. And once they build a relationship, they come to Savera. The meaning of Savera is new day, or like new hope. Savera's plan is like give the training to the girls. Basically, training in tailoring - so we have a designer program where we give them training. The training is for four to six months. Some girls may come to this training in like three months, or four, months or some may take nine months. We provided life skills sessions with them because we want to teach them, that they are priceless. We give them a small gift when they complete each module because most of the women are still working in the brothel, so we try to help pay off their debt. Once they complete the program, we find them a job in Somerset.” (Staff)

Riya discussed the benefits of joining Savera. Her attitude and emotions improved as the conversation transitioned into talking about Savera, which for Riya was a positive reinforcement in her life.

“Here everything is good. We come to Savera, we learn new things and we work. When we graduate from each module, we receive a small gift. Normally when you have to learn a skill like this, you have to pay but here I am learning free of cost and I am getting a gift every couple of months. They also give us lunch for free and I feel supported by everyone.” (Riya)

Kajal highlighted that Savera does not only provide a skill, but they teach the women life skills such as how to maintain relationships, create goals, time management, how to act in an office environment and how to be organized. Kajal was so proud of herself for learning how to stitch. She kept showing the money she received that day since she graduated from the first module that day.

“I love everything. Everyone gives me a lot of love and I get everything when I come here. I feel so great when I am here. When I go back to my village, I can tell people that I got training here and I working for an American company. I can proudly say that I am working and earning my own money that I have made. I can say that with pride. I am attending 6-module training and in that training, I receive a gift from the organization. The first module I received 1000 INR, and then 800INR they gave me and then 200INR. I saved this money in my bank account. The teacher taught us different parts of the sewing machine. In the second module we learned how to make the bags and pouches. I also learned some life skills in Savera. I learned how to maintain boundaries in relationships, how to create goals, different office rules and to be organized.” (Kajal)

A staff member shared that female sex workers participants do not only attend Savera for the training, but they also receive emotional support with the creation of a family environment in the office. In addition, Savera is one of the few organizations in Kamathipura that will educate female sex workers on a skill and guarantee a job in another company called Somerset.

“Other NGOs are giving them training, but they don't know the employment opportunities. Savera was on the right track to provide employment. These women need to have a job in order to reintegrate into society. Second, we wanted the women to feel at home and feel welcomed. These women will understand that not everyone is horrible. We create a family atmosphere. Through this atmosphere we develop trust with them. Once they trust us, then we are able to educate them and teach them how to reintegrate into society.” (Staff)

Farida shared that women are illiterate. The staff at Savera have taught them how to hold a pencil and to write their names. She was enthusiastic and showed how to write her name multiple times during the interview in addition to successfully writing the interviewer's name.

“I love it so much. I came to realize that I was in the right place. The staff here taught me how to write the alphabets. They taught me how to write numbers and my name. They also taught me how to read the signs on the train station.” (Farida)

In addition, since most female sex workers have been trafficked to the brothels, they don't have any form of identification. A staff member shared that Savera assist female sex workers to create an ID also known as Adar and a pan card. Through these forms of IDs, female sex workers would be able to access programs, discounts and funding from the government.

“In Savera, once they complete the third module we connect with an agency and start to create their documents. Adar card, pan card and after that is created, then only can we create a bank account for them.” (Staff)

A staff participant noted that the staff would take the female sex workers for a full medical checkup. The staff wanted the women to be healthy before they started working in Somerset.

“I take them for medical checkups; I take them to check if they are HIV positive, if they have any sexually transmitted diseases. We also purchase all the necessary medications for the women. When we take the women to the hospitals, the doctors are very nice; they try to make the women feel comfortable.” (Staff)

Sex workers obtaining a skill through an NGO are given the opportunity to feel a sense of productive and protected belonging. Allowing the rehabilitative process to start or continue through offerings of counselling sessions, vocational training, interpersonal and social skills, organizational and educational programs help as well as through providing emotional and medical support.

5.3.2 Mental Health of Sex Workers

Sex workers in India face several forms of violence ranging from verbal, sexual, emotional, physical and psychological abuse. These forms of abuse take a toll on their mental health and it is a deterrent for them reintegrating into society. Most NGOs in the Kamathipura

area offer some form of counselling during the rehabilitation process. It is necessary for these women to enter counselling willingly and discuss the trauma they have endured of the past years living in the brothel. It is a critical entry point to begin the process of healing for many female sex workers in the area. During the interviews, the staff described the form of therapy that is being used for female sex workers and the effectiveness and challenges of utilizing this method.

“In Savera we use Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy [TF-CBT]. This form of therapy is one-on-one. So, it has different stages involved. The first stage is gathering-we gather basic information, and we get to know the women. So, you have basic activities where you build a relationship with the women. You become friends and develop a comfortable zone. The next stage is the relaxing stage where you help the women deal with their stress and traumatic symptoms. We do mindfulness therapy and anger management. The next stage is the feeling stage where we understand and learn more about their feelings-like how they feel when they are angry. So, when it comes to sharing, they are open to share about themselves. It is important for them to share this information with someone they trust because there is a lot of trauma that is suppressed. This therapy is not enforced here. I have had two or three women who were just not interested in attending any sessions. If you force these women to attend counselling, it might never work for them because they are not coming out of their own will.” (Staff)

Another staff member indicated that Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy is a creative method to build trust with the female sex workers. Instead of discussing their past, the staff discover what their interests are, and they build rapport through this process.

“So, when they come for counseling for the first time, the women are very quiet, they will not speak, but as they move ahead, they're more talkative and I am less talkative. So, I will identify what are her interests first so if she likes to study, drawing or stitching. Once they become comfortable with me, I talk about their current issues in their life. The past will always be there, but I won't dig in their past because those are triggers. So, I will identify triggers when I talk to them. So, some women will say I don't like black color. I don't like dark rooms. So those are triggers, where the object or thing brings them back to the trauma they endured and it's not allowing them to move forward. There are many times the women sit in the therapy and they are distracted, or they zone out. When that happens, I will distract them by clapping very loudly. So, they asked ‘What happened?’ I said ‘Nothing-what were you thinking about?’ ‘No, no, I was thinking about my past’. Then I will start- ‘Okay, what was it that you want to share if you're comfortable?’ If she is comfortable, she will say yes. I tell them that they don't have to share everything with me right away, it will take time no worries.” (Staff)

Sneha shared that counselling has allowed them to overcome their anger and allowed them to heal from their trauma.

“Before I would never talk about my past, I would never even think about it. I didn’t want to think about it. But slowly I told the staff, about how people treated me, they cheated me. Before going to counselling, I would always be angry and fight with everyone. After coming here, I have learned that I need to be a bigger person and let the other person speak. Arguing will make the situation worse. If the other person sees that I am not arguing or yelling back, then they will stop talking as well. They taught me to listen to others first and then respond in a calm manner.” (Sneha)

Vinaya recalled her experience with counselling as she paced the room back and forth.

“In Savera, I learned be a better human being. I was addicted to working in the brothel, tobacco and alcohol because it would numb my pain. Every day I woke up and I wanted to die. After coming to counselling, I have stopped drinking and chewing tobacco. Every day I wake up, it is a struggle not to drink and smoke, but counselling has helped me talk about my dark past and the pain I have been hiding for so many years. Now I feel like I can lead a good life. Now I am happy and leading a good life. Savera has brought me from darkness to light.” (Vinaya)

Staff participants indicated that Indian society has created a culture where sharing your emotions demonstrates weakness. This is further intensified amongst vulnerable groups.

“In India, women really don't share their feelings. They hide and they pretend to be happy. So, I tell them that India is not like this, but you are given an opportunity here to share. So yesterday I was counseling one of the girls she didn't share her feelings for past 20 years. She cried yesterday in first session itself and she said ‘You are the first person who is listening to my story nowadays, nobody listens. They just make fun of my story thinking that this is everybody's story.’” (Staff)

Divya noted that she had not disclosed her past in over 30 years. She looked relieved and as if a weight was lifted from her shoulders.

“At first I used to feel distressed and anxious. I did not know how to understand my emotions-like why I was so angry. After counselling, I have learned to control my anger. Counselling has helped me talk about my past which I have not talked about in 30 years. I would cry every time I went for counselling. More I attended counselling I got comfortable.” (Divya)

Anaya indicated that counselling has helped her set goals for her future and she looked excited and hopeful for her future.

“I never even thought about my future. I thought I would just die here in the brothel alone. I didn’t even know what or how to set a goal. I thought if I receive a little bit of training, I can go back to my village and I can work there. I never dreamed that this counselling would help me deal with my anger or emotions. The counselling has motivated me to do better for my life.” (Anaya)

In counselling sessions, the staff prepare the female sex workers to reintegrate into society and how to tackle the stigma that is attached to sex workers.

“One of the activities I like to do with the women is the sentence completion activity. In this activity the women need to reflect on what they think about themselves? At the end of the activity, we discuss their thoughts and discuss the stigma attached to them. For example, I will ask them questions like ‘How do you feel about it?’ ‘What would you do in this situation?’ ‘What is the first thing that comes in your mind and how do you respond?’ There are three sides to it- one is the action, one is the behavior and one is the feeling. So, we talk about how you connect your action, feeling and behavior when there is something negative happening and how to change it to be positive. We also give them positive statements that help them.” (Staff)

The staff identified a few challenges these women face when they come for counselling sessions.

“So, there are 9 to 10 stages in this training and with these women we are unable to complete them because it takes a lot of time and these ladies do not come to Savera regularly. Sometimes the counselling sessions have to be modified because some women graduate from the program quickly. Once they graduate, they see another therapist in Somerset. As well, if I meet them today, they will talk a lot but tomorrow they will forget what they told me. So, every time I have to remind them.” (Staff)

The advocate shared one of the major challenges female sex workers face during rehabilitation is the lack of consistency when it comes to program or therapy, as they often move among counsellors.

“This whole understanding that you can go and talk to any counsellor. It doesn't work like that also, because we've seen that women and young girls who've been rescued from places of either brothels or RLA or wherever it might be, they connect very well to the person they have met the first time. And they built a very nice strong rapport in their hearts and minds with this particular person. However, due to structures of organizations, women are bounced from one person to the next. Now this person, this human being has

gone - has been asked to deal with like 10 different people over 1 year, and she has no idea how each of them is connected, because those connections are known only to the organization, but not to this human being who has been rescued. Because a lot of organizations provide rehabilitation for sex workers, they do provide a small component of counseling, but it is only for a short time. These women should have one counsellor-I don't call myself so much as a counsellor, as much as a friend in support. I get calls from women who we rescued like 10, 11 years ago. And, yeah, they are married and have children of their own, but suddenly they call up in the middle of the night and they will say 'You know, my husband loves me so much. So, I want to tell him that I was rescued from a brothel'. And that is something like you pointed out. Most organizations do not extend it. I do it because of an absolute personal affection, because I just believe that these women must have somebody that they can fall back on."

Within the goal of maintaining and strengthening the rehabilitative process, forms of counselling are provided with the aim of creating a safe and effective space for the women to talk about their endured and cumulative traumas. Even though the process has its challenges, it still maintains itself as an aid in both the women's personal growth and healing, as well as helping in the betterment of proper reintegration back into society.

5.4 Access to Health care

Female sex workers are often afflicted with life threatening health conditions. Most female sex worker participants that were interviewed lived in a small room with one bed and a stove for cooking. These are the same rooms they use to attend to customers. Facilities for bathing and personal hygiene in the brothels are communal - these brothels have one communal washroom per lane. The living conditions in the sex industry further intensify health conditions. Due to these conditions some participants fall ill on a daily basis and only if they are able to make extra money in one night, will they then visit a doctor. On a more severe scale, if female sex workers have genital tract infections or pelvic inflammatory diseases, they tend not to visit the hospitals due to the stigma and fear of shame.

Farida recalled that she visited a hospital several times with severe lower abdominal pain. As Farida was sharing her story, she looked uncomfortable and ashamed.

“One packet [eight pads] I used for three months. My period is very irregular. The doctors are conducting the check up and they understand my line of work. So, they know what I am doing. But they are saying no you don’t have any sickness. I am asking other doctors as well if they can help me. I even went to private hospital and I am paying good money for it, but they have to take care of me nicely. Even though I am paying so much I still don’t know what is wrong with me. My problem is this health issue. If I get rid of this health issue, I know I can do anything that my heart desires. I am unable to enjoy things in life. I am very lazy. I am under many medications and I have visited many doctors. Yes, they are telling me that I am healthy. My breathing is very poor, in the morning I am unable to breathe properly and my happiness is going and no motivation.” (Farida)

Anaya shared her experience in the hospitals. As she shared her experience she was fidgeting with her hands and tears rolled down her face. Anaya felt hopeless.

“The staff in the government hospital yell at me because I don’t wear good clothes. Since I cannot read or write, the staff become very frustrated with me. They tell me that I am uneducated and stupid. Once they found out I lived in Kampathipura, they treated me even more badly. They told me that there aren’t any doctors available to see me and that I needed to leave the hospital now.” (Anaya)

Another staff member indicated that NGOs also accompany female sex workers to the hospital to undergo multiple tests:

“We are taking girls to government hospitals close by in Kampathipura. There they will do an internal, blood and sugar checkup. This is the first time they find out if they have HIV. The doctors also check if the women are pregnant or if they have any diseases. They will do their full check and prescribe medication for these women.” (Staff)

If female sex workers are connected to an NGO, the NGO’s staff will assist the female sex worker at the hospital since the staff have a great rapport with the health physicians.

Unfortunately, most female sex worker participants shared that if they go to the hospital without being accompanied by a staff member they are mistreated.

“One of the women thought she had TB [tuberculosis]and she didn’t get treated because the doctors didn’t want to treat her since she lived in a brothel. So, they told her to go to another hospital. She went to several hospitals and they all denied her for treatment. So, she was very fed up with the doctors because she was also vomiting blood. So, she was in bad condition. She ended up borrowing money from her madam and went to a private hospital and she paid a lot of money to see a doctor and received medication. I went to

check on her weeks later, but her madam said they moved her to another brothel since she was in more debt.” (Staff)

However, Riya indicated that they did not have concerns accessing a doctor or visiting a hospital. Instead in her experience, the doctors were willing to assist her and did not charge her for her operation or the medications.

“I told the doctor I live on Grant Road and that I am receiving training from Savera. The doctor took all my bloodwork and they asked me a few questions. He said I needed to do an operation right away. I was very scared because I didn’t have money for this operation, but he said he wouldn’t charge me for anything. He helped me a lot.” (Riya)

The health consequences endured by many of the female sex workers are often life threatening and long term. Further exacerbated by the reality of unclean communal facilities including personal and hygienic spaces, small and cramped living conditions, avoidance of healthcare visits as a result of stigma, rejection and neglect and mistreatment – particularly if not accompanied with an NGO staff member during the visit.

5.5 Challenges Reintegrating into Society

Women leaving the sex industry and trying to reintegrate into society presents a paradox. On the one hand, women are coerced into the sex industry due to inadequate or a breakdown of social structures or attitudes. On the other hand, while female sex workers have struggled to leave the sex industry, they have to overcome an additional hurdle of reintegrating back into society which means finding a job, and a home, a change of lifestyle, and a change of attitude and behaviours. In addition to these challenges, sex workers have to negotiate a space in a society which has predominately traditional attitudes concerning the family and the community. These kinds of attitudes, norms and behaviours are taught to women from a very young age. There are many sex workers who are unable to cope with the behavioural, social norms and attitude changes and they relapse back to what they are comfortable with and the environment

they grew up in, which is the sex industry. Staff members indicated that members in society do not accept vulnerable groups such as sex workers into society.

“There are some orthodox people in the community, and they won't change. People do not understand why they have been cheated or sold to these pimps. So most people don't know these realities. They think they do it to earn money and of course they do it to earn money but there is a dark story that is connected to these women. When the people find out that a woman has worked in a brothel, they will gossip, they won't help her, they will throw stones at her and they will chase her out of the communities. The women find it very difficult. If people in society don't know her past, then they don't give them any trouble.” (Staff)

Another staff member shared that it takes time and a lot of counselling to assist female sex workers to blend back into society.

“There are many women that blend into society. It takes time for these women to reintegrate into society because they have to manage their emotions and trauma. If they are not welcomed into society this might lead them to depression and suicide. This is why they need to go to counselling, and they need to work on themselves” (Staff)

Ahana indicated that because she was addicted to drugs, alcohol and pan, it was very difficult for them to work in an environment they were not use to, build relationships at work or heal from the trauma they experienced while working in the brothels.

“There were some days that I was very happy that I left the RLA. I got a good job, I have a clean house, I have good food to eat but I wake up in the night screaming because I dreamed about what happened to me in the RLA. Some days I can't get out of bed and go to work because I am scared someone will take me back to the RLA and then some days I just want to drink so I can forget about that experience.” (Ahana)

Saira noted that they were finding it difficult to follow work etiquettes such as going to work from 9am – 6pm or wearing clean clothes to work. As well their income had reduced drastically. There were many women who paid off their debts. However, the high income became a lucrative reason to continue working in the brothels.

“When we work in the brothels, we are earning 30,000 to 40,000 INR [500 to 600 CAD]. So sometimes I feel like my salaries is little. Here I only get very little money. When I go to work sometimes, I just don't want to work, and they want us to wear clean clothes every time.”
(Saira)

Other staff members alluded that some women decided it would be easier if they went back to the sex industry. One of the recurring issues with the women is the high amounts of debt they still owed to the madams or pimps. With them making such little money, it was easier for these women to rationalize going back to the brothels.

“Sometimes even if they do go to work in another organization, they want to leave and go back to the trade. The main issue is that they are in so much debt that they would rather go back into the trade and earn more money and pay off the debt. We try to find out and ask them what happened. ‘What problem do you have? And how can we solve your problem’. We resolve their problem and then bring them back to the training center. For some of the women, the debts are so high we are unable to help them.” (Staff)

Some staff highlighted that there are women who work in the brothel and they work in the organizations as well.

“Even though the women are working in Somerset they still go back to the RLA to work in the night. They don’t want to leave this place because they grew up in the brothels and this is all they know.” (Staff)

Deepa stated they found it difficult to trust people. They have gone through so much trauma and so many people have made fake promises, that they find it very difficult to trust people in society.

“I get very scared taking the trains in the morning. Sometimes I get lost because I don’t know what platform to go to and I am scared to ask anyone in the station for help because I feel like they are going to lie to me or cheat me or sell me in another brothel.” (Deepa)

Challenges of reintegrating back into society presents a paradox, by which there is a struggle in the fact that most heavily struggle to leave an industry they were initially coerced into. If presented with the opportunity for reintegration, ‘freedom’ still comes at a cost of overcoming many more hurdles including those of economic, deeply embedded social issues, behavioural, mental, emotional and physical. The reality of the challenges presented to the

women upon attempting to reintegrate (even with help), at times even makes it easier for the women to rationalize staying or going back into the brothels.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The results presented from the participant's stories in chapter five provided insight into the realities and challenges sex workers continue to face in India. The results in chapter 5: findings were divided into five themes and four sub-themes. In this discussion, I will summarize and reflect on the main findings within the themes. The causal factors that coerced women into the sex industry include the burden of being a girl in a family and being sold into the sex industry. The second theme consisted of the violence against women in the sex industry, which included the abuse women endure against pimps, madams, and clients. The third theme consisted of issues with the rescue and raid models in the brothels. The fourth theme enlisted the resources in Savera that taught female sex workers tailoring and life skills, small gifts (economic stipend), government documents, and placement in a permanent full-time job with a tailoring company. The fifth theme consisted of health care services and access to counseling and hospitals. The final theme consisted of the challenges of reintegration into society. In this section, the participants identified multiple social and personal factors that prevented them from reintegrating into society.

This chapter will discuss how Indian police victimize and criminalize sex workers. The question of whether rescue and raid models are effective will be addressed, in addition to investigating the health care system and their interactions with sex workers.

6.1 The Epitome of Patriarchy

Piecing together the narrative of women in the sex industry in a society that is constrained in a rigid patriarchal structure showcases the inequalities of women. As mentioned throughout this study, gender disparities in the sex industry are related to the patriarchal hierarchies of society. When analyzing the sex industry, there are women who were coerced and

those who became entrepreneurs. One of the commonalities women face in the sex industry is the gendered power dynamics. A critical issue in Asia is how to segregate the free choice of women who choose to work in the sex industry from women who are coerced into the industry. India is embedded with a strict patriarchal structure; these structures and systems coerce women into the sex industry.

The analysis section of this thesis identifies that trafficking of female sex workers is a manifestation of patriarchal dominance, which became a norm due to the gendered human behaviors in Indian society. This same gendered human behavior is based in other socio-economic and political systems in society. In this research, the focus is analyzing the macros, which are the overarching factors that force women into the sex industry (e.g., laws, enforcement officers, societal views), and micro, which are the construction or lack of self-identity and building relationships. In Chapter 5, micro perspectives were identified, such as access to resources like counseling that would reconstruct their identities and rebuild trust in society. In analyzing the macro perspective, such as laws and cultural beliefs, there is an understanding that the sex industry reinforces the structural oppression of women, which then, in turn, develops systemic gender ramifications.

Kampathipura covers a large geographical area, and it is very distinct in the community. As this research was being conducted, the question “How does a brothel that covers a large geographic area in Mumbai still exist under the ITPA?” In theory, this brothel shouldn’t even exist because of the laws that exist today. During this research, the ongoing question that kept reappearing in the interviews was: “How do the police and politicians allow these brothels to exist and flourish when politicians are the ones who are creating and implementing the ITPA that criminalizes sex workers?” The other important question that needs to be addressed is “How do

we get more politicians to move from creating band aid solutions to fixing a system that is evidently broken to reforming the system?”

Sex workers often receive harsh punishments, such as incarceration, and are charged with offenses, as inscribed within the legislation. In other cases, police officers beat, detain and rape sex workers and those same police officers face little accountability for their behavior. It is evident that gender and corruption are key players in victimizing women in the sex industry. This was further proven during the interviews when several participants mentioned that politicians and police officers rely heavily on the bribes and extortion of women in the brothels. Some participants mentioned that there are several cases that are pending in the courts, and these cases will not move forward until a bribe is paid. In India, the majority of the politicians and police officers are male, and therefore, decision-making is dominated by a male perspective which has a negative consequence when understanding the lack of resources being allocated to women. The ITPA was created in a male-dominated environment where women's voices were not present and therefore criminalized and victimized even further.

6.2 The Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA)

It is essential to understand the characterization of sex workers in the criminal forum. In some countries around the world, there are people who are less equivocal about violence and stigmatization attached to sex workers; therefore, people favor decriminalization because the cost of criminalization is disproportionately borne by sex workers, and this would punish them even further. The political system in India seems to be failing to make a significant effort to combat trafficking. The ITPA is supported by section 270 of the *Indian Penal Code* (IPC). It is the combination of these two frameworks of ITPA and the IPC that criminalizes the practice of sex work (Kotiswaran, 2008). Therefore, sex workers are the ones solely directly impacted by this

law because they initiate the act of soliciting and the act of the services. With this law intact, sex workers are not considered citizens but rather labeled as criminals and, therefore, prone to further violence and stigmatization. Throughout the interviews all participants, including the female sex workers, Savera staff and the advocate indicated that this law criminalizes sex workers instead of protecting them from the grapples of the pimps and the clients. Ironically, once these participants were 'saved' from the industry, they were often placed in rehabilitation centers or jail, which is especially harmful since many of the women could not pay the bail. In another situation, the female sex worker participants complained that the justice system placed a huge financial burden on the women because they had to pay for the lawyer and courts fee, and in some cases, it took years to resolve a case.

This law also provides a framework for police and NGOs to conduct raid and rescue operations (Sinha, 2017). Through these raid and rescue operations and during the interviews, there were several female sex workers that shared that there were several cases where sex workers faced further violence, irrespective of their age or consent to be 'helped' out of the brothels. These raids and rescues have led to systemic violations of the human rights of sex workers, such as right to life, dignity, equality, equal protection and due processes under the law (Sinha, 2017). The political system in regard to criminalizing sex workers completely ignores their basic human rights and public health principles. Therefore, leaving them vulnerable in a society that further paints them as criminals.

Even though India seems to criminalize sex workers, several NGOs are pressuring Indian policymakers to criminalize customers and brothel owners and decriminalize sex workers (Vanwesenbeeck, 2017). These same NGOs are mobilizing to call sex work labor so it can be recognized as work, exposing the violence of the postcolonial state. This change in the criminal

section of society changes the imagery of what some scholars label a “global sex panic” (Sarkar et al., 2008). By changing people's perspectives on sex workers, barriers and misconceptions can be broken down and the structural and systemic issues which force women into the sex trade industry and perpetuate violence and stigma against them can be addressed. In addition, to establish sex workers as legitimate citizens of India, sex workers need to understand they are worthy and have a right to become a citizen.

Loomba and Lukose (2012) argue that "sex workers developed a notion of worthiness to prove themselves to be worthy citizens' right. Further personal religiosity was emphasized to offset the stigma of being 'bad' women, along with a reiteration of their participation in the broader religious and charitable life of the community" (p. 271). Scholars such as Nuken et al. (2013) have argued that legalizing sex work in India could create an alternate model for empowerment that can aim to protect the rights and dignity of women. Nuken et al. (2013) also state that this new model of legalization would involve zoning areas, registration and the compulsory testing of sex workers in health care facilities. This form of political change would protect the rights of sex workers and not leave them so vulnerable to police brutality, violence amongst the community or human trafficking, and could help protect against unsafe working conditions and further stigmatization.

6.2.1 Loopholes in the Law

One of the biggest issues with ITPA is that it can be interpreted in various ways. The title of the law: *The Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act* is problematic due to the usage of the word immoral and trafficking. There are different forms of trafficking, such as the trafficking of drugs, money, humans or ammunition, and all of this is considered a criminal offense. The word trafficking means moving people or things from point A to point B. However, in this law,

trafficking is interpreted and associated specifically with sex work (also known as prostitution). During the interviews, the advocate emphasized that trafficking and sex work/prostitution are two separate terms. However, under this law, they viewed as one and further labeled as immoral. Most women are coerced to enter the sex industry; therefore, they are trafficked. The act of selling sex is considered illegal in India and hence immoral. The stigma attached to sex workers in India is embedded in the law from its very title because the law states that the act of selling sex is immoral. The advocate further states that if the law views sex work as immoral, that stigma is then connected to sex workers, and therefore society views them as immoral and criminal.

The ITPA is prone to a lot of discrimination amongst sex workers, brothel owners, pimps/madams and clients. Theoretically, the main aim of the ITPA was to protect sex workers who have been coerced into the sex industry and to criminalize those who deceived, abused, raped and violated the human rights of sex workers. Unfortunately, since sex workers are considered to be on the lower rung of the social ladder within the sex industry, they are more vulnerable to being criminalized under this current law. During the interviews, several participants questioned why there were only consequences for the sex workers. They were being placed in jail, abused by the police and beaten by pimps. They further stated that they were helpless and victims of the industry. The perception of sex work is considered to be taboo in India, even though there are several countries that have legalized it. Specifically, for India, Misra, Mahal & Shah (2000) argue that the perception of this industry is considered to be evil, while on the opposite end of the spectrum it offers an outlet for uncontrollable male sexuality, violence and the oppression of women. Due to these perceptions of sex workers being evil and satisfying the needs of men, society has protected itself by creating a stigma against sex workers

and have displaced them to certain areas in society. Several female sex worker participants indicated that the men would choke and sexually abuse the women in the brothel. The participants even indicated that due to the sexual abuse, their health has declined drastically. In some drastic cases, women have been murdered on the streets by their pimps or clients, and the police did not open up an investigation or charge the clients or pimps because these sex workers are seen as easily replaceable in the sex industry.

During the interviews, several staff participants mentioned that Section 3 of ITPA discusses the punishment of owning a brothel or allowing a person to use a space for a brothel. The staff participants shared Kamathipura is one of the densest and largest brothel areas in Maharashtra, and unfortunately, since female sex workers are restricted to live and work in that area, they are subjected to further exploitation from police officers, clients, pimps and madams. The staff's biggest issue was that under Section 3 of the ITPA, the people renting the rooms in Kamathipura, the brothel owners, the clients, the traffickers are not criminalized under this act. Kamathipura is in the heart of the city and is considered to be as big as a city like Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Under this section of the law, law enforcement and politicians have the jurisdiction to close the area completely, but interestingly continued to keep the RLA in Kamathipura open. If this law truly focuses on trafficking, why are only the female sex workers constantly being criminalized and stigmatized in society? There are several of sections within the ITPA that treats female sex workers as criminals and declares the other parties involved as non-criminals even though they are committing or are involved in the act of trafficking.

6.3 Are Rescue and Raid Models Effective?

In India, due to several multi-causal factors that force women into the sex industry, there is a judgment that if women had a choice, they would not choose to enter the sex industry.

Unlike other countries such as New Zealand and the Netherlands, where sex work is considered work, sex work in India is not viable employment and is instead painted as immoral. There are multiple causal factors mentioned in the previous chapter that showcase the reasons why sex work in India cannot be considered voluntary since most of the women in the sex industry are coerced and exploited. Even under the philosophical concept of moral responsibility, Fischer and Ravizza (2008) state that the issues arise when people believe in the concept of moral responsibility because even though we have free will to make decisions, there are limits, and our actions are determined by other factors. Women who are forced into the sex industry have limits to their free will because they are constantly imprisoned, whether it be in a government shelter or the brothels.

There is a lack of choice and autonomy whether they want to be in the brothels or work in another career. There were several staff members who indicated that society holds this belief, including different sections of government, that when it comes to women being trafficked, they chose to remain/re-enter the sex industry. The concept of free will and agency is interesting among a human population that is already vulnerable in society. The women in the sex industry might have high agency or low agency once they are rescued and rehabilitated. Moore (2016) states that external factors can influence a person's free will and agency. It is important to recognize this for women in the sex industry who have been rehabilitated since there are a large percent of women who tend to go back into working in the brothels. External factors such as paying their debts or paying for their children's education are a few examples why women reenter into the sex industry. However, the element of 'voluntary' is removed because of the lack of choice and lack of opportunities. Several of the female sex worker participants stated that even while they have left the sex industry, society does not provide women with enough of a safety

net or services to reintegrate into society. Another participant indicated that several organizations' rescue' these women from the shackles of the industry but then dump them into society and do not understand the repercussions or the negative effects the rescue can have on many women. During the raid and rescue model the women do not have free will to make the decision whether or not they want to still be in this industry or leave. Instead, they are forced to leave and forced to rehabilitate into society rather than being provided with options. Some women might not be coerced into the industry as a young child but instead might enter the business as adults, often to overcome being socially and economically deprived.

The female sex worker participants continue to be slaves in the sex industry, the emergence of rehabilitation centers was created to provide a haven or shelter for women before they were reintegrated into society. This may include vocational training such as tailoring, computer skills, and beautician. In addition, they acquire life skills, receive medical attention, counseling, legal aid, and upon graduation from the program, provision of employment in a company, including a salary and benefits.

The female sex worker participants continue to be slaves in the sex industry. Rehabilitation centers were created to provide a haven or shelter for these women before they are reintegrated into society. This may include vocational training such as tailoring, computer skills, and beautician. In addition, they acquire life skills, receive medical attention, counseling, legal aid, and upon graduation from the program, provision of employment in a company, including a salary and benefits. There were quite a few participants who mentioned they were placed in governmental shelters, and initially, they felt they were 'saved'. Over time they realized they were unable to leave, and they received little nutrition; some were even abused. Some of the participants in the study indicated that they felt like they were trapped yet again because the staff

would threaten to either put them back into jail or back into the brothels. Most of the participants felt they lost their lives even more as they faced abusive treatment in the shelters while waiting for the justice system to determine whether or not they need to be jailed for their crimes or allowed to return back to society. Most of the participants felt like they lost control of their lives and were unable to make decisions for themselves. Within these situations, the raid and rescue model itself perpetuated forms of violence against women.

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However, with the rejuvenation of rehabilitation centers, especially ones like Savera, women can gain power and autonomy to make decisions for their future. The staff indicated that the rescue and raid model for Savera consists of staff going to the brothels to talk to the women instead of forcing them to participate in the training program. All of the participants described Savera as an inviting, loving place, and the female sex workers refer to the staff as family members. Staff participants expressed that they treat the women like there are one of their own family members, hoping to reform the women's view on society. Even after the women graduate from the program and begin working in Somerset, the staff from Savera visit their workplace to maintain relationships. Mohanty (2003) states that women are portrayed as victims of male violence and hence all women are depicted as powerless. It was transparent that the women were empowered once they graduated from the program. Empowerment can be experienced in

different forms for different people. For the women, leaving the sex industry, entering into organizations such as Savera and obtaining a job at the end of the modules elevates their sense of empowerment. However, when they are forced to reenter into the sex industry due external factors such as paying of high debts or paying their children's education this might lower their sense of empowerment and some women might have higher sense of empowerment if they chose to enter into the sex industry as they make a lot of money. Especially in this research, the women were able to increase their sense of empowerment through the art of storytelling especially when they shared how violent their enter was into the sex industry and their success of rehabilitation in society. The important components to CRF theory are empowerment and advocacy. The theory focuses on how narratives and storytelling alter the view of women from victims to empowered. Once these voices are heard it can challenge the systems and entities which oppress them.

One of the issues that arose from the discussion with staff is how economic considerations are frequently ignored under the raid and rescue model. Society has an unrealistic notion that once individuals are rescued from the sex industry, this 'saves' women from the trenches of the industry, and they will experience true happiness. In reality, women coming out of the sex industry struggle to manage with minimum wage salaries and the effects of psychological trauma. Most of the women in the brothels are making 10 times more than they would be working in a company. The women have become so dependent on receiving large sums of money from their clients that they are unable to adjust to the economic realities' society offers. With the salaries they receive from companies, they are sometimes unable to pay for necessities such as rent, children's education, food or healthcare.

The rescue and raid model tends to be a band-aid solution to some underlying issues with rescuing women from the sex industry, such as gender disparities and economic dependency.

Staff participants highlighted that there are major gender disparities in the rescue and raid model because it solely focuses on victimizing women. Women in India are considered powerless, and therefore, if someone is rescued, there is an unlimited supply of women who can fill the positions of those who have left the industry. The rescue and raid model completely ignores that the sex industry in India is based on a supply and demand model. In India, demand is determined by men's need for female sex workers, and a majority of the supply is provided by male traffickers.

In India, there is this notion that men are able to control women in every social domain, and this includes the sex industry. This social structure of the subordination of women that is rooted in society forces women to be valued as a commodity, and therefore they are not protected even in the justice system. In a 2011 report, Hamm implied that in Scandinavia, being a 'real man' stems from social pressures not to buy sex, which transforms the sex industry into a choice versus being forced. On the contrary, in Thailand, to use services in the sex industry depicts a 'real man' and further illustrates masculine behavior. This ideology of men being superior to women within Indian society is deep-rooted and will take time and effort to change. Men in India must change their belief of viewing women as a commodity and begin viewing them as human beings. Only after this ideology is dismantled may the sex industry in India be transformed like what has happened the Netherlands and New Zealand, where the state and police protect the women who chose to be in the sex industry.

6.4 Recommendation

From the discussion, it is understood that the sex industry is not just controlled by the pimps and clients, but in reality, it flourishes as the result of a patriarchal society. It criminalizes sex workers through the ITPA, funded by corrupt politicians, and sex workers are captured and imprisoned either in the criminal justice system or the rehabilitation centers.

In many countries, governments have created policies to support and/or legalize sex workers. However, for India, legalizing sex workers would not solve the patriarchal environment or the state of the vulnerability of sex workers. Instead, it might exacerbate current issues even further. The epitome of patriarchy is the root cause of the continuation of violence against sex workers, therefore leaving them powerless and socially marginalized. It does not matter which portions of the sex industry you investigate; you will notice violence is the common theme amongst them all. All players within the sex industry from pimps and clients to police officers, NGO staff, lawyers and judges, perpetuate violence against sex workers. The key to normalizing the sex industry is to sensitize police officers, lawyers and judges, and criminalizing pimps and clients who abuse women. It will also be imperative to sensitize society in general, breaking away from the attitudes of women being second class citizens. This will only occur once we listen and understand the women's realities in the sex industry.

6.4.1 Sensitization of Law Enforcement Officers and Judicial System

The ITPA gives full agency to police officers to conduct raids whenever there is a suspicion of an offense being committed. This agency has fostered corruption from law enforcement officers, pimps, madams and politicians, which has in turn impeded the human rights of women in the sex industry. Initially, before any changes occur within law enforcement, it is essential to modify the ITPA. Bhatti (2017) states the ITPA solely covers prostitution and commercial sexual exploitation and therefore is very problematic as there are concerns with the lack of definitions of what constitutes trafficking or exploitation, lack of clarity on the rights of the victims, weak charges against abusers and lack of accountability of law enforcement. A large-scale change in the law is essential to dealing with trafficking, and these changes need to consider the voices of the sex workers. Within the law, there needs to be a higher significance for

the coordination, convergence, and accountability between departments and agencies, which will impede the efficiency of a new law that protects sex workers in India.

Organizing a task force of police officers solely to focus on assisting and protecting sex workers is an important step. This team of police officers would need intense training and sensitization sessions that address the different concepts of human trafficking. This would include understanding the entire concept and realities of human trafficking, the law, rescue operations and how to provide support for victims, among others. In addition, making police officers more accountable when corruption and abuse are evident, for example when bribing pimps, brothel owners, and female sex workers is imperative. In addition, police officers need to partner with NGOs to accompany NGO staff members when they go to the brothels to build relationships with the women. Through this experience, they will understand that these women are not criminals, and it will shed light on the realities these women face daily. A participant shared in this study, that police officer needs extensive training, and they need to work and collaborate with different agencies including NGOs. The participant further stated that because a female chief superintendent was transferred to the local police station near the brothel, she was able to implement a program where she trained police officers to build a healthy relationship with the women in the brothels. They would invite the women to come to the police station and to answer questions about their needs and then connect them with a local NGO that would assist the women in reintegrating into society.

When discussing the raid and rescue model, it is essential to understand the need to organize a squad of people that come from different agencies rather than only involving police officers. When a raid and rescue operation is being conducted, it would be crucial to involve the superintendent for the police, a medical officer, someone from the labor department, a

psychologist who has experience working with patients with trauma and a staff member from an NGO. These different agencies can not only keep each other accountable but also protects and provides basic services to the women when they are being rescued from the brothels.

6.4.2 NGOs support

Women entering NGOs such as Savera are generally only there for a short period of time frame, hoping to obtain a trade and earn an income since they have lost their source of income from the sex industry. So, for many NGOs, the staff accelerate training and counseling sessions so the women can reintegrate into society and earn a stable income. However, accelerating the training and counseling sessions can have consequences for the women in the future, especially if they have not acknowledged the trauma of their past. Psychologists in NGOs use Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), and normally it takes years. Davis (2018) emphasizes that CBT can assist people to reduce stress, manage complicated relationships, deal with grief and traumatic life challenges. Davis (2018) states that CBT interprets people's life and traumatic events, and to process such complex issues can take months or years, it varies. With Savera, most of the women who went through CBT were only in counseling for one to three months. Most of the sex workers who went for counseling for this period of time were at a high risk of re-entering into the sex industry. For one, they are unable to support their family with an income that is reduced, and as all they know abuse, they become addicted to the unstable relationships they have fostered with clients, pimps and madams. Some of the staff participants stated they wished they provided counseling for the women for four to six years to deal with their trauma. For this to occur, hospitals, NGOs and other civil society agencies would require having psychologists who would have experience working with patients with CBT.

It is also important that NGOs provide more activities other than counselling. Savera, for example, teaches essential life skills; they facilitated multiple sessions on anger management, how to dress at work and how to take the train. all these activities are provided to these women for only one to three months. Once they find a job, they stop attending these training sessions, as it does not become a priority. To assist women in the sex industry, they would require going through intense training so that when they begin reintegrating into society, they will have the tools to overcome challenges.

6.5 Conclusion

This thesis explores the multiple challenges women face in the sex industry, and all these challenges stem from poor socio-economic structures and inadequate services on an individual level to the poor implementation of policies that criminalize sex workers and gender biases that are deep-rooted within society. This study shows that most of the female sex workers interviewed were coerced into the sex industry by either their family members or promised employment in larger cities. Even while in the brothels, they were emotionally and physically abused by the pimps, madams and brothel owners. During the interviews, the women share stories of physical abuse they endured from clients. Some even shared stories of women being murdered in brothels and the lack of an investigation by law enforcement. Their living conditions were deplorable, living in a small space with multiple women and their children, which was the same space they used to host clients.

When analyzing the research question – “Which factors facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of former sex workers back into society?” this thesis showcases that organizations such as Savera do, in fact, empower women that come out from the sex industry. They empower these women by providing women them with technical skills so they will be able to earn an

income outside the sex industry. Savera also teaches these women basic life skills such as a coping mechanism to deal with their anger, time management, and many more. However, these organizations are faced with multiple challenges when they do provide services to such a vulnerable group in society. A few of these challenges include the limited timeframe that women attend Savera for their training and counseling, the effects of not dealing with the trauma of their past and the insufficient income they receive once they have left the sex industry.

The victimization of sex workers through police brutality and the stigmatization of sex workers is fundamental to understanding the challenges to reintegrate into society. Due to police brutality and lack of accountability to law enforcement, the women in brothels are unable to trust police officers during the raid. During the rescue and raid model, law enforcement officers enter the brothels, and instead of protecting the women, they victimize them even further through bribes, emotional and physical abuse.

With this research, it is evident that there is a lack of sensitization to sex workers in India when it comes to people in law enforcement. With intense training provided by people who have worked in this sector for several years, law enforcement would be able to get a better understanding of the realities these women face daily. The policies and laws that are embedded in the justice system in India prevent sex workers from receiving a fair trial and therefore are criminalize their existence. In this study majority of the female sex workers participants shared that they would rather go to jail than go through a long trial which costs a lot of money, and they would be ostracized in the courts by the judges and lawyers.

Throughout this research, this topic of sex workers is considered to be analyzed under a gender specific domain and whether dealing with these issues needs to be viewed from a more feminist lens. There are both male and female sex workers in the sex industry, but most studies

are geared towards a female perspective than a male. Throughout my field research, I noticed the brothels were saturated with female sex workers, and the majority of the pimps or brothel owners were male. This is evident that women face far more social challenges than men in India.

6.5.1 Area for future research

There were multiple questions that stem from this thesis. Future studies should seek to explore how will NGOs support sex workers once these brothels dissolve into society? Brothels are becoming less obvious, especially with gentrification occurring in every city, and therefore, the people who run the brothels are finding other spaces to cater to their clients. Kamathipura is currently going through the process of gentrification where sex workers are now being blended into society by working at train stations and malls. The traditional space of being in a brothel is evolving to working in a space that is constantly changing. The questions arise, will women be able to continue accessing services from NGOs and lawyers? What will the rescue and raid look like once sex workers are not visually seen in a specific geographical location? What controls or programs will the government implement to support sex workers who will be considered invisible? In addition, more research is needed to explore how generations of sex workers find it difficult to reintegrate into society? These studies should examine how there is a generation of children that are manipulated and formed to think that the sex industry is the norm in society. For future study, it will be interesting to analyse the unionization of sex workers in India in brothels and the reason why it has not been implemented in bigger brothels such as Kamathipura. “In bigger cities such as Mumbai and Kolkata there are geographically contained red light regions where sex worker lives temporarily or full time in brothels.” (Panchanadeswaran et. al, 2016, p. 144). The need for unionization in Karnataka has protected men and women from physical, mental and financial abuse, addressing healthcare need for sex workers and a shift in societal

perceptions about sex workers (Panchanadeswaran et. al, (2016). Panchanadeswaran et. al, (2016) states there are many other states in India such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh where sex workers who have formed collectives such as All-India Network of Sex workers (AINSW) and The National Network of Sex workers (NNSW). Through these networks and unions, the question that arises are sex workers completely protected from corruptions of the sex industry and how can unions be implemented for all sex workers nationally.

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