

Input for UN Human Rights Council Thematic Report on Prostitution and Violence against Women and Girls

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INTRODUCTION

I am writing to provide input for the thematic report on the nexus between prostitution and violence against women and girls, particularly focusing on the context of Nepal. I commend the Special Rapporteur on the thematic focus and believe this report can be a crucial step towards protecting the human rights of women and girls exploited in prostitution.

CONTEXT:

Nepal currently has made progress, in addressing the issue of violence against women and girls involved in prostitution. This has been achieved through a combination of reforms, policy changes and various programs. However there is discussion and debate, about the effectiveness of these interventions.

EFFECTIVENESS:

• POSITIVE ASPECTS:

- **Criminalisation of trafficking and exploitation:** Nepal's Human Trafficking and Transportation Act criminalises various forms of exploitation, including forced prostitution, offering protection to victims.
- **Domestic Violence Act:** This Act provides legal recourse for women experiencing violence in any form, including within the context of prostitution.
- **Increased awareness and support services:** Government and NGO initiatives have raised awareness about violence against prostituted women and girls, fostering a more sensitive environment and expanding access to support services.

• CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS:

- **Stigma and discrimination:** Societal stigma against prostitution creates barriers for women and girls to seek help or report violence.
- **Limited enforcement:** Implementation of existing laws and policies can be inconsistent, particularly in remote areas, leaving women vulnerable.
- **Lack of disaggregated data:** Scarcity of data on violence specifically against prostituted women and girls hinders targeted interventions and effective monitoring.
- **Debates on criminalisation:** The criminalisation of prostitution itself is a point of contention, with some arguing it further marginalises and endangers women, while others view it as crucial to combat exploitation.

OVERALL:

While legislative frameworks and policies have contributed to reducing violence against women and girls in prostitution, substantial gaps remain. Addressing stigma, strengthening enforcement, ensuring comprehensive data collection, and engaging in inclusive policymaking are crucial for creating a safer and more supportive environment for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Increase resources and training for law enforcement to strengthen implementation of existing laws.
- Invest in data collection and research to gain a deeper understanding of the specific forms and dynamics of violence faced by prostituted women and girls.
- Foster collaboration between government, NGOs, and community organisations to provide holistic support services and promote social reintegration for women leaving prostitution.
- Engage in open and inclusive dialogue with all stakeholders, including prostituted women and girls themselves, to develop evidence-based and human rights-centred policies.