“Girls for sale”

Understanding the difficulties in protecting girls in Nepal from being exploited for prostitution

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Abstract

The number of girls that are being exploited for prostitution in Nepal has increased in recent years, and girls suffer a high risk of being exposed when they come from already poorly conditions. Previously, uneducated girls could be found in the adult entertainment sector, but nowadays even educated girls are being exploited. This thesis aims to gain further understanding to why girls are being exposed and why it is difficult to protect them. By conducting qualitative interviews with employees from several NGOs working to protect girls from being exploited for prostitution, insights has been given about socio-structural factors that influences the situation for girls. By examining these factors with support from theoretical approaches that highlights social injustice, gender discrimination and structural oppression this thesis presents how different factors affect the work of protecting girls, and how the same factors also are contributing to why girls get exposed.

The state of Nepal shows several efforts in trying to eradicate the problem and have ratified both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The state has also made changes in national law that shall promote and strengthen children’s rights. Although the laws are strong, the protection for girls is insufficient and girls are vulnerable to being exploited by traffickers. The Government of Nepal, NGOs and several other authorities are working together to eradicate the problem, but the work needs be strengthened, coordinated and responsive to influencing factors simultaneously in order to achieve a long-term solution.

This thesis suggest that cultural norms need to be challenged more and that the Government of Nepal needs to oversee how structural injustices affect opportunities for girls to take part of social benefits. In addition, knowledge about legal and moral rights needs to be increased among girls and in society as a whole, moreover the knowledge about trafficking and prostitution needs to be spread.

Keywords:

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Thank you,

Natasha Semenets

Västerås, 26th of May 2019.
### Acronyms and Abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>Act Relating to Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCWB</td>
<td>Central Child Welfare Board</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>CRC-OPT</td>
<td>Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography</td>
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<td>DCWB</td>
<td>District Child Welfare Board</td>
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<td>GoN</td>
<td>Government of Nepal</td>
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<td>MoWCSW</td>
<td>Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>NHRC</td>
<td>National Human Rights Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAARC</td>
<td>The member states of the south Asian association for regional cooperation</td>
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<td>SSRP</td>
<td>School Sector Reform Program</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund</td>
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<td>The Constitution</td>
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1 INTRODUCTION

I had about 20-30 customers a day. Sometimes the owner told me to go into a room and that it would be one man in there waiting for me, but it wasn’t. There were several men. And they tossed me around like a doll, you know how kids play with a doll and they toss the doll around each other and they drag in the doll. That’s how they did with me. Afterwards, I couldn’t stand up.¹

Situation like these happen often to Hanit, an individual who has been dealt a bad hand in life. The road to this life began when her parents died when she was very young. She cannot say the exact age since she does not know her exact date of birth. After the death of her parents, she and her brother moved from their village to Kathmandu with help from their uncle. Her brother got a decent job and could take care of them both. But shortly thereafter, he got married and everything changed. His wife started to treat Hanit badly, and the sister-in-law blamed Hanit for being a burden to her brother. Soon, she started beating Hanit, and without protection from her brother the beatings started to occur more frequent. One day Hanit did not see any other choice than to run away. This young girl, no older than ten was trying to find a way to survive. With no survival experience, she put her trust in the wrong people leading to year of sexual abuse, exploitation and control.

Hanit, is just one of several girls that dreamed of a better future, and at the expense of believing in someone to help her and having social-structural factors working against her, she was exploited for prostitution. Forced prostitution and sexual abuse are horrible crimes that should no longer be tolerated or accepted, and we as a society must work together to put an end to it. Human trafficking is estimated to be the third most lucrative criminal business behind drugs and weapons. Approximal 21 million people are victims, and about 79 percent is for the purpose of sexual exploitation. It is estimated that children account for one third of the victims of human trafficking.² Through child trafficking and sexual exploitation, girls are not only being exploited, but are also being deprived of their fundamental human rights. Even though there are existing laws that are adopted and ratified to protect girls, the magnitude is increasing and the demand of girls are a fact. The legal protection in Nepal has been showed to be

¹ Hanit is a fictitious name in order to protect the anonymity of the woman whom shared her personal story to me.
insufficient and the work to eradicate exploitation for prostitution faces several socio-structural factors as obstacles, since poverty, family structures and cultural norms all enhance girls vulnerability as well as inflict on the preventive and protective work.

According to employees working at NGOs in Nepal, the access to social and economic support for citizens is limited and inadequate, and sometimes children must work in order to help both families and smaller communities. But often children are forced to work to an extent where it is considered not be age appropriate and they are at risk of missing out on education and certain work may even endanger their physical and mental health. Families in rural areas often send their children to bigger cities to work or get paid for sending their children away. This often happens to the girls in the family, which make girls more vulnerable to being sexually exploited. Since the earthquake in 2015, even more girls from rural areas have been looking for work outside their communities, after losing family members. This puts girls in desperate situations which enhances the possibility for traffickers to lure them into the sex industry.

The state of Nepal has ratified both the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (CRC-OP), 2000, which in theory should provide protection, safety and the chance for girls in Nepal to live a life without being exploited for prostitution. According to the CRC a state party shall ensure that children are protected from any kind of economic or sexual exploitation, work that can endanger a child’s physical and mental health and work that can have a negative impact on a child’s growth. Further, the CRC shall ensure that children are not being deprived of an education, safe upbringing, or possibility to good physical and mental health. By engaging in or forced into prostitution, a child is being harmed both mentally and physically, and can suffer from scars that will remain with them throughout their life. An extension of the convention, the CRC-OP is adopted to extend the

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protection and states that children should be protected from being put in a position where they get exploited for economic benefits or being forced to conduct work that endangers their “health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development”. These rights apply to all children “without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.

1.1 Aim and research question

Since the number of girls being exploited for prostitution is high, it is safe to assume that the implementation of laws to protect them have not been successful and that the current protection for girls is neither sufficient nor efficient. The aim of this study is to examine the reason why the protection in Nepal is insufficient and how socio-structural factors affect the ongoing work to eradicate exploitation of girls for prostitution. Because of the fact that reality is complex and influenced by several contributing factors that together affect girls’ life situations, a secondary aim of this thesis is to examine reasons why girls in Nepal suffer a high risk of exploitation, and what makes it possible for prostitution in Nepal to exist. By interviewing employees at NGOs that work with exposed girls, this thesis attempts to provide further understanding into why the preventive and protection work does not have a sufficient effect. By analyzing the findings using theoretical approaches, the research should contribute new insights that can be helpful in responding to the challenges of finding a solution to how the protection and operational work for girls can be improved. To fulfill the aim of this study, the following main research question is posed:

- How can socio-structural factors affect the work of protecting girls from being exploited for prostitution?

As mentioned, it is essential to understand the situation of girls in Nepal and the difficulties Nepal is facing when it comes to protecting vulnerable and exposed girls. Thus, a holistic approach will be applied in this study in order to understand the underlying context of why girls in Nepal end up in prostitution, i.e. socio-structural factors such as poverty, education and family structure. To understand the shortcomings in the current protection efforts, it is also necessary to study the applicable law. Hence, the study poses the following sub questions:

- What socio-structural factors can contribute to girls ending up in prostitution?
- What is the state of the legal protection of girls in Nepal?
1.2 Material

In order to acquire knowledge about how girls’ protection against exploitation for prostitution in Nepal is affected by socio-structural factors, qualitative interviews have been carried out with the purpose of gaining insight into how the situation in Nepal occurs for girls. Hence a field study has taken place to examine the experience and perspectives of employees at different NGOs, whom work with prevention, rescuing and advocating for the target group. The outline of the field study will be elaborated further in chapter three. In addition to the interviews, it will be examined which legal protection exists, where the international laws the CRC and the CRC-OP, and Nepal's law will be presented. To add additional context, a literature review has been carried out, in order to determine what is previous known about the research subject and to establish the importance of the present research\(^6\). Everything that is being reported in the previous research and what has emerged from the interviews might not be applicable to all cases and every girl in Nepal, nevertheless, the overall result attempts to contribute to an insights of the problem.

1.3 Delimitations

Delimitations in this study mainly relate to exploitation area, age span, gender, and laws. Prostitution is closely linked to both external and internal trafficking; however the exploitation area that is examined is exploitations of children for prostitution, the age up to eighteen years. The essay is also limited to girls only, for the reason that girls are overrepresented in this field. Several conventions and declarations have been ratified in order to stop human trafficking and prostitution. However, the thesis will limit its research to the CRC, the CRC-OP and the following national laws: The Constitution of Nepal (the Constitution) and Act Relating to Children (ARC). Based on the empirical result and previous research implied that in some cases girls and women enters prostitution by choice or did not want to accept help, an additional delimitation was added during the work. Girls personal perception will not be deeply analyzed in the study since that would require another more extensive interview study. Instead, different

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reasons that demonstrate these “choices”\(^7\) and refuse to help will be analyzed with the help of findings from the field study and theoretical approaches.

### 1.4 Definitions

The thesis uses the following definitions of certain key terms:

**Child** – “means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”\(^8\).

**Girl** – refers to a girl child, and thus means every girl below the age of eighteen\(^9\).

**Trafficking** - "means the moving, selling or buying of women and children for prostitution within and outside a country for monetary or other considerations with or without the consent of the person subjected to trafficking"\(^10\).

Internal trafficking in Nepal - involves situations where someone is being taken from one place in Nepal, often rural areas, to another place within the country, often being a bigger city like Kathmandu. Internal trafficking results in either labor exploitation or sexual exploitation\(^11\).

**Exploitation of children for prostitution** – “means the use of a child in sexual activities for remuneration or any other form of consideration.” The definition is taken from the CRC-OP, however they uses the term “child prostitution”, a term that is avoided in the thesis based on recommendation from Interagency Working Group in Luxembourg that follows “The use of the term ‘child prostitution’ has been questioned, since it may arguably be interpreted in a manner to imply that the phenomenon represents a legitimate form of sex work or that the child has given her/his informed consent to prostitute her/himself”\(^12\).

The word “choices” has been placed in quotation marks due to two reasons: firstly, girls are children that are not old enough to make these life changing decisions and secondly, when an individual is forced to make certain choices for survival, it is not considered a choice but a coercion.

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recommendations, this paper will only use the definition "girls exploited for prostitution", even if articles from previous research, or respondent answers says "girls that work". This is to influence a new way of talking about exposed girls, in which girls are not portrayed as prostitutes but as victims of society's failure to protect them.

1.5 Disposition

The remainder of the thesis is structured as follows. In chapter two, theoretical approaches of the thesis are presented. Chapter three provides the methodology that has been used to answer the research questions, including methodological approach, analytical method and ethical considerations. Chapter four contains previous research and reports about the situation for girls in Nepal, where sub-question one will partly be answered. Chapter five presents the legal framework that are in focus in the thesis, containing both international and national laws, where sub question two will be answered. In the sixth chapter, the findings from the case study divided in different themes will the presented and further answers to sub question one will be provided. Chapter seven presents an analysis and discussion of the results of the study, where the previous research combined with the findings from the case study will be analyzed by applying the theoretical approaches. In chapter eight, concluding remarks are presented along with suggestions for future measures and research. Lastly, chapter nine, will present the remainder of Hanit’s story.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The findings that emerged from the empirical results shows a variations of factors that impact girls situation and vulnerability; thus the theoretical framework consist of several approaches to reach an understanding from different perspectives. Since several circumstances illustrates that socio-cultural factors affect how girls are treated, girls vulnerability and reasons to why they do not seek help to a greater extent, the theoretical framework will derive from social justice, ontological perspectives and an economic position and poverty explanatory model. Within the theoretical approaches a gender perspective is applied, since it is considered to be a variable relevant in order to observe how girls’ situation is affected by boy preferences and other male-dominant attitudes found in Nepal. Social justice should be understood as not a given matter, since it consists of smaller components, such as opportunities, that can be perceived and assigned differently dependently on processes and relations. In order to
understand these processes and relations; a social theory can contribute to gain insight to why individuals act and respond in certain ways, since individuals act as a consequence of learned behaviors and perceptions and also based on existing structures in society, which all can be reproduced by new actions. By illustrating how the view of gender can affect normative and moral aspects based on culture and social constructions, it may contribute to an insight to how girls protection is affected.

2.1 Social justice and opportunities

In a society social justice can be described by the distribution paradigm as the moral distribution of social benefits and obligations between its citizens. Within this distribution, matters such as income, material resources, rights, opportunities, self-respect and power are on the agenda. However, too often material matters are at focus and justice is more complex than just a sheer distribution of materials and it outcomes, since this would require that society is static and reality is far from such. When it comes to managing social injustice, it is up to the state to divide and support those in need in order for everyone to at least have their basics needs satisfied. However, this tends to exclude factors that cannot be measured as easily as material things, such as rights and opportunities. Therefore, what needs to be observed is the relations and institutional powers that are behind distribution and injustice. The discussion on social justice cannot limit itself to the distribution of material things nor that laws will enable individuals to prosper, since the risk can be that one loses perspective on individual's opportunities to be able to take part in what is distributed. Rights, as well as opportunities are both factors that cannot easily be given to individuals, since access to the above mentioned is enabled by relations and institutions. Surely, access to certain material resources creates opportunities that can lead one to realize their rights, though if an individual is treated based on expectations from society, with a discriminatory form, or that structural conditions affects ones actions, it cannot be expected that a fair distribution can take place. Thus, self-esteem is a factor that is of matter, since its absence can affect the lives of people and consequently give the power to others. The question is how self-esteem can be provided to one fairly since it is based on both the societies and her perception of herself, and not a material that can be given.

14 Ibid., pp. 15–19, 22–23.
15 Ibid., pp. 26–27.
16 Ibid., pp. 28–33.
Social justice is therefore more than the access to material and what society considers one shall attain; it can be about a person’s opportunity to use and explore her skills as well as to impact her own life. If the latter cannot be attained a discussion can be made about how one is a victim of oppression, since systematical institutional process can prevent or restrict individuals from expressing themselves or institutional relations can control peoples action or their opportunities. Structural oppression can take many forms and does not have to involve direct power towards an excluded group, it can also involve norms and culture that are not being challenged. These norms and cultural aspects influence people in their daily life and affect their behavior unwittingly. Thus, even if new laws or leaders are instated it will not change everything in an instant and therefore cultural differences that discriminate or oppress may go on.17 Certain oppression can be understand from cultural domains, where already existing expectations and definitions influences both those that maintains them and those that are being oppressed. When one is constantly being viewed at in a certain way, for example if it is considered that she is not entitled to equal dignity and rights, it may tends to affect the perception of herself and may cause her to downgrade herself.18

2.2 Culture as a construction

To understand how culture both affects us and control us, an ontological point of view can be applied, which can be understood from two perspectives: either through objectivism or constructionism. Culture according to objectivism is described as a social phenomenon that exist independently, and shapes individuals with already existing perceptions and values, ergo a static influence. While constructivism regards culture as a phenomena that continually is being constructed by individuals and can thus be reconstructed by individuals themselves. It should be noted, that the two perceptions can be applied simultaneously, since culture can in a certain context and timeframe exist as given facts that affect people to act based on cultural expectations. Yet, with time and interaction between people, culture may reconstruct itself.19

Already from birth, children are formed into different gender roles and attributes are applied to us, and in certain cultures the traditional view on gender roles is more distinguished. This has an impact on both what is expected from us, and what we expect from the opposite gender.20

18 Ibid., p. 80.
Women are in many places in the world viewed as of less value, which entails that they will not have the same opportunities as men and can be treated as a mean, for example a child bearer or caretaker. In certain cultures, girls are often considered to be consumable, since they will be married away and thus belong to a new family. Consequently, it is likely that she will not have the opportunity to be educated or her family will neglect her during childhood. When females are being treated badly within the family, it sets an example for future generations and the systematic neglect and violence that might take place continues. In addition, when a boy from early ages is being thought that he is superior the females within the family, it is likely that he also applies this approach out in the society. When it comes to oppression of women and girls, tradition exist, where women are the pleaser of men’s sexual desires, which puts females in a secondary position to the relationship of the men. The consequence of this leads to females being in an exploited position within the family, which can transfers to the labor market where women firstly is considered to be the pleaser and can therefor justify the exploiting for the female gender in the sex industry.

Even though girls are being exploited and should not be in a position where they have to support for themselves, the situation in Nepal is of the character that girls need to take care of themselves and in some cases even their families. Based on this, the economic position and poverty explanatory model might provide understanding to the situation, since its aim is to demonstrate how few opportunities to earn money can force one into prostitution. Understanding prostitution from an economic position can be made from two perspective; girls can be forced to engage in prostitution since another way of earning money is not possible or prostitution makes it possible to earn more money than other available options can offer. The first perspective, involves the combination of poverty and not having marketable skills and thus positions females in an exposed position. Hence, it should not be considered a choice, but an expression of male dominance to create a possibility to make girls a commodity that can be sold. The second perspective, describes how prostitution can in some cases generate more money than other occupations and can work as inducing factor towards poor women and thus attribute a certain attraction to prostitution. In addition, capitalist economic structure combined with gender division in the labour market enables the poverty of females and tends to push one towards prostitution. From this point of view it might appear that some choose to become

22 See Young, 2000, pp. 67–68.
prostitutes because the economic pressure and structural violations of women are factors that dominate, and thus has a strong impact.\textsuperscript{23}

Violence is another face of oppression, when it in a social context has become understandable and possible to execute. When violence is taking the form of a systematic character and target a certain group, it is a social injustice that in some cases are tolerated when it is being executed on already oppressed groups. Just to be a possible victim of a certain type of violence, can be enough for an individual to live under oppression and may affect her energy so that she loses the ability to perform things.\textsuperscript{24} One form of violence is sexual abuse, and research shows that sexual abuse against children leaves scars, and among prostitutes several have been abused as a child. The violence against females can put girls in a victim position that allows for men to take advantage of them. Though, it is important to stress that every child that has been exposed for sexual abuse does not end up being exploited for prostitution, but along with other factors such as family conflicts and neglect it can be an contributing factor.\textsuperscript{25} Thus, the family can function as a institute that shapes children’s abilities to justify other people's rights. Therefore, it is of importance to pay attention to how the family, as an institution, is being constructed and influenced by norms and that the women’s role is not a given fact, but a construction.\textsuperscript{26}

3 Methodology

Since this thesis aims to answer questions about the ongoing situation for girls and why the Government of Nepal (GoN) fails to protect them from exploitation for prostitution, the study will combine qualitative interviews with research and reports about the situation in Nepal to gain an overall picture about circumstances and factors which has an impact on the problem. The study will also determine applicable law to establish the legal protection the state of Nepal have committed to. These will then be analyzed and discussed on the basis of Nepal’s ambitions and measures taken and changes the state of Nepal have made in their new laws and how shortcomings may affect the protection.

\textsuperscript{24} Young, 2000, pp. 82–83.
\textsuperscript{25} Giddens, 2007, p. 204; Phoenix, 1999, pp. 61-62.
\textsuperscript{26} Nussbaum, 2002, pp. 294, 301.
3.1 Qualitative interviews

The choice of interview style can affect the information given, hence semi-structured interviews, also referred as in-depth interviews, has been selected\(^{27}\), with employees at different NGOs in Nepal. The choice of interview method is considered to be most suitable, as it provide room for letting the interview to be guided from the responses that the respondent considers to be important and allows for follow-up questions based on the answers given. The interview structure also gave the opportunity to following certain themes that are considered important in order to get answers to the study's research questions and allowed to design new questions throughout the interviews.\(^{28}\) However, a restriction by applying new questions during an interview can be that they may affect the thematic analysis if the questions may vary in each interview. This was in consideration during the interviews, so new questions were asked for the purpose of clarification of what was said or to enrich the answers. In order to provide a certain depth in the interviews, which is considered important in situations where the purpose is to examine and obtain information that is detailed and personal, the aim was to create a conversation that had a balance between well-designed questions and reflective listening.

When designing well-formulated questions, it is of importance that the researcher is briefed on the research topic, which can be utilized by studying past events, ongoing situations and underlying causes of the problem that is being studied. By compiling this information, it helped when conducting the interview guide.\(^{29}\) The knowledge gained about the situation in Nepal, concerning child trafficking and prostitution, helped with writing the interview questions. The structure of the interview guide has followed certain themes, to create a nice flow in the interview. Questions has been developed so they neither limit the respondent answer nor create misunderstanding. The main themes of the interview guide were Personal information, The organization and The situation in the area and collaboration. Regarding the language in the interviews, much thought had been given to it and questions were constructed in basic English, since the respondents first language is not English.

Two pilot interviews were held in order to examine approximate time of the interview and to discover errors in the interview guide, thereafter the guide was edited before the first interview

of the study. There are several benefits in pre-testing the questions, such as to see if the questions were perceived correctly and within the scope of the study's purpose, to see if additional questions were needed to be added to the interview guide and to ensure that the interview questions fall in an efficient pattern.\textsuperscript{30} However, during the interviews, the order of questions was changed some to not restrict the respondents answer and line of thought.\textsuperscript{31} Since the research was made in a context that differs from the Swedish context, both in structural and cultural aspects, it was also considered to be of the study's best to apply a semi-structured interview to give the opportunity to allow a certain freedom for the respondents to formulate their answers. This approach also generated facts that were not expected and gave a broader view of the situation that was examined, thus provided more comprehensive answers.

### 3.2 Case selection and data collection

Before the planning of the interviews, secondary sources were studied in order to get insight on the context as well as to get knowledge of different organizations that works with the target group. By knowing background reasons and contextual fact to the problem that is being studied, it allowed for a deeper understanding which has been helpful when selecting respondents.\textsuperscript{32} There are several NGOs operating in Nepal for human rights, however the chosen NGOs are based on their target group. The NGOs that are represented in this thesis work with girls and women who have been exposed, are at risk of being exposed and those who are active in the adult entertainment sector and were therefore considered to be representable to provide valuable insights to the subject of the thesis. All the NGOs that have been selected, work in collaboration with other NGOs, the GoN, local authorities and the police. The collected data could have been given a broader perspective if interviews had been carried out with the police and government representatives, since these professions also work to eradicate prostitution, and their responses could have contributed to an insight into the situation based on their qualifications and experience. However, it is considered that these NGOs, which represent the girls without intermediaries, are able to provide the study with valuable opinions regarding obstacles and opportunities in the work to create better conditions for vulnerable girls.

Altogether, ten interviews were held with employees from five different NGOs, located in Kathmandu valley, Lalitpur and Pokhara. The aim was to collect more interviews from

\textsuperscript{31} Bryman, 2011, p. 305.
\textsuperscript{32} Brounéus, 2011, p. 132.
additional NGOs but several prospective NGOs did not respond, neither to email nor phone calls. Even though the selected NGOs are from just three cities, they are considered to be representable, since the adult entertainment sector is mainly located in Kathmandu valley and to a greater extent in Lalitpur and Pokhara (nearby cities where many girls also gets trafficked to or migrate to). When contacting whom to interview, two approaches were taken simultaneous. First, a NGO was chosen through comfort selection, which was a NGO that I had been in contact with a previous year and had met some of the employees in person. Since already being in contact with a previous year and had met some of the employees in person. Since they work hands on with the situation the study wished to examine. Through this NGOs director, additional interviews were booked with two other NGOs, and therefore a so-called snowball selection was partly applied. Simultaneous, two other NGOs were chosen based on that fact that they were considered to be suitable respondents.

All in all, the interviews took place during September and October 2018, and seven women and three men participated. The uneven selection of gender was not a choice, since these respondents were available ones and women are overrepresented in the current NGOs. The professions of the respondents varied from founder of the organizations to counselors and coordinators, which provided answers from different perspectives. Most of the respondent spoke fluent English, except for three. In two of these interviews the questions and the researchers language had to be adjusted, in order to make the context of the interview situation simplified, which might have affected the result since the respondents might have wanted to give more elaborated answers but could not due to language barriers. In another interview, a translator was used, and in order to not lose any information in the transcription process the translator was used to transcribe the whole interview as well. All interviews have been held separately and were recorded, with the consent of the respondents, to ensure that nothing that was said during interviews got lost. The respondents were reinsured that the recording would be safely stored, and non-other than the researcher would have access to it. Neither would the list of respondent be stored in connection to either the recording or the transcribed material, to ensure that the confidentiality of the respondent was respected. The advantage of recording the interviews has allowed me to be present during the interviews and be able to focus on what is said, and not be disturbed by taking accurate notes. This made it possible for follow-up questions based on the responses given by the respondent and let me be more responsive to

34 Bryman, 2011, p. 133.
what was said.\textsuperscript{35} Recording the interviews has also been helpful, since it prevents the important information from getting lost due to shortcomings in memory, or not fully taken notes.\textsuperscript{36}

### 3.3 Ethical principles

At each interview, a friendly atmosphere was created for the purpose of making the respondents feel comfortable and respected. This is considered to be important in order for respondents to feel that they can talk freely and share information that they consider important, and to instill a sense of security in sharing information without being judged for their opinions.\textsuperscript{37} In order to achieve such an atmosphere, emphasis had been placed on communicating ethical positions, which are the four ethical basic principles: information requirement, consent requirement, confidentiality requirement and utilization requirement.\textsuperscript{38} It had been ensured that these had been presented and perceived correctly by all respondents who participated in the study, and this had been done as follows.

*Information requirement* means that the respondents were given general information about the purpose of study. The respondents have been able to take part of necessary information, such as the method being used and what the result of the study shall be used for, to be able to determine whether they want to participate in the interview or not. Further, the respondents had been informed that their participation was voluntary, and that they at any time during the interview had the opportunity to decline further participation. In this study, the respondents were informed of the overall purpose before the interview and were fully informed afterwards, for the reason that the respondents' answers should not be affected, instead they should feel that they could respond based on their own experiences.\textsuperscript{39} The *consent requirement* follows up on the previous requirement, about the information about consent of the respondents, but specifies the importance of their decision to participate.\textsuperscript{40} In this study, some of the respondent were provided by their supervisor, and therefore it was considered of importance to establish that everyone participate voluntarily in the interviews. In addition, respondents were informed that they could refrain from answering individual questions, if they felt the question caused

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{35} Bryman, 2011, p. 306.
\textsuperscript{37} Brounéus, 2011, p. 136.
\textsuperscript{38} Bryman, 2011, pp. 131–132.
\textsuperscript{40} Bryman, 2011, p. 132.
\end{footnotesize}
them discomfort or if they did not have much insight to the subject. Confidentiality requirement means that information was given regarding that personal information about the respondent that could reveal their identity will not be used, to make sure that they were completely anonymous. The consequence with confidentiality is that it affect the studies possibility to replication, since another researcher will not be able to conduct the same study if not knowing whom the respondents were. If the case is that some information needs to be published that may risk to expose their identity, this must be approved by the respondents.\(^{41}\) However, since the total registered NGOs of Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Pokhara is approximately 591 (though not all of them work with trafficking and prostitution), according NGO Federation of Nepal,\(^ {42}\) the odds to trace the respondent to a certain NGO is considered weak. Furthermore, information collected have been kept safe, so that no outsider could access it. The last principle is the utilization requirement which states that collected information about the respondent shall only be used for the purpose of the study.\(^ {43}\)

In addition to the four ethical principles, the study has taken into account a consequence perspective, which requires that the researcher needs to consider if the respondents could be caused harm by participating in the study. The researcher needs to make sure that as little damage as possible will be caused the respondent, and the information given should outweigh the risk in case there is a chance that the respondent can be caused some damage.\(^ {44}\) At the end of each interview respondents were reminded of the possibility to withdraw their participation, and were provided with my contact information if they later would feel that they wanted to do so. By providing them with my contact information, they were also given the opportunity to change an answer or add information afterwards, which they were informed about as well.

### 3.4 Processing the findings

The data collected from the interviews had been processed through several steps. The first step was that all the interviews were subsequently transcribed immediately following the interview. The advantages of transcribing interviews is that it facilitated the analysis of what has been

\(^{41}\) Kvale and Brinkman, p.109.


\(^{43}\) Bryman, 2011, p. 132.

\(^{44}\) Kvale and Brinkman, p. 110.
said since it became easier to go through the answers several times.\textsuperscript{45} The transcribed material have been stored safely, and in separation from the respondents name. Transcribed material is also contributing, since it gave a clearer picture of different themes and frequently occurring aspects, which have been beneficial in search for quotes. Quotes have been used in order to provide a depth to the presented data and the respondent have been given fictitious names, so that quotes from one and the same respondent can be linked to one respondent. Since the aim was to identify socio-structural factors, a framework system have been used in order to discover themes that can represent socio-structural factors. Different themes have evolved by using a set of codes to represent different sub-factors, that corresponds to different themes. By first reading the transcribed material a few times, different themes emerged. Thereafter, a chart with themes was made and the material was searched through with code words that were sub-factors, which were then put under the right theme in the chart in connection with the respondents’ fictitious names.\textsuperscript{46} Since the findings from the interviews reflect personal perspectives, and it cannot be established if the answers are bias, the data collected will be analyzed with an awareness that the respondents from the chosen NGOs will narrate the problem and not stand for the complete reality. Another aspect that had been reflected upon, is the risk of NGOs want to enhance problems and let this affect their answers in order to get funding for their organization. Though, it cannot be certain this was not the case, the chance is considered to be small since during the initial contact it was declared that all the respondent would be anonymous and the research had not been financially supported by any organization.

The study has taken an inductive approach, meaning the collected data became the outline to which theoretical approaches that were chosen to analyze the findings\textsuperscript{47}. The different approaches have been resourceful to explain the empirical result, since they have provided different perspectives in order to explain and understand how socio-structural factors can affect the protection\textsuperscript{48}. The data that emerged from the interviews showed more comprehensive answers than had been calculated for, regarding socio-structural factors, which resulted in that the analysis of each factors had not become as profound as had been expected. Based on the fact that the existence of exploitation of girls for prostitution is based on several socio-structural

\textsuperscript{45} Bryman, 2011, p. 310.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 2011, pp. 133, 528–529.
\textsuperscript{47} Bryman, 2008, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{48} Brounéus, 2011, p. 131
factors, and several of them are interconnected, it is considered misleading to exclude any aspect in order to allow for a more profound analysis on just a few.

3.5 Reliability, validity and generalization

Reliability aims to illustrate to what extent the result is reliable. However, the possibility to replicate this study, could be difficult since the respondents perceptions as well as the current circumstances may change over time, and therefore would make it unlikely for another researcher to achieve the same result. The possibility for complete replication is considered to be too small, since in a qualitative study like this the researcher is used as a tool in the sense that researcher choose what shall be examined and which topics shall get more attention. An attempt has been to be transparent as possible by being clear about the purpose of the study and describing the work process in detail. However, the research might be affected by subjective preferences since the aim and purpose of this study is based on the researchers interest in the topic. In order to avoid bias, an effort has been to collect data and previous research with an open mind, in order to not exclude important information nor highlight certain information.\(^{49}\)

Regarding the study's measure of validity, that is, if the chosen method examines what was intended to be measured, it is considered to be strong. The aim was to examine how socio-structural factors can affect the work of protecting girls from being exploited for prostitution, and by interviewing individuals who work directly with exposed girls and have been for several years, they were considered to provide valid information. The collected data has been transcribed carefully to achieve a strong validity, and an objectivity has been attempted throughout the work process in order to achieve valid results and conclusions.\(^{50}\) However, the result of the qualitative interviews has been produced through a thematic analysis, which can be difficult to demonstrate the exact procedure and may affect the validity of the result.

To generalize the findings from the interviews to other environments is not fully applicable, since the number of respondents are small and cannot represent every employee at all the NGOs in Nepal nor can the findings represent the situation of the entire country. Although, since the respondent themselves represent a number of victims, the data may in a small extent be used to make some generalization since it does not describe specific individuals backgrounds and choices but aims to demonstrate general reasons that contribute to girls being exploited and

\(^{49}\) Bryman, 2011, pp. 352, 368-369.

\(^{50}\) Kvale and Brinkman, 2014, pp. 296-298.
why the protection is insufficient. In addition, the findings in combination with previous research and theoretical approaches may contribute to developing new theories that can help to explain why the work to eradicate the exploitation of girls for prostitution faces obstacles.\textsuperscript{51}

4 \textbf{PREVIOUS RESEARCH ABOUT THE SITUATION FOR GIRLS IN NEPAL}

By examining the outcome of implementation of laws related to children’s rights, underlying causes to sextrafficking, prostitution, and measurements taken by the state a further understanding about why the protection of girls is insufficient can be given. The material that will be presented has been collected from human rights reports made by monitoring organs, NGOs and researchers. Several reports that have been used are not written in near-time, and since Nepal has both updated their Constitution and the law regarding children, some reports might not show the current situation in Nepal. However, the information is considered useful because it shows the seriousness of the situation and although the laws have been updated, it takes time to implement them as well as generate a sustainable effect in the society.

4.1 Measurements taken by the state

Beyond ratifying international treaties and protocols, the GoN asserts that they have laws enacted, and have taken action by developing policies and responsible institutions to ensure the rights of Nepalese children\textsuperscript{52}.

4.1.1 Government’s responsibility

Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW) has responsibility to implement the CRC-OP, ensure the rights of children and to monitor policies related to children. However, the monitoring of violations is also delegated to National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), which has set up an unit, Child Rights Protection Desk (CRPD), to monitor and handle complaints on a national basis in order to make sure children have their rights protected. In

\textsuperscript{51} Bryman, 2011, pp. 369-370; Brounéus, 2011, p. 131.

addition to foregoing authorities, Central Child Welfare Board (CCWB) has responsibility regarding the monitoring of all children’s matter at any level.\textsuperscript{53} Further, several projects and programs have been initiated by the government, such as awareness campaigns and creating equal access for habitants. For those who are more marginalized both economically and socially, the GoN has implemented positive discrimination programs that have a statutory support, in order to benefit such groups. For example, extra efforts have been made to make education possible and available for girls.\textsuperscript{54} The GoN believes in a democratic system, where all habitants have equal right to opportunities, and they strive for creating better possibilities for those who live under poorer conditions, as they believe that if any part of Nepal is still exposed then Nepal has not developed.\textsuperscript{55}

In the work to ensure that children’s rights are being upheld, CCWB has the responsibility at a national level to produce national policies and see that these are being adapted in the civil society and among concerning departments. Further, they shall oversee that monitoring mechanisms are in place, that advocating on child relating matters is taking place on all levels and oversee the work of District Child Welfare Board (DCWB). DCWB is established to monitor the work for the safety of children on a local level, and all the 75 district in Nepal have one DCWB office.\textsuperscript{56} In order to combat sexual exploitations of children the GoN also encourage collaboration with several actors, both on a national and international level, such as NGOs, UN agencies, different government agencies and institutions that support with financial aids.\textsuperscript{57} According to CCWB, the fourteen periodic plan for the period 2016-2019, has an objective to focus on the protection and promotion regarding all rights for the child, for instance on all types of exploitation. To achieve this, new strategies have been put into work relating matters such as management of street children, protection and survival. CCWB, in collaboration with development actors such as MoWCSW, have for the protection of children started a campaign that strives for a street children free Kathmandu. In addition to this, the GoN is taking active measures to help street children, with the support of several authorities

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{53} UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011, pp. 6, 18, 21, 22.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., pp. 11-12.
\textsuperscript{56} UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Consideration of the reports submitted by States parties under article 44 of the Convention, Third to fifth periodic reports of States parties due in 2010 : Nepal, 23 December 2013, CRC/C/NPL/3-5, https://www.refworld.org/docid/573d6ce04.html accessed 3 March 2019, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{57} UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011, p. 31.
\end{flushleft}
such as the local police and various NGOs. Since many girls are working in massage parlors and in the adult entertainment sector in Kathmandu valley, the GoN has establish a monitoring team to control businesses. Children are also assisted with direct support in the form of a helpline, initiated by the GoN and executed by MoWCSW, were both children and those concerned can call a toll-free number to get support if a child is in the risk zone. The helpline has been operating in Kathmandu valley and has a goal to expand nationally.

4.1.2 Social security and social protection

To help individuals that do not have economic stability and are in need of support, there is state assistance in the form of social security and social protection, which have been shown to have supported several children. The former, provides cash and kind for the individual and relatives. The latter, is three-fold to prevent, manage, and overcome with aims to provide social benefits, strengthen peoples own capacities, and support their well-being. The GoN has addressed the matter of children, by providing social security assistance, such as free education and scholarship without discriminating any cast or group, since compulsory and free education up to basic level shall be guaranteed to all children according to the Constitution of Nepal. Further, the GoN has in their School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) an ambition to bring school closer to home. The plans taken by the GoN the past few years have proved to be successful, since significantly more schools and teachers have been provided to children. However, the Advocates wrote in a report in 2016, that even though education might be free there are some cost which is added, such as the school uniform, the examination fees and school supplies for the children. These costs might be too much for many families to afford. The GoN states that for the Fiscal Year 2018/19, they aim to implement reform programs in order to understand the reason to why some children drop out from school and aims to reintegrate these children. Such programs may expose the economic difficulties that many families struggles with when it comes to the hidden costs of education.

59 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011, pp. 16, 28.
61 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013, pp. 34-36.
4.1.3 Shortcomings

The third report Nepal gave in accordance with article 44 in the CRC\(^{64}\) covered the third, fourth and the fifth periodic report, stated that Nepal had made changes, accomplishments and developments since their second periodic report.\(^{65}\) Nevertheless, the country has been criticized for not providing even the lowest standard in the work to eliminate human trafficking. Nepal’s government has been able to demonstrate increased efforts when it comes to investigations, prosecutions and convictions, but in spite of this they fail in their work.\(^{66}\) Even though there are strong laws against the problem, due to political changes, up to 23 government within the 24 years until 2018 has taken place, the system is not stable and it has effected the implementation of the laws.\(^{67}\) The lack of stable governance, shortcomings in the state organs efforts and the economic situation in the country have effected children’s rights.\(^{68}\) Even though actions are being taken for children’s rights by several parties, such as the state, NGOs and the civil society, due to an increase of exploited girls actions need to be strengthen, improved and increased to prevent prostitution that are taking place in the society.\(^{69}\)

4.1.4 Changes in the law and future prospects

According to an article written by Save the Children, ARC has recently been adopted and comes with significant changes from the previous act, Children’s act 2048 (1992). One significant change is the legal protection of children is stronger, since ARC states that the state of Nepal has an obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights.\(^{70}\) While in the previous act, only stated that “it is expedient to make timely legal provisions in order to protect the rights

\(^{64}\) Article 44 in the CRC states that a state party shall hand in reports on measurement taken by the state concerning the articles mentioned in the present convention. The report shall also include any factors that might affect the implementation of the CRC, and information needed for the Committee to understand the implementation that has been done. This shall be done within two years after the CRC has been entered into forced, and then every five years that follows, and the report shall be accessible for habitants of one own country.

\(^{65}\) UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013, p. 6.


\(^{68}\) UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, p. 46.


and interests of children for the physical, mental and intellectual development of children. The change is believed to create more responsibility, and with the force of the act be able to implement required policies and hold people accountable for realizing the right of the child. In addition to ARC, the Constitution of Nepal also recently changed in the year of 2015 from previous Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007, and the new constitution declared that children’s rights are fundamental rights. Another significant change that should be highlighted is the age of a child, raising it to eighteen years old from the previous age of sixteen. After Nepal’s combined state report in 2017, UN Child Rights Committee came to the conclusion that improvements in the measures being taken in line with the CRC needs to be made regarding several issues, such as sexual exploitation and abuse. In the plan for fiscal year 2018/19, GoN claims that all violence of women and human trafficking will be controlled through effective implementation of the laws, and that all social evils shall be eradicated.

4.2 Individual hardship and socio-structural influences

The magnitude of sex tourism of children has increased in the world, and girls represent the larger proportion of sexually exploited children. Human trafficking is the modern version of slavery, where individuals are being sold and their inherited dignity is being deprived. In order to ensure that children’s dignity is respected, it is needed “that every child is recognized, respected and protected as a rights holder”. Since children are too young to make certain decisions regarding their own wellbeing and the fact that prostitution is against human rights and prohibited, prostitution of children is considered a form of sexual abuse. UNICEF has declared being used for prostitution is the most serious violation of a child’s rights, and it undermines their dignity. There is a clear nexus between trafficking and sexual exploitation in Nepal, as most of the individuals who are victims of trafficking are exposed to sexual exploitation. A report from NHRC, shows connections between human trafficking and the

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71 Guragai, 2019; UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011, p. 6.
77 Thapa, 2015, p. 452.
adult entertainment sector\textsuperscript{78}, which exists mainly in Kathmandu’s red district area, Pokhara, Narayanghat and Itahar\textsuperscript{79}, and the entertainment sector has in the last ten years increased significantly\textsuperscript{80}. According to UNICEF, it is difficult to determine how many girls are being exploited for prostitution in Kathmandu; however, a survey made in 2010 shows that about 11,000-13,000 women and girls are being exploited in the entertainment sector, and girls between the ages of 8-9 years represent the majority of these numbers.\textsuperscript{81} The Natural human rights commission in Nepal states that the problem of determining the number of individuals who are victims of human trafficking, which is linked to prostitution, is because it is difficult to conduct household surveys, and also because reporting from NGOs can imply that same cases are reported several times\textsuperscript{82}. Also, it is not possible to determine the number of women and girls that are being used for prostitution in Kathmandu, since the number of entertainment venues is not mapped\textsuperscript{83}. Reasons to why children become victims of trafficking and later exploited for prostitution can be found in causes such as poverty, gender discrimination, fake promises of a better lifestyle from traffickers, difficulties to get work and loss of one’s parents\textsuperscript{84}.

\subsection*{4.2.1 Poverty and natural disasters}

Nepal, being one of the poorest countries and one of the 50 least developed countries in the world\textsuperscript{85}, faces several challenges to ensure that children will have a proper upbringing, are provided with education, medical assistance and access to enough food. Those who suffer the most are children in rural areas, which amounts to an high number since about 90 % of the population lives in rural areas.\textsuperscript{86} There has been attempts to reduce the number of people living under the poverty line in rural areas, and a slight decrease has been seen. Overall, the GoN has

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\textsuperscript{78} The adult entertainment sector includes dance bars, dohori restaurants (restaurants were Nepalese folk music is played), cabin restaurants, spa, massage parlors and khaja ghar (small restaurants serving alcohol) and guesthouses.

\textsuperscript{79} National Human Rights Commission, p. 35.


\textsuperscript{82} National Human Rights Commission, 2018, p. XIV.


\textsuperscript{84} UNICEF, 2018, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{85} UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011, p. 10.

been able to reduce poverty on a national level. However, increasing the income of habitant in rural areas is a challenge that has not been very successful through either structural improvements or development efforts. The poverty affect children on many levels, and to exemplify the situation the Committee on the Rights of the Child writes in their report that more than half of the children in Nepal between the ages of 0-17 do not have access to any kind of toilet.\textsuperscript{87} To address and handle the poverty situation obstacles occur when Nepal been struggling to rebuilding itself, due to the earthquake in 2015 and the flood emergency in 2017\textsuperscript{88}. Natural disasters, not only takes life and harms the habitants, but also puts girls in an extra exposed situation. If girls are getting displaced they might be forced to take care of themselves and are put into a situation where they need money, and thus become a target for traffickers to take advantage and are at risk of being sold for sex trafficking.\textsuperscript{89}

### 4.2.2 Migration, forced to work and forced labor

Not every case of sextrafficking has a clear path from being lured to being exploited for prostitution. Many cases involves migration, both beyond the country’s borders and within the country, for better work opportunities. Later within this path a girl may end up being exploited for sexual activities such as prostitution. When it comes to migration, numerous factors influence ones decision, such as poverty and gender, which puts girls in an exposed position.\textsuperscript{90}

Up to 90 percent of Nepal’s habitants have been relying on agriculture, but after changes in the Nepal’s economy the possibility to support oneself has become harder. Therefore, an increase in migration to cities, such as Kathmandu, has become a phenomena. Unfortunately, even children are being sent away by their families to cities, to seek employment, and often girls being sent to carpet factories where they latter are being target for sex trafficking. Many girls are also willingly migrating to cities, with promises of great salaries and a glamourous lifestyle,\textsuperscript{91} and girls might even have support from their families to leave home, since they all are being deceived by traffickers\textsuperscript{92}. A study shows that girls who are already working in the entertainment sector, are the main recruiters to the different venues, since if they have a wish

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\textsuperscript{87} UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013, pp. 12, 33.
\textsuperscript{89} See Thapa, 2015 p. 452.
\textsuperscript{91} See Ibid., pp. 308, 316.
\textsuperscript{92} UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011, p. 16.
to leave they need to find a replacement for themselves. Another aspect that adds to girls exposure is that, even though the GoN has forbidden any kind of bonded labor, it still exist in numerous forms of bonded labor due to the poverty situation. At present, girls are still being subjected to different practices where they are either being used for paying depts or forced to work due to inheriting slavery.

4.2.3 Social and cultural factors and the lack of knowledge

It has also been shown that social and cultural factors have an impact to the magnitude of prostitution, by upholding discrimination among genders which reinforces girls exposure. Girls that comes from marginalized livings, been subject of abuse and violence or abandoned by their families are even more in the risk zone. Since boys are considered to be responsible for their parents financial security and are also the prime inheritance, they are in general are more preferred and therefore prioritized. Hence, it is more likely that girls migrate to find work or are being deprived education. Founder and director at Maiti Nepal states in article concerning the exploitation of women and children in Nepal, that gender discrimination, lack of education and unemployment are contributing factors for girls being in the risk zone of being trafficked. The discrimination of women and girls in a patriarchal society reinforces the challenges in eradicating the problem. Ergo, a girls future is considered to play a less valuable role within families and the society. The deficient awareness girls have about their rights is another factor that contributes when it comes to the work of eradicating the problem. Several victims of trafficking have low educational levels, and a majority have no education at all. Actions to create awareness of children rights are being made, by incorporating the subject in the curriculum in school, in the levels six to ten. Also, teachers, police, army and the civil service are getting more education on subjects such as exploitation of girls.

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94 Thapa, 2015, p. 453.
96 National Human Rights Commission, 2018, p. VI.
99 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011, p. 23.
100 National Human Rights Commission, 2018, pp. VI, XIII.
101 UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013, p. 38.
4.2.4 The market and the demand

A problem Nepal is facing is the high number of tourists that travel there for sex, and children are more exposed than ever before.\(^{102}\) A study made by The Freedom Fund, about perspective of customers, managers and owners in Nepal, shows that many owners are justifying the exploitation of girls as they consider themselves giving these girls protection from poverty and helping them from a life on the streets. An owner mentions that the government fails to protect girls with providing them with food and housing, and therefore the owner considers that he is helping the girls. Since many girls come from backgrounds where they have been subjected to sexual abuse from their own relatives or fathers, a manager justifies his actions in that he believes he treats the girls kindly, opposite from what their families have done to the girls. The study also shows a variation about the contact with law enforcement, where some owners (often to larger and visible venues) consider that the police are visiting them from time to time. While one owner, that has run his business for thirteen years, has only had a visit from the police once. Also, businesses that are frequently visit by authorities, such as the Nepal Tourism Development Council, follow regulations by demanding photocopies of identification of the employees in order to prevent girls from working in the entertainment business.\(^{103}\)

Regarding the demand of the customers, the study shows a variation, where some customers prefer younger girls, since they are more attractive and have good physiques or that the experience with younger girls can be “more fun”. One customer justified his requirement for younger girls in that he is paying for a service, and therefore wants to make sure that he gets value for money, which according to him only younger girls could provide. Another reason for wanting younger girls, is that they were considered to be most obeying and therefore less likely to object to demands from customers. However, some customers prefer to not engage with girls, in respect of their emotional health and education opportunities. Even though customer are paying for sex, some of them consider themselves to have some moral responsibility and therefore avoid engaging with young girls (even though they feel the attraction for them) since it would be morally wrong.\(^{104}\) It should be noted that the stigma of engaging in sexual activities with girls are stronger, and therefore could have affected some respondents answers. Overall, an important finding in the study showed that no one really wants to face the responsibility of

\(^{103}\) The Freedom fund, 2018, pp. 15, 17.
\(^{104}\) Ibid., 2018, pp. 19-21.
exploitation of girls, and blamed girls for lying about their age; the authorities of failing in their monitoring and customers blamed owners for providing services with younger girls.\textsuperscript{105}

Regardless, if a perpetrator is benefitting from subjecting girls to prostitution, it is considered to be an aspect of human sale and trafficking when forcing someone into prostitution. Girls that are being trafficked to the cities, such as Kathmandu, often end up in the entertainment sector, where they work at massages parlors or dance bars\textsuperscript{106}, and later are being exploited for prostitution. Girls that have ended up in the entertainment sector and have been sexually exploited often become marginalized and stigmatize. Consequence of this follows that the girls might not want to seek help and therefore continues to be loyal to their owners.\textsuperscript{107}

5 LEGAL FRAMEWORK – CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

Children’s rights have been on the United nations agenda since 1945, but at the time discussions were about human rights for “all”. Three years later children’s rights got a stronger significance, however, their rights were at the time set in declarations. Declarations are not legally binding, therefore leaders of the world agreed that children requires special protection and care, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, that protected children under the age of eighteen was adopted in 1989 and became legally binding in 1990. The convention would contribute so that every child grow up under circumstances that supports them to reach their full potential.\textsuperscript{108} Beyond the CRC, United nations has stated that additional protection is needed to ensure that children are protected from harm and not being used for economic exploitation nor exploitation for sexual purposes, hence the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography have been adopted. Both the CRC and the CRC-OP have been ratified by Nepal, and it has been done without any declaration or reservations\textsuperscript{109}. Nepal ratified the CRC in September 1990 which lead to adjustments for the better, in the work to uphold and protect the rights of the child\textsuperscript{110}.

\textsuperscript{105} The Freedom fund, 2018, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{106} UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{107} Anti-slavery, 2019.
and the CRC-OP was ratified in January 2006\textsuperscript{111}. Thereafter, they have been transformed into national law, which means that the GoN has aimed to harmonize the international laws with the national law.\textsuperscript{112} UNICEF states that there is not a manual regarding how the implementation of the CRC shall take place, but countries should use the CRC as a starting point and let it influence governmental work, particularly when adopting national laws and policies.\textsuperscript{113}

5.1 Convention on the rights of the child

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children being a vulnerable group shall be guaranteed to; education, grow up under conditions that provide safety, freedom and good living conditions, and to be protected against violence and abuse. These are only a fraction of the rights that can be violated when girls are exploited for prostitution. It should be noted that the rights in the CRC are of equal importance and interconnected\textsuperscript{114}. Anyone should be able to enjoy basic necessities with respect to one’s dignity, and prostitution is not compatible with human dignity, therefore children shall not have to be subjected to degrading treatment or be used for sexual exploitation of any kind\textsuperscript{115}. The right to not be exploited is a non-derogable right, which means that even in a state of emergency, the state of Nepal cannot derogate from this right\textsuperscript{116}. The rights in the CRC contribute to uphold the dignity of a person, which not only includes to guarantee children the basic necessities, but also provide better prospects that reduce the risk of being exploited and used for sexual activities, by advocating for proper education, a safe home environment, and financial security. When it comes to the ensure the safety of children, several factors are of importance and interconnected with each other in order to create good living conditions. Moreover, all articles in the CRC are considered to contribute to prevent trafficking of children for sexual exploitations. However, since this thesis focuses on protection against exploitation for prostitution, only articles that are specific to that matter will be presented to get an insight into what rights exposed girls are entitled to.

In accordance with article 32 § 1-2 state parties shall protect children “from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with

\textsuperscript{111} UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{112} UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{116} UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013, p. 7.
the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development” and “shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of the present article”. However, the CRC does not prevent children from helping their families in the household or in family business, however, all task shall be age appropriate, in compliance with national law and not prevent a child form rest and play\(^ {117}\). While exploitation can take many forms, the CRC specifies in article 34 that children shall be protected “from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse” such as “the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity” and “the exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices”. In order to implement this, state parties shall apply both nationally and internationally agreements, and in accordance with article 35 states shall through these national and international agreements ensure that abduction nor child trafficking takes place regardless of purpose and procedure. In addition, article 36 states that children shall be protected “against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare”. Since girls being exploited are often forced or introduced to drugs, article 33 is of relevance to mention and states that “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substance”.

5.2 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

The international community has taken extended steps to protect children from exploitation and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography has been adopted to work towards eradicating any kind of activities that involves “prohibit the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography”. The CRCs optional protocol has it name because it is an optional choice for states to ratify it, because it requires more efforts\(^ {118}\). Since Nepal has ratified the CRC-OP, they have the obligation to take actions that forbids any activity that involves children being used for exploitation for prostitution. The work needs to target every aspects to eradicate the problem, which includes “prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution and punishment of those responsible”. The preventive work, is in the CRC-OP applied with a holistic perspective, which


includes factors such as family structures, economy, education, cultural, urban-rural migration and discrimination. The optional protocol also states the importance of creating awareness in the society about the problem, both to adults and children, with the aim to instill knowledge about preventive actions that can be made and consequences of crimes like this. The CRC-OP covers a broad field of child exploitation and only selected articles with a direct nexus to prostitution will be presented.

According to article 1 “States Parties shall prohibit the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography as provided for by the present Protocol”. For the present protocol, stated in article 2, “Sale of children means any act or transaction whereby a child is transferred by any person or group of persons to another for remuneration or any other consideration” and “Child prostitution means the use of a child in sexual activities for remuneration or any other form of consideration”. In accordance with article 3 the following acts in relations to the sale of children, based on the definition from article 2, shall be covered under criminal law regardless if: taken place within the country or abroad; if the actions have been conducted by an organization or a person and any attempt or participation to commit these offences: “The offering, delivering or accepting, by whatever means, a child for the purpose of: sexual exploitation of the child […] engagement of the child in forced labour” and “offering, obtaining, procuring or providing a child for child prostitution”. To ensure that the rights in the protocol are being applied, article 9 § 1 states that “States Parties shall adopt or strengthen, implement and disseminate laws, administrative measures, social policies and programmes” and children whom are a risk group for these offences shall be given extra protection. In § 2 the importance of promoting awareness in the society, to adult and children, is being presented and mentions that information shall be spread “by all appropriate means, education and training, about the preventive measures and harmful effects of the offences referred to in the present Protocol”. Beyond national and international agreement and implementation of laws, article 10 § 1 recognizes the necessity for State parties to strengthening “international cooperation by multilateral, regional and bilateral arrangements for the prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution and punishment of those responsible for acts involving the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography and child sex tourism”. As well as “promote international cooperation and coordination between their authorities, national and international non-governmental organizations and international organizations”. In addition, article 10 § 3 mentions that “the strengthening of international cooperation” shall encourages in order to
combat underlying causes that affect children’s vulnerability to exploitation for prostitution, such as poverty and underdevelopment.

5.3 Nepalese law

The State of Nepal has the intention to act in accordance with international law and several laws in Nepal includes rights that are applicable for protecting children’s rights, such as The Constitution of Nepal, 2015, and Act Relating to Children 2018. Based on the aforementioned laws, Nepal has in its law made an attempt to protect the interests of children and ARC's primary goal is to modify existing national laws regarding children so that their rights are respected and applied. Article 39 in the Constitution deals explicitly with children’s right, where § 6 states that “No child shall be […] be subjected, in the name of cultural or religious traditions, to abuse, exclusion or physical, mental, sexual or other form of exploitation or improper use by any means or in any manner.” In ARC, the rights and prohibitions are more detailed, and the following articles deal with prostitution related matters or sexual exploitation. Article 7 § 5, states that all children have the right to be protected “from all forms of physical or mental violence and torture, neglect, inhuman behaviour, gender based or untouchability related abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation by her/his father, mother, other family member or guardian, teacher and other persons”, and § 6, states that all children “shall have the right to protection from economic exploitation and to protection from any work that is harmful to her/him or hampers her/his education or is detrimental to her/his health, physical, mental, moral and social development.” In accordance with article 66 § 1-3, any individual that commits act of violence against children will be considered to have committed an act of crime. Accordingly to article 66 acts of violence can be the following:

- “Involve in addictions such as smoking, drinking or gambling.”
- “Allow entry to, or use in, recreational facilities opened for adults such as dance bars and casinos.”
- “Inflict physical or mental punishment or behave in undignified manner, whether at home, school or any other place.”
- “Inflict physical injuries or harm, terrorize or intimidate, humiliate, neglect, discriminate, exclude or hate, isolate or cause mental torture.”
- “Keep in illegal confinement, detention, jail or house arrest; handcuff them.”
- “Treat in a cruel or inhumane manner or torture.”
Any act where an individual participates in sexual abuse as those that follows, shall also be considered as an act of crime:

- “Propose, entice, coerce or threaten for sexual activities.”
- “Touch, kiss, hold sensitive parts of body, embrace with sexual intent or cause them to touch or hold sensitive parts of own body or body of another person or render them unconscious with sexual intent or display, or cause them to display, sexual organs.”
- “Use, or cause to use, children for stimulating sexual urge or sexual excitement.”
- “Use, or cause to use, children for the purpose of sexual gratification.”
- “Engage in, or cause to engage in, child sexual exploitation.”
- “Use, or cause to use, children with the intent of providing sexual services.”
- ”Use, or cause to use, children with the intent of engaging in sexual abuse.”
- “Use children in prostitution or other sexual work.”

ARC does not specifically mention a child shall be protected from trafficking or exploitation for prostitution, though, the aforesaid paragraphs in article 66 are acts that can be committed within those offences, and altogether it implicitly states all children shall be protected from exploitation for prostitution. In addition, the Constitution of Nepal, article 29 §§ 1 and 3 which are fundamental rights, states that “Every person shall have the right against exploitation” and that “No one shall be subjected to trafficking nor shall one be held in slavery or servitude” and thus, since the protection comprehends every person, also children are protected accordingly.

6 FINDINGS FROM THE QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

The findings from the qualitative interviews indicates that girls are being exploited for prostitution as a result of several socio-structural factors, which will be presented into four themes. To distinguish clear themes is difficult, since the factors have a nexus and may partially overlap. Respondents will be represented by fictitious names and will be referred as NGO employee 1-10 (NGOE X).

All respondents agreed that when it comes to girls being used in the adult entertainment sector for prostitution, it is a matter of internal trafficking or child trafficking. According to NGOE 5:

When you talk about prostitution and child, there is no way a child can be considered not trafficked. Because they are minors. And anything that is conducted with minors, even with their consent is considered legally not right. So that goes straight into trafficking.
Based on the findings, it appears that trafficking of children is increasing, especially internal trafficking. When it comes to girls exploited for prostitution in the adult entertainment sector, the largest proportion is estimated to be between 15-18 years but it is also common from the age of 12. However, it is not unusual that younger girls are victims as well. In some cases it is hard to determine the age of the girls, since they learned to lie about their age in order to find work and in some cases girls are being injected with hormones that makes them develop faster physically, to gain larger breasts and curves. An important aspect that is lifted from NGOE 4 is that even if the CRC states that a child is anyone under the age of eighteen, in Nepal it is still viewed that a child is only up to the age of 15, sometimes younger, because if they are getting married around these ages they are not considered to be children anymore.

6.1 Knowledge and unawareness

Several of the respondents underlined the lack of education as being a big problem, because if girls are not going to school it becomes harder to get a proper job due to lack of skills. In Nepal it is common with gender discrimination towards girls within the families, meaning that girls are given less opportunities then boys, and are not sent to school. Consequently, when girls come to the cities looking for work they tend to seek work in the adult entertainment sector, where they become at risk of being sexually exploited. Some girls actually might get a job at a restaurant. But in many cases when it comes to girls from rural areas that are trying to find a life in the city, it leads to working in the adult entertainment sector, like dance bars, massage parlors and dories. In many cases, these places are just fronts, they are a two-faced organizations, that offer the normal services and then offer sex with girls.

Regarding the influence of cast system, different opinions appear in the findings, where it is both consider to be an major influence since lower cast, whom are regarded to be untouchable, face difficulties when they are not welcomed in school and are being excluded from society, while some respondents have noticed girls from all kinds of cast being exploited. Laws do exist to forbid any discrimination due to cast, though the implementation of the law is weak. Additionally, the lack of education also has a nexus with unawareness about rights, moral responsibility and risk factors of trafficking, which increases the risk of being victims for traffickers. However, even though if one has an education, moral education is often missing in the school curriculum, specifically about trafficking and prostitution. NGOE 1 mentions that the trend has changed, and that “previous years it was mostly uneducated girls, but now currently there is girls that have completed 12 years of education or higher education that are
working there”. Many of the girls come from poor families and need to find a job in order to continue their educations, hence they see no other choice. NGOE 1 adds that “some girls do it to continue their education, because they need to study in a good school where they have to pay higher fees. And they don’t have a good economic situation, so they have to work in those sectors to pay their fees”.

From the findings it is shown that the awareness in society about trafficking and prostitution is inadequate, and some of the respondent themselves announced that before entering this field of work they were not aware of these problems. Respondents believe that the knowledge a child is given, reflects what is already know from their parents and their surroundings. In many cases in Nepal, people are not aware of their rights nor the risks that can lead to sex trafficking and prostitution. Therefore, all the respondents work strongly with preventive work, where they focus on educating not only girls but also whole communities, in order to instill knowledge about the dangers, trafficking and human rights. It is believed that uneducated individuals, both girls and their parents, are easier to manipulate. Therefore, false hope about better prospect can easily be instilled in girls and their parents minds, and it is important to emphasize that believing in promises of a better life does not mean that they are naive but because of their lack of knowledge, their judgment is affected. “Because due to ignorance, lots of children have been trafficked” according to NGOE 5. In some cases, the result of this ignorance may lead to parents believing that their children are being sent to the cities for household work but are later sold to restaurant for an amount between 5000-7000 NRS. Traffickers often know what to say or do to lure girls, and through promises about good job opportunities in the city or in making girls fall for them by promising that they will take care of her and marry her she can easily be fooled.

NGO 3 addressed a newly developed trend, where girls from the cities return to recruit others in their home villages. This recruitment occurs in three stages, where girls that are living in rural areas are easily influenced by their friends that visit. One way is that when they come to visit and show off in their new clothes and makeup and talk about the money that is being made in the city, thus indirectly contributes to recruitment. NGOE 3 declares that “the girl who goes from Kathmandu don’t tell them that she is working in this sector, this kind of work she has to do. The girls only see, she has earned money, she has gone to Kathmandu”. The second and third way are linked, and this way is about girls promoting the life they have in the city. NGOE

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5000-7000 NPR equals about 45-63 US dollars, calculated on the exchange rate on 24 April 2019.
3 says girls are being influenced by their owner to bring friends, and the girls will tell other girls things like “You can work with me, I am happy, I am earning money”, while NGOE 4 mentions that the owners force them to bring back friends. Usually girls are being recruited in the teenage, when girls are extra vulnerable since they are in a developmental stage where they try to find themselves and have a aspiration to look beautiful.

6.2 Financial difficulties and family structure

The financial situation is a common occurring theme that the respondents agreed on as being a major contributing factor to why girls end up in prostitution, since children are compelled to work and contribute to the family or work to survive. Thus, the poverty situation of families has a huge impact on why girls become vulnerable victims to traffickers, since many families are struggling with their financial situation. In some cases girls can either be sent from their homes to the cities or choose to leave by themselves. After the earthquake in 2015, the financial situation became worse for entire families and especially of children that lost their families. Due to both poverty and natural disasters, boys and girls, have fled from rural areas to urban cities for safety and security. But when discovering the difficulties to find work they became compelled to work in the adult entertainment industry. Initially many have been approached by agents with fake promises about jobs, such as receptionists, but ending up being forced to entertain clients sexually.

Although many girls that can be found in the adult entertainment sector are uneducated, there are girls with higher educational background. In a survey conducted in Pokhara, it showed that 70% of 996 interviewed girls working in this area were students. They had migrated to the city for education but coming from poor families they needed to support themselves economically, since living in a big city is expensive. Not being able to cope with the expenses, they look for work at restaurants and massage parlors, where they are later are forced into prostitution by their employers. Trying to help the girls get into alternative work can be a struggle for NGOs, since if they have gotten used to having money “alternative means will give them very little money. […] So they don’t want to switch from big money to small money and struggling job” according to NGOE 5. Hence, when girls are being offered help from NGOs, they can be resistant to receive help since the economical help being offered is mostly emergency assistance in the form of housing at the beginning but does not provide them with economical help for a long period. This makes girls reluctant to quit what they are doing. Even if they get vocational training, emotional support and temporary housing, it often comes down to money.
“The main issue is the economic part. Even if we give them training, at the end of the day they need to have money. They need to earn money to live their life” according to NGOE 1. Although reports, presented in the previous research chapter, states that the GoN offers social security, respondents declare that Nepal does not have a functional system to support girls.

Besides the family's financial situation, in respondents experience many girls comes from dysfunctional families, containing domestic violence and neglect and abuse towards girls. Numerous cases show girls have been raped by their own fathers, grandfathers, and other relatives. Dysfunctional families are considered to be one of the main reason why girls enter the adult entertainment sector, since the consequence of not having a safe home environment entails that there is not a protection system at home. Although the financial situation have a major impact, NGOE 7 also states that when girls are being neglected and not have their opinions heard it can have long term consequences. NGOE 7 continues:

Many of the things around her makes her like she doesn’t feel that much confident or happy, being at home. […] But for the girls who are already in the kind of family where she is not heard by anyone or she is not getting emotional support, you see, a trafficker can come and convince a girl in ten minutes. She has that much of loneliness inside. If a trafficker can say that ‘I am there for you, I can care for you, I can think for your future, I am here for you’ this kind of things they say. She is not getting this kind of support from her family. You can say, if she is in a family where she can fully share her problems and things with her parents, with her relatives, probably she would not trust him that much.

6.3 The vulnerable state of girls

Trying to convince girls to accept help can be difficult not just because of money, but also because of stigmatization. NGOE 2 and 3 specify that many girls are ashamed of what they have been doing which tends to affect their wish to be reintegrated with their families. In some cases girls are not allowed to return to their village if the community is aware they have been used for prostitution. The respondents describe how a perception exist that girls “working” as prostitutes are not good, and either the family or their village will not accept them. If girls would return it would create problems, ergo NGOs faces difficulties when trying to reintegrate girls with their families. Another reason that makes it hard to reach out to girls, is due to owners influence on the girls. Not only do owners convince girls that the NGOs contacting them are not good and cannot help them, but they provide girls with a place to stay, clothes, food and money. Coming from poorly conditions, girls have difficulties leaving from this form of
security. The findings also show that girls are being provided, and even forced, to use narcotics to make it easier for owners to have control over them, since being addicted to drugs make them more compelled to continue to work in order to get more drugs or money to buy drugs.

NGOE 6 often meet girls sharing how they have been physical mistreated during their time in the adult entertainment sector, on top of the mentally and socially injury they are already suffering, which lowers the girls self-esteem to the point that they do not wish to live anymore. When trying to help them, NGOE 6 usually get the following response: “Oh Aunty, don’t give… don’t waste your time”, […] You have so many things to do. Maybe you can do other things. But easy solution is give me poison or give me idea how to kill myself”.

6.4 Discriminatory attitudes among authorities and shortcomings

Discrimination is forbidden by law, and no difference shall be made regardless of background or cast, yet, prejudice and oppression occurs and can be found among authorities. NGOE 3 describes how it has been noticed that local authorities consider that they do not have the same responsibility for girls from rural areas, with the explanation that these girls come from communities that do not vote for them. Although authorities, both governmental and police, work to help the girls, perceptions still exist that create obstacles in the work to protect the girls from being exploited. NGOE 6 shares that:

Not all the police, but very few people, police also abuse them. […] Sometime they thought, ‘Oh! They are foolish girls.’ Sometimes ‘Oh! They are doing willingly.’ […] Sometime, not always, not all police, but few people. Every sector have those. Few people are bad people.

Although not every policemen have this perspective, or directly abuse them, this sort of unsensitivity affects the work effort in respect to assisting girls with help. NGOE 1 wish to raise awareness to corruption, where there have been cases when the police have been customers, taking bribes from owners or being impinged by powerful criminal gangs in order to look the other way.

In spite of the fact that the support system and the implementation of laws is not completely adequate, all respondents considers that the GoN has made changes and efforts as well as listens to NGOs reports on the current situation in the country. Though, the work is far from reaching its full potential, and several respondent believe that causes can be based on the country for many years has had an instable government with several changes of government, which made
the executive level weak. NGOE 8 states that “the foremost point is that it is because of the political turmoil and the political environment, and the changing structures of governance”. Nepal is now going through structural changes after they adopted a federal structure, the three layers of government: the Union government, Provincial government and the Local government. Although, many authority and government levels are in place, due to reforms, confusion occurs regarding who should take responsibility for what. “The elected officials are not very clear about their roles and responsibilities, their rights and duties” NGOE 10 states. NGOE 5 opinions on the matter is that:

The judiciary is active; you can clearly see because the laws are strong. The legislative body is to implement, which because they suffered from instability, they are not adequately educated in terms of human trafficking, they are not provided enough of information. It could be that they are not aware of what’s happening, they are more into only politics and not worried about the social problems. It is now very high time for the NGOs like us to educate the implementing body, the legislative body so that, that gap can be maintained or narrowed down.

Within the adult entertainment sector, numerous restaurant, dories, massage parlors, etcetera exists and far from all are registered. According to the respondents, one reasons for this can be that too many different authorities, such as the Ministry of tourism or the Labour Ministry, handle the registration and as a result there is no complete overview of which businesses that are not registered. Another reasons is that not enough resources are being put into monitoring the adult entertainment sector, thus the monitoring is not as effective as it should be. Consequently, the lack of knowledge about existing business makes it possible for owners to exploit children. It is perceived that due to the political environment in Nepal, the governing bodies are not fully aware about where children are vulnerable and that there is no rush in monitoring this sector. Even though the respondents have partial opinions in that the GoN lacks insight into the extent of the problem, it cannot be stated that the GoN is not aware of the existing problems. NGOE 7 explains that:

We cannot say they are not aware but they are not given priority, I think, I should say. […] There are lots of obstacles. […] And now the government is in the restructuring process of the country. So the directive that was there in the past is not valued or workable anymore now.

NGOE 10 believes the GoN do not have their priorities in order when it comes to development work since it is mostly focused on money. It appears that investing in infrastructure is given priority since it can generate a huge commissions but human capital will not generate a
commission. However, accordingly to NGOE 9, “when we talk with the government officers, they don’t have budget part. But if we support budget part, then they will adopt our delegation and other things”. Despite the efforts being made by both the GoN, authorities and NGOs, trafficking and exploitation of children is increasing and the current protection is not enough. NGOE 10 believes that “the government is not proactively working for protection, and families are not in that position to protect or safeguard the children. They have no money, they have no opportunity, they have no education”.

7 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The focus of this thesis has been to examine how socio-structural factors can affect the work of protecting girls in Nepal from being exploited for prostitution. In order to fully understand how the protection work can be affected, knowledge about underlying causes of why girls end up in prostitution, which protection girls are entitled to by law and what socio-structural factors can affect the protection have been presented. The combined result from research and the field study shows that several factors are contributing, both as causative factors behind why girls are exposed and why it is difficult to eradicate the exploitation of girls for prostitution. Based on the fact that the factors affecting the protection are largely the same factors that cause girls to be exploited, a common analysis and discussion will be conducted in answering the research question and the sub-questions. In addition, the socio-structural factors that have been presented in previous chapter are interconnected to each other in ways that one affects the other and thus contribute to allowing the continuance of them, thus several of them will be analyzed together. To generate an understanding of how socio-structural factors can affect girls lives and lead to horrors such as prostitution, different theoretical approaches have been used to describe how factors such as poverty, culture, gender discrimination and social constructs influences maintains social injustices for girls. The following chapter have been divided into three themes that have emerged throughout the work process, which represent socio-structural factors impact, an attempt to making sense of prostitution and the GoN responsibilities and efforts.

7.1 Socio-structural factors as underlying factors and counteracting the protection

A family's financial situation can indirectly force girls to seek employment away from home to support themselves and their families. Loss of family can also force a girl to seek work and take care of themselves. In both cases, girls are in a situation where they lack the support and
protection of their family. Consequently, when coming to the city these girls may end up working in the adult entertainment sector, where they often end up being exploited for prostitution. Although, girls should not be responsible for supporting their family or themselves, because of extreme poverty, the situation in Nepal is of a character that there might currently not be any other choice. Despite that, it must be pointed out that prostitution should not be justified as a means of survival, since it is not compatible with human dignity.

The economic position and poverty explanatory model, helps explaining why girls in Nepal engage in prostitution. If a girl grows up in poverty, deprived of education and lacks both skills and opportunities to support herself, she might not see any other choice, and becomes vulnerable and desperate to survive. Even though reports show that the GoN has established authorities and programs that are supposed to support financially vulnerable families and children, as well as provide for girls that are being exploited, the reality shows otherwise. The interview findings revealed that due to financial shortcomings in the country, there are not sufficient means to offer these girls, or their families; therefore, the spiral of prostitution continues out of desperation to survive.

The findings also show that there are cases where girls do not want to accept help, since they have gotten used to having money, and by quitting they risk facing poverty again. The economic position and poverty explanatory model also contributes to create an understanding of the reluctance to receive help. The model describes how money's impact work as a controlling factor, since prostitution in some cases can provide girls with money that they could not obtain in other ways. As a result, money imbues prostitution with a form of attraction. It follows that girls that have lived under poor conditions can be manipulated by money. Although it is occasionally referred to as girls making a choice, it must be stressed that these girls are only children and should therefore not need and are not able to make decisions that lead to exploitation for prostitution as the only possible choice for survival for themselves or to support their families. In my opinion, the “choices” that they are making are forced choices that undermine their dignity. The “choice” to sell one’s body is a result of cultural and structural injustice; this will be elaborated further in the following sub-chapter.

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120 See Phoenix, 1999, pp. 52-53.
121 Ibid., 1999, pp. 52-54.
The interviews show that the lack of school education is another contributing factor, however, it is not a decisive factor when it comes to which girls are potential victims. The interviews reveal that even girls that have had education or are enrolled in school can be found in the adult entertainment sector, therefore it can no longer be considered that an education will automatically prevent exploitation. Living in cities is expensive, and many girls that come from poverty need to work at the same time as they educating themselves. When desperately trying to support themselves, they tend to find work at massage parlors and restaurants where the owner subsequently pushes them into prostitution. Money leads girls to continue to prostitute themselves, and in many cases they see it as the only way to pursue and complete their studies. According to the interviews, there are girls that have managed to complete their education; however, some do not. Nevertheless, once girls have been exposed, they are left with emotional scars, and in some cases physical scars, that no amount of money earned or completed education will be able to erase.

It cannot be stressed enough that it is important to spread knowledge about risks associated with prostitution, because there are many girls that dream of a better future, and they tend to believe anything if it might be the slightest chance to free them from their current situation. An alarming situation is when girls who are sexually exploited in the cities, return home for a visit and influences rural girls. If these girls paint a picture of a better life in the city, it will convince rural girls to follow the same path. This problem can be connected to how money manipulates girls and, from a constructivist perspective, understood as a new phenomenon where girls themselves find ways to justify their current lifestyle\textsuperscript{122}.

Even though there may be educated girls in the adult entertainment sector, there is a common understanding among the respondents that awareness about trafficking and prostitution is missing and knowledge about human rights and moral education is lacking, not only among girls but in society as a whole. The risk of not being aware of these matters puts girls in a vulnerable position, since if neither they nor their parents pay attention to possible risks when sending girls away for work, traffickers can take advantage of this unawareness. Therefore, moral and social education needs to be applied to a greater extent in the education system and spread in society. Regardless of the quality of education, the results suggest education is a preventive measure and decreases the possibility for girls to be exploited for prostitution. In Nepal, free education is a part of the governments assistance that have made progress.

\textsuperscript{122} See Bryman, 2011, p. 37.
However, research also indicates that education is still not available for very poor families due to extra costs such as examination fees and uniforms, thus these children will not be able to complete their education. The distribution paradigm points out the difficulties for less fortunate individuals to take part in social justice if they are not given the right opportunities. It should be considered how marginalized families, and children in particular, can be able to take part in assistance provided by the state, if they lack awareness of these possibilities and especially lack knowledge about their rights. Full access to education is the government’s responsibility as a form of social justice, and thus the GoN has the power to either ensure or overlook that every child has opportunities required to complete their education. If the lack of knowledge about the risks of sending girls to work in the cities and unawareness of their rights could be reduced, it would enhance the possibly to build a personal defense to injustices and girls’ vulnerability.

While Nepal has existing laws that shall protect girls, as well as several authorities, policies and government assistance, there are shortcomings in handling with girls’ lack of opportunities. According to the distribution paradigm, social justice involves more than financial support and material resources. If girls are not given the same opportunities as boys or have knowledge about their rights it will prevent them from taking part in government assistance and social benefits. Consequently, girls will be at risk of being exploited for prostitution as long as girls are a vulnerable group that continuously are being deprived of opportunities and their rights. However, opportunities, and rights, cannot be distributed like money and material, but are enabled or disabled through power structures and relations in society. Hence, it needs to be focused on strengthening girls’ self-esteem, and changing the view of how others regard girls as less worthy, in order to minimize the risk that girls end up in an inferior position.

7.2 Justification of degrading treatment of girls

In an attempt to making sense of prostitution, economic pressure and structural violence against women it helps to explain how a labor market is created where the female gender is objectified and turned into a commodity. In order for girls to be able to be exploited for prostitution, there is a need for a market to exist. The following sub chapter aims to provide understanding about the justification of treating the female gender as objects and how girls as a consequence of degrading treatment becomes easy to exploit. By highlighting aspects about the demand and

123 See Young, 1999, pp. 28-29.
124 See Ibid., pp. 15–19, 22–23.
125 See Phoenix, p. 64.
the justification for using girls, insights can be given that are considered necessary to take into account to counteract the problem.

In a previous study where perspective of customers were presented, customers explained how younger girls are more attractive, fun and more likely to obey, thus less chance that they will hesitate on demands from the customers. Certainly, there are customers who thinks it is morally wrong and the reasons for demanding girls varies, nevertheless the increasing numbers of exploited girls still shows that drastic measures need to be taken to stop the exploitation of girls. In national law it is clearly stated that any use of children that involves sexual acts, is a form of abuse and shall be punishable by law. Yet, the phenomena continues. Results from the interviews, which is also supported by research, indicates that the adult entertainment sector is growing and the exploitation of girls is increasing. Even though it is hard to determining the exact number of girls being exploited, as well as the ages, a report combined with interview results shows that it appears that the age range varies from 8-18 years.¹²⁶ One respondent explained how there still exist views in Nepal that a girl is someone up to the age of fifteen years, since after that they are getting married and regarded as adults. Even though international treaties ratified by Nepal states that children are any human being under the age of eighteen, Nepal’s previous Children Act, 1992, stated that a child is a minor that have not completed the age of sixteen years but has been changed in the Act Relating to Children, 2018. Without, by any means justifying prostitution in any way regardless of age or gender, this could explain the justification of using older teenage girls if men regards them as women instead of children.

If we put aside legal aspect, based on the fact that many habitants knowledge about rights are inadequate, and instead focus on moral obligations, how can we then understand how someone can treat girls in a degrading way. Results from the interviews show that many girls that are exploited for prostitution have been victims of abuse and rape by their own fathers and other relatives, and the respondents describe dysfunctional families as one of the main reasons why girls become victims of trafficking and prostitution. These findings are supported by the reports presented, which also indicates that gender discrimination in Nepal is a big issue.

From an objectivistic perspective, the justification for using girls as an object can originate from cultural patterns that have been instilled in the mind of people since birth, patterns that

¹²⁶ The Freedom fund, 2018, p. 6; UNICEF, 2018, p. 2
are not being questioned\textsuperscript{127}. If children learn that there are different expectations from different genders and embrace these, it will influence ones actions and expectations\textsuperscript{128}. In certain cultures, such as Nepal, many girls are ascribed less value and perceptions about the female gender exists that portray them as consumable, because they are being married off or being first to be sent away to cities for work in order to help the family financially\textsuperscript{129}. From this follows that the impact of distinctive gender roles with a discriminating character, that still exist in the culture of Nepal, may explain why men can justify their need and demand for buying sex, since if men from an early age have learned that girls have less value and a woman place in the family is to please their husband.

If boys are brought up witnessing their mother and sisters being abused, raped, and treated with less respect, without learning that it is legally and morally wrong and oppressive, it can be understood how these men as adults lack the capabilities to respect girls and their bodily integrity\textsuperscript{130}. Consequently, this might impact on the respect the female gender is given in future interactions. As a result, a justification is formed that regards girls and women as secondary\textsuperscript{131}, as a means for pleasure, and an oppression is taking form that is expressed through violence and sexual abuse towards girls. Thus, if the oppression and discrimination have become justified, it does not come as a surprise that it may also affect men in all kind of positions regardless of their occupation. Even though a moral obligation implies one shall distinguish right from wrong and treat others with respect, it is not applied by or towards everyone. If people live their lives with a mindset that girls are less valuable and that women should ensure that men's sexual needs are satisfied, it can be hard to expect that men should feel that it is morally wrong when they put their sexual needs before women's integrity and well-being.

One thing that has emerged in the findings, is that even police officers and other officials may regard girls as less valuable, especially girls from rural areas, which affect their efforts to protect exposed girls. When this form of oppression takes on a systematic character, as it can be seen in the adult entertainment sector were girls are being oppressed on a daily basis, it becomes a social injustice that needs to be acknowledge and confronted. Even though cultural phenomena can exist by itself, the objectivistic perceptive can be challenged, since when this

\textsuperscript{127} Bryman, 2011, p. 35-36.  
\textsuperscript{128} Giddens, 2007, p. 168.  
\textsuperscript{129} See Nussbaum, 2002, pp. 19-20.  
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 2002, pp. 291-292.  
\textsuperscript{131} See Young, 2000, pp. 82-83.
pattern repeats itself from generation to generation it is made by individuals whom are not static beings, but constantly influenced and thus a constructionistic perspectives allows for changes to take place and allows for cultural patterns to be re-constructed.\(^\text{132}\)

For men to be able to exercise violence and abuse against women, men need power to do so, and when women view themselves as passive and reconciled with being inferior they indirectly give this power to men. This passiveness may originate from cultural norms and learned behaviour. For example, if cultural norms personifies girls as less valued it does not only risk that customers and owners can justify their actions, but also make girls believe that they are not worthy and thus impact her choices.\(^\text{133}\) The interview result show many girls that have been exploited have been neglected by their parents, in ways where their opinions are not being heard and they are not getting any emotional support at home. Combining this neglect with structural discrimination and downgrading views towards the female gender, the distribution paradigm can offer an explanation on how this may affect girls self-esteem and as a consequence affect her ability to express herself and take part of social benefits.\(^\text{134}\) This argument implies that if a girl has low self-esteem and does not consider herself entitled to social benefits or the choice to influence her own life, there is a risk that she becomes vulnerable for traffickers to take advantage of her. The chance of her reaching out for help becomes less, since she might be of the beliefs that she is not worthy of a better life. The findings implies that a high amount of lack of self-esteem due to neglect, previous abuse and lack of other opportunities may contribute to the new lifestyle, where she is exploited for prostitution, and can be endured if she now is now given attention and better living conditions.

When it comes to oppression and systematical violence, sometimes it is enough to be a possible victim based on that you belong to an already oppressed group and consequently, it can affect your self-esteem and willingness to take part in society.\(^\text{135}\) This reasoning can lead to girls believing that they are not worthy of another way of living or believing that there is not any help, especially if the trust in grownups has been destroyed, which provides another explanation to why girls does not seek help to a greater extend or declines when help is offered. Respondents also describes how exposed girls often become stigmatized and can have trouble finding decent work or that they are not welcomed back by their families or to their villages.

\(^{133}\) See Young, 2000, pp. 82-83.
\(^{134}\) See Ibid., pp. 45-46, 52.
\(^{135}\) Ibid., pp. 82-83
This means, that the work to help exposed girls becomes harder in two ways: first, the stigmatization enforces girls lack of self-esteem and willingness to start over and second, they might face discriminating attitudes from society that push them back to prostitution, even after they have been rescued.

7.3 The Government of Nepal’s ambition to secure the rights for girls

The United Nations has taken several steps in order to ensure children, up to the age of eighteen, are protected against trafficking, any kind of exploitation, such as prostitution, or having their human dignity respected by adopting the CRC and the CRC-OP. Nepal has ratified both the aforementioned documents, and thereafter transformed them into national law which in theory means that there is a legal framework regarding trafficking and prostitution. Based on law and policy documents, it appears that Nepal has taken measures to ensure that girls rights are applied and protected. The interview result support that the GoN has been able to make improvements, but as respondents point out the implementation has not been effective. Even though there is no manual for how the international documents shall be implemented, the international documents shall work as a guide to influence the governmental work. However, since the CRC and the CRC-OP has only been transformed into Nepalese law, this can partly explain why they have failed to live up to their commitments. Another explanation for shortcomings in the implementation can be associated to that Nepal up to year 2018, had undergone 23 changes of government in 24 years, thus the system have been affected. Respondents describe how the political instability in Nepal has certainly affected the situation and as a result, the executive level have been negatively affected.

Response to the situation regarding exploitations of children has not been approached fully by the GoN, due to the political situation but also due to lack of coordination amongst different departments. While research indicates there are several authorities and units responsible to ensure that children’s rights are being protected and that operational work is taking place, the findings from interviews shows uncertainty and concern over no one taking full responsibility. For example, the monitoring of the adult entertainment sector in Kathmandu is regarded as weak. Even though UN Committee on the Rights of the Child reports that the GoN has establish a monitoring team to control businesses, the interviews indicates that the monitoring and registration is divided among several ministries and uncertainties emerges among the departments, as there is vagueness about who should do what. It can be understood that while several efforts can create comprehensive protection, too many authorities responsible for the
same matter may risk the work will lack structure and continuity, and in worse case be overlooked. Additional obstacles in monitoring come when several of the businesses are not registered or so-called two-faced organizations, hence, the monitoring needs to leave as little space as possible for shady businesses to operate by coordinating the monitoring more efficient.

The rights to be protected against any kind of exploitation, violence and abuse, is a non-derogable rights, hence, Nepal cannot waive these rights even if the country is in a state of emergency such as earthquake or flooding. As natural disasters have had an effect on rural areas to a great extent, recently in 2015 and 2017, many children have fled to bigger cities and girls have been put in an extra exposed situation. Because of the two major natural disasters occurring close to each other, it is understandable that it create difficulties for the GoN to provide its citizens the protection and social justice they are entitled to. Since Nepal is located in a geographical risk zone for natural disasters, it is likely that this might occur again, which, entails that Nepal needs to add additional protection if necessary to ensure the risk to be exploited does not increase after a natural disaster. One assistance the GoN is taking that can handle the aftermath is that they are working for a street children free Kathmandu, where they, in collaboration with police and NGOs strive to help these children, in response to the increased number of children who migrated to Kathmandu.

The CRC-OP highlights that the preventive work needs to take an holistic approach, which includes every aspect of a child’s life in order to ensure that the protection against prostitution is adequate. This approach shows the interconnection between rights and how all rights are of equally importance and contributing to ensure the wellbeing and dignity for girls. It has already been presented how a child home environment, education opportunities and financial situation can both influence children wellbeing and risk exploitation. In addition, drugs are an influential factor that should be discussed in the discourse of exploited girls, since many girls that are exploited are users of drugs, either by force or to numb the pain. Article 33 in the CRC states that children shall be protected from “the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substance” and by including drugs as a present element it exemplifies how all rights are interconnected, since many difficulties in children's lives can strengthen or bring further mishaps. For example, if a girl have been addicted to drugs she might be pushed to engaged in prostitution to support her addiction.

Currently, the rights in ARC and the Constitution together aim to provide girls with extensive protection and shows that the ambition is to act in accordance with international law. While
this might be true, Nepal has received criticism for not even providing the lowest standard regarding elimination of trafficking. If we disregard the influencing factors mentioned, some explanations can be found within the legal documents. Comparing international law with national law, the state of Nepal shows that they have made an attempt to meet the international standards by harmonizing it with national law, but some shortcomings are observed in the both the old and new acts that may have been open for interpretation and thus have affected the protection. One significant change in ARC that should strengthen the protection for children and minimize interpretations regarding children’s rights is that the State of Nepal has made it an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil children’s rights. While in the previously act only was stated as suitable to make appropriate legal provisions to protect and realize children’s rights. In the Constitution the significant change for children was the declaration of children’s right becoming fundamental rights. Another shortcoming that previously existed is that, in spite of that the ratification has been done without any reservation, Nepal has until 2018, in their national law stated that a child is someone who has not yet turned sixteen. This difference may have affected previous work regarding efforts that have been applied, if girls between the ages of sixteen and eighteen where not considered to be children and thus have not received the same protection. Hopefully, this change will bring stronger protection with clarity about who is considered to be a child, and the new political order and new laws may bring success in both the preventive and protective work. At the same time, even as new leaders are instated the change for the better will not come automatically, since it requires new leaders to dare question the political atmosphere and expose outdated and discriminating views, in order to work against institutional oppression.

The GoN, according the plan for fiscal year 2018/19, aim is that all social evils shall be eradicated, by an effective implementation of the laws, but does not clarify what these evils are and thus leaves it up for interpretation. Nor do they go into detail on what actions they will take in order to eradicate social evils. A lack of clarity like this, may create vagueness in the administration, and cause deficiencies in the operational work. It also appears from the interviews that the legislative body is not educated enough about human trafficking, and that the political instability could be a causing factor. It is said that the GoN is working on creating awareness in society about the subject, as well as to increase knowledge among teacher, police, army and civil service, which is beneficial for both the preventive and protective work if

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136 Young, 2000, p. 54.
different authorities work under similar guidelines. In order for habitants to act according to the law, it is a prerequisite that authorities work towards the same agenda. Hence, the level of knowledge needs to be strengthened about all the circumstances involving trafficking and prostitution, especially after Nepal has undergone significant political and legal changes.

Regardless of the fact that changes in the law have been made, those cannot themselves bring change and create opportunities for girls. The government is not only responsible to adopt and implement rights but must oversee the relations and institutional power that still maintains discrimination and injustice, and consequently prevents girls from benefiting from all rights.\textsuperscript{137}

If the GoN takes a stronger stand against injustice, it can reduce corruption and strengthen authorities work to protect girls. In order to counteract the situation in the country, the GoN needs to observe how they can work more proactive to change cultural perspectives and behaviors that disadvantage girls.

8 CONCLUDING REMARKS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

To declare that the exploitation of girls for prostitution is a social injustice is an understatement, as sexual exploitation is not only a form of violence and abuse, but it deprives girls of their dignity and violates several of their rights. Based on the several circumstances that impacts on girls situation, the work to protect girls becomes difficult since several factors are needed to be addressed simultaneously in order to achieve a long-term protection.

As it has been demonstrated in the analysis and discussion chapter, it is clear that socio-structural factors have a strong impact on the work of protecting girls from being exposed to sexual exploitation for prostitution. The several social-structural factors magnitude and the difficulties in addressing them, together contribute a strong obstruction to maintain social justice. How then can the increasing exploitation for girls for prostitution be solved? Some simple solution to the problem cannot be found. However, theoretical approaches have contributed to increase the understanding of why the exploitation of girls is increasing and why they are not adequately protected.

\textsuperscript{137} See Young, 2000, pp. 22-23, 54,
Material resources, educational opportunities and rights are social benefits for which the state is responsible to provide. The ability to access material resources and education, are partly affected by opportunities, and opportunities in its own is affected by knowledge about ones rights and the knowledge is often missing due to lack of education. In other words, already exposed and vulnerable girls are in a vicious circle. When structural injustices and discriminatory attitudes exist in society, it makes it difficult for girls to take part in social justice and have their rights respected, thus affecting the protection they should get. Based on the fact that there are cultural norms that believe that the female gender is consumable and less worthy, girls from the start have less opportunity in society. Such standards affect people's attitudes and actions and create power structures that undermines girls and reduce their opportunity to benefit from rights and social benefits. This oppression affects the protection since it influences girls into believing that they are not worthy, and consequently will not accept help when offered.

Even if laws are applied and knowledge exists about underlying causes, money has a strong impact and will affect the protection. While several factors are contributing to girls being used, it is considered that money is a deciding factor. Girls, as anyone else, need money to survive in a modern society. The lack of financial security pushes girls into a desperate situation, and when the state fails to provide them with support and protection, girls may not see any other way to survive and they take risks that lead to sexual exploitation.

It must be stressed that prostitution would not exist without the demand. The demand can be justified from cultural norms that are a combination of men's sexual needs, with women's lower status and their role to please men. When men are ranked higher than women, norms are created that allow girls to be treated as secondary and consumable, leading to men justification to purchase sexual services. These views derive from years of cultural constructions that accept gender discrimination and results in structural oppression, which affects the protection if cultural expectations proceeds and are not being challenged enough. If the population has a different perceptions, knowledge and expectations about the female gender, rights and morality, it does not only affect justification of the exploitation of girls for prostitution but also the operational work. Conclusions can be drawn from the justification of exploiting girls combined with girls struggle to support themselves has resulted in a normalization of prostitution. Adding structural oppression, even though it is not directly applied to a girl but the mere fact that girls are regarded less valuable, can affect girls self-esteem. From this, it
becomes difficult to help girls as they have accepted their situation and believe that it is their best opportunity in life if they experiences stigmatization from society.

It becomes difficult to provide full coverage on the protection if the knowledge in society and among girls about trafficking and prostitution is lacking. When knowledge is missing, and unaware of the risks of migrating to cities for work, the protection face obstacles when girls willingly put themselves in risky situations. Even though many educated girls can be found within the adult entertainment sector, education is still a proactive measure. Education can create opportunities to access knowledge and take part in society, as well as provide skills for future work possibilities. However, this requires both the state and family to provide girls with these opportunities. Family can work as an important institution that can both break and create girls futures. This points to how the importance of knowledge about legal and moral rights, needs to be instilled in all families as the family can help to re-construct traditions and norms.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the work to eradicate prostitution and provide help to vulnerable and exposed girls is influenced by factors that are interconnected. Thus, solving one problem, will not be enough and the work requires a holistic perspective to address the situation. Overall, it appears that Nepal, both through changes in the law and with several authorities established, is making an effort to provide for a better future for girls and have the ambition to provide equal opportunities for all children. While this might be true, it is considered that a review needs to be made regarding how all girls in Nepal can have the opportunity to access social security, social protection and receive both education and vital information. The future for girls in Nepal is unsure and in jeopardy, since the efforts to provide a secure future for them and protect their rights is not yet enough.

While there are laws against prostitution and work is being done to address the problem, more effort is needed when it comes to addressing socio-structural factors that both hinder the implementation of the laws and counteracts the protection. In order to battle sextrafficking, the problem needs to be addressed from multiple angles, and not only rely on the enforcement of laws. There is a strong need to be more vigilant in addressing influences and socio-structural factors that interfere with respect and assurance of the girl's rights. The leaders of the country need to observe and dissolve invisible structures that have emerged from cultural norms, that allow for gender discrimination and deprive a girls dignity. Injustice and structural oppression must be counteracted by focusing on the unawareness and lack of knowledge, in order to de-construct the discrimination gender views that exist. In addition to the many factors that affect
the problem, another dimension of resistance arises when the country has had political instability for several years. Nepal needs to build a political stability with clear directives, in order to create better conditions for strengthening the implementation of the new laws. Hopefully, this will lead to a positive effect on the operational work, leading to the protection for girls to become strengthened.

For future research, it would be of interest to conduct a comprehensive qualitative interview study with girls who are active in the adult entertainment sector, and with women who have received help. This would contribute to valuable insights to understand specific needs that may be important when reaching out and offering help to girls and to get insights about girls opportunities and access to social benefits. In addition, since Act Relating to Children has recently been adopted, curiosity arises about how the new law may affect the protection of girls. Hence, it would be of interest to conduct a study a few years to come to see what changes the new law has contributed to.

9 AFTERWORD – THE STORY OF HANIT

After Hanit ran away from her brother, she ended up living on the street and eating food from garbage’s. Several times she tried to find a job for herself, but whenever people hiring asked which cast she was from, they closed the door in her face. Hanit was born in a cast where they are consider untouchable. One day, Hanit lied about which cast she belonged to and finally got a job as a housekeeper and got to stay at the house. However, Hanit got only 2-3 hours of sleep a night, was given old food, cleaned for 20 people, and family son of the household started to sexually abuse her. Often, there was a man visiting the house and he used to say to Hanit that she does not have to have it like this. Since she already have been so disappointed and let down by people, it was hard for her to believe him. “He said that he would help me get a better job. I didn’t believe him at first. But the situation got worst, I couldn’t take it no more, so one day I believed him, and I went with him.” She truly hoped that it could become better, but sadly she was wrong. After just a few days living with this man, owner of a massage parlor, the nightmare began. The man that promised Hanit a better life, required her to stay in one room all the time and one day he sent a man into the room. This man forced himself over Hanit, and she tried to get away. The man pushed her back and she hit her head on the edge of the bed, still she tried to get away and she screamed. Hanit could not understand what was happening. When the owner came, she thought she would get help, but the opposite, the owner helped the
man. Once again, she got pushed down by the man and she hit her head another time. The owner kept her legs apart while the man held down her arms, and slowly she started to lose consciousness. When she woke up she was covered with bite marks and the white sheets on the bed were covered in blood. Hanit managed to get herself out from the room and she asked the owner what happened but he did not respond her. A woman working there helped her get cleaned up, but she refused to give Hanit answers as to what had happened. Hanit, only being a child and not educated about prostitution and rape, could not understand what had happened to her, that she just got sold and raped.

Throughout the years, while living in the house, Hanit could have between 20-30 customer a day and the owner used to give her drugs, “so I would be more relaxed for the customers”. The owner provided drugs for her and other girls in the house, so it would be easier to have the girls sexual exploited, and it would also make them addicted to drugs which would help the owner to control them since the girls would need to work to get access to drugs. For a long time the owner controlled Hanit carefully, but after a while the owner started to trust her and he could leave the house without having her supervised since he knew that she did not had anyone else or nowhere to go. During the time Hanit had lived in the house she had observed a women doing the finances and the owner using the landline, so Hanit learned numbers and how to use the phone which became her rescue. Hanit, was 22 years old when sharing her story with me and is now working at a NGO against internal and external trafficking. She was rescued when she was about thirteen years old by a NGO. After years of being exploited for prostitution, one day, she took the step that changed her life:

I like to listen to music on the radio, and then I heard this broadcast, from a NGO called Raksha, about that they could help girls like me, help them get an education and help them from their situation. I made the call to them, and this women said that she would help me. But you know, I didn’t believe her. But somehow she found me. I don’t know how she found me, but she did.
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