



Emerging  
into  
**LIGHT**

Unveiling the Post-COVID Impact on

"Victims of Commercial  
Sexual Exploitation and  
Survivors of Trafficking  
in Andhra Pradesh"

## "Emerging into Light"

A Study on.....Unveiling the Post-COVID Impact on  
"Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Survivors of Trafficking in AP"

March 2024

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# Emerging into Light

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## Preface & acknowledgement

The COVID-19 outbreak devastated many livelihoods socioeconomic, political, cultural, and also health conditions by intrinsic across the globe. Amongst all such vulnerable categories of people, rescued survivors of trafficking and victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE)/Sex Workers remained one of the most exposed groups affected by the bitter impact of the dreadful disaster that had ever been seen before during the decade.

**HELP**, being an organisation working for the protection and promotion of the rights of rescued survivors of trafficking and victims of CSE in the state of Andhra Pradesh for the last two decades has strived its best to identify and address their practical issues and challenges during and post COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and has gone through ample experiences at the grassroots level in the three high-risk united districts of Guntur, Prakasam, and Krishna in Andhra Pradesh.

To bring in to the light of its experiences, observations, and overall understanding of the helpless conditions and calamities throughout the trajectory of the rescued survivors of trafficking and victims of CSE in the above-cited three potential districts in the backdrop of the pandemic outbreak, **HELP** has conducted a study called **Unveiling the Post-COVID Impact on "Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Survivors of Trafficking in AP"**. The study has put its maximum efforts into covering the multiple facets of the crisis faced by the marginalized group of survivors of trafficking and victims of CSE who are being threatened almost to the threshold of their lives.

We hope that the findings of the study will give rise to attention across the systemic stakeholders for accelerating efforts to bring all-inclusive victim-friendly policy reformations that improve access to benefits from existing government welfare schemes, state support services, and social entitlements as well as rehabilitation and victim compensation services helps survivors and victims of CSE in their holistic development including their socio-economic empowerment.

Our sincere gratitude to **DASRA & Rebuild India's** support in taking up this precious assignment of research and publication of this study report with its unrestricted funding and uncompromised cooperation which indeed adds value to our **HELP's** organisational development.

Our special thanks to Mr. Lawrence who is a freelance consultant from KOLKATA, West Bengal for his tremendous support in making the study document a short but sharp one with eye-catching graphical design attracting the readers to read through it with enough interest.

We are glad to acknowledge the constant cooperation with invaluable inputs and guidance of **Ms. Harsha** and the team from **Swaniti - IWG** National Secretariat, New Delhi helped us a lot in reviewing and revising the study document with all the required information/data with effective insights and reflections.

With warm regards and best compliments,

**Ram Mohan VS. Nimmaraju**  
Secretary - HELP

# CHAPTER I

## CONTEXT

In India, women engage in sex work either as a result of economic hardships, often involuntarily, or under coercive circumstances. Those entering the profession typically hail from specific social, caste, and class backgrounds, with factors such as illiteracy, a lack of family support, and the inability to meet basic needs serving as key motivators. The escalating incidence of women and girls entering the sex trade can also be attributed to trafficking. Women become sex workers through both voluntary and involuntary means. Voluntary entry may be driven by poverty or familial pressures, while involuntary involvement stems from factors such as trafficking, coercion, or adherence to traditional practices. Notably, documented evidence suggests that a substantial portion of sex work in India is involuntary.

Sex workers, like other at-risk individuals, face considerable vulnerability, yet they often receive unequal attention, protection, and respect. Unfortunately, the reasons prompting individuals to engage in sex work are frequently overlooked, leading to premature judgments that deem them unworthy of consideration, protection, and respect.

Against this backdrop, researchers have sought to document the social problems encountered by female sex workers in the state of Andhra Pradesh, encompassing discrimination by society, disparities in accessing and utilizing health services, discrimination by husbands and families, police harassment, and overall violence.

Amid the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the widespread adoption of remote work became a refuge for many, allowing them to safeguard their well-being within the confines of their homes. However, this choice was not available to the daily wage earners in the informal sector, who bore the brunt of the crisis. While work gradually resumed for many after the lockdown, the challenges persist for sex workers in red-light areas who find it arduous to rebuild their lives.

On March 26, 2020, the Government of India announced a relief fund of Rs. 1.7 lakh crore aimed at supporting migrant workers, rural and urban poor, and frontline health workers in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, the more than 800,000 sex workers in India were excluded from these benefits, as sex work is not officially recognized as legitimate employment in the country. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) took a positive step on October 7, 2020, issuing an advisory urging states to acknowledge sex workers as informal workers for the protection of their rights during the pandemic. However, this stance was later retracted due to opposition from some social activists, who feared that such recognition might inadvertently legitimise human trafficking.

The nationwide lockdown imposed as a preventive measure against COVID-19 has left sex workers unable to sustain their households and meet rental obligations. Many have been unable to access benefits from the Public Distribution Service due to inadequate documentation.

Regrettably, the challenges faced by sex workers extend beyond the context of the pandemic. Subject to societal stigma and legislative neglect, these individuals often experience harassment from brothel owners.

Sex workers are also vulnerable to exploitation by law enforcement agencies, who may

illegally detain and sexually abuse them. During brothel raids, brothel owners sometimes escape legal consequences by bribing the police. Children living in red-light areas face their own set of challenges, falling victim to the stigma associated with their mothers' profession and enduring abuse and discrimination.

The issue of sex work in India is complex, encompassing a spectrum of experiences from those forced into the profession due to abject poverty, lack of opportunities, or trafficking to those who engage in it voluntarily. It is crucial to acknowledge that while a significant number of women are compelled into sex work by adverse circumstances, there exists a segment of sex workers who enter the profession willingly. However, the legal framework in India tends to view sex work predominantly through the lens of exploitation, focusing more on eliminating prostitution than recognizing and safeguarding the basic human rights of sex workers.

Historical practices like Devadasiis, Dombara, and Mathamma, among others, persist as contributing factors that force many women into prostitution. The government must direct attention toward the rehabilitation of individuals within the sex worker community, recognizing the need for comprehensive support.

## CHAPTER II

### OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

1. Understand the multifaceted impact of the post-COVID era on the lives of sex workers
2. Contextualize the challenges faced by sex workers in Andhra Pradesh
3. Identify the specific impacts of COVID-19 on sex workers
4. Amplify the voices of sex workers and advocate for their rights

Overall, the objectives of "Emerging into Light" are to shed light on the post-COVID impact on sex workers in Andhra Pradesh, advocate for their rights, and inform policies and initiatives that create a more supportive environment for this marginalised community.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The proposed research methodology for the study "Emerging into Light: Unveiling the Post-COVID Impact on Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Sex Workers, and Rescued Survivors of Trafficking in Andhra Pradesh" adopts a descriptive research design. The study encompasses the three united districts of Prakasam, Guntur, and Krishna in Andhra Pradesh. A total of 50 female sex workers from each district are chosen for participation in the study, ensuring a representative sample. Data was collected through interviews, participants' observation and non-participant observation. Subsequently the data was analysed and this report was developed.

**Data analysis was done through codifications and computer tabulation**

The research methodology is designed to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the post-COVID impact on female sex workers in Andhra Pradesh.

By employing a combination of data collection techniques tailored to the study's objectives, it aims to shed light on the challenges faced by this marginalized group and inform intervention strategies for their support and empowerment.

## CHAPTER IV

### SALIENT FEATURES OF PRELIMINARY SURVEY AND DETAILED ANALYSIS

United Districts	Preliminary survey Conducted with CSW's	Detailed Interviews conducted with CSW's	Type of Prostitution			Age Status				
			Domestic	Brothel Based	Street Based	Below 18	18-25	25-35	35-45	Above 45
Krishana	142	50	28	-	22	1	24	22	2	1
Guntur	110	50	34	9	7	0	18	29	2	1
Prakasam	106	50	40	7	3	0	9	40	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>

### Key Findings of The Study

#### Financial Challenges

- 68% of CSWs in Andhra Pradesh engage in domestic prostitution
- Customized interventions are required to tackle the varied challenges faced by CSWs in different age groups types of sex work.
- A significant proportion of CSWs bear familial responsibilities. Hence it is important to address their financial needs and provide adequate support to mitigate the impact of their occupation on their families. There is a need to understand the occupational profiles and financial challenges faced by the CSWs for implementing targeted support measures.
- The presence of CSWs in SHGs highlights the significance of collective savings and support mechanisms within the community.
- CSWs exhibit diverse loan profiles, ranging from manageable borrowings to substantial indebtedness. Focus on financial literacy, savings behavior and debt management strategies are essential to empower CSWs and alleviate their financial burdens.

#### Mental Health Challenges

- Mental health support is an important area that needs to be addressed. There is an urgent need for increased awareness and access to mental health services for sex workers, addressing their unique challenges and providing support for their psychological well-being.

#### Challenges Related to Support to Family and Children

- There is a need to address discrepancies in documentation and access to ensure equitable opportunities and greater societal inclusion.
- A disparity is noticed in utilisation of welfare schemes among CSWs. It prompts a need for improved outreach and awareness initiatives.
- There is a need to develop targeted interventions and support systems for both parents and children within this community.
- Recognising and addressing gender-specific and age-sensitive challenges is crucial



for tailoring interventions to promote the well-being and empowerment of all children in CSW households.

- Targeted interventions are needed to protect the rights and well-being of vulnerable children, including those experiencing child marriages.
- The data emphasizes the multifaceted challenges faced by CSW children in accessing and succeeding in education. High dropout rates, irregular attendance, and academic struggles highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions and support services to address the unique needs of these children.

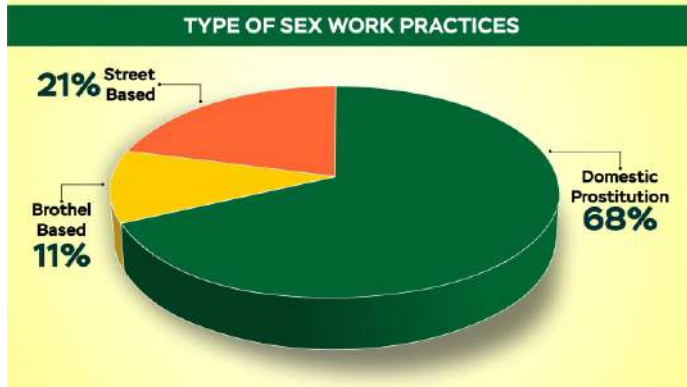
## Transitioning Out of Commercial Sex Work: Insights and Opportunities

- **Willingness to Transition:** The data reveals a notable trend among CSWs, with a significant majority expressing a desire to transition out of the sex work industry. Many of them said to have harbouring this desire for several years. Data showed that 67% of CSWs desired to leave their profession for the last 1-3 years. 19% has been harbouring this desire for the last 4-5 years, 8% for more than 5 years and 6% has been thinking of leaving sex work for less than 1 year.
- **Impact of COVID-19:** The data underscores the multifaceted impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on CSWs' livelihoods and well-being. The survey shows 47.33% suffered insufficient income during and after the COVID pandemic. 14% reported lack of customers after the pandemic yet another 12% increased health problems after COVID. These situations contributed to their willingness to leave the profession.
- **Barriers to Transition:** The data reveals a complex interplay of social, familial, and economic factors influencing CSWs' decisions to continue in the profession. 36.67% were bound by family and economic problems as a result they could not come out of the profession. 28% said that they might not receive sufficient government support after they come out of their profession. 16% reported that they have no other alternatives to earn and 14.67% admitted they lack occupational skills to earn their livelihood if they leave the profession.
- **Lack of Awareness:** The data highlights a critical gap in knowledge and awareness among CSWs regarding government rehabilitation schemes. A meager 22% appeared to be aware of different government schemes/programmes that are available for the rehabilitation of the CSWs. In contrast a whopping 78% admitted they have no knowledge about this/
- **Varied Rehabilitation Needs:** The data showcases the diverse range of rehabilitation measures sought by CSWs, reflecting their multifaceted needs. 26.10% felt they needed supports for livelihood, 15.16% wanted stigma reduction, and 14.37% sought financial support. There were other measures also which the CSWs wanted like skill training, social security etc.

# CHAPTER V

## 1. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

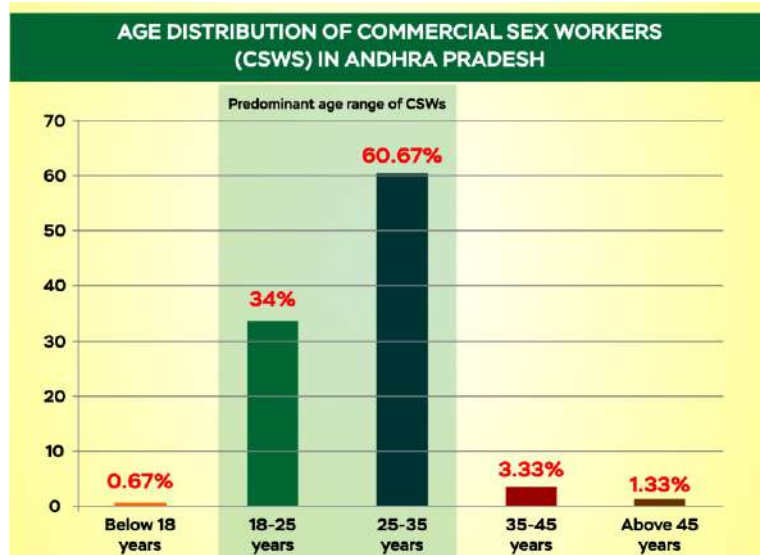
### 1.1. Variations in Sex Work Practices: Examining the Classification of Prostitution in Andhra Pradesh



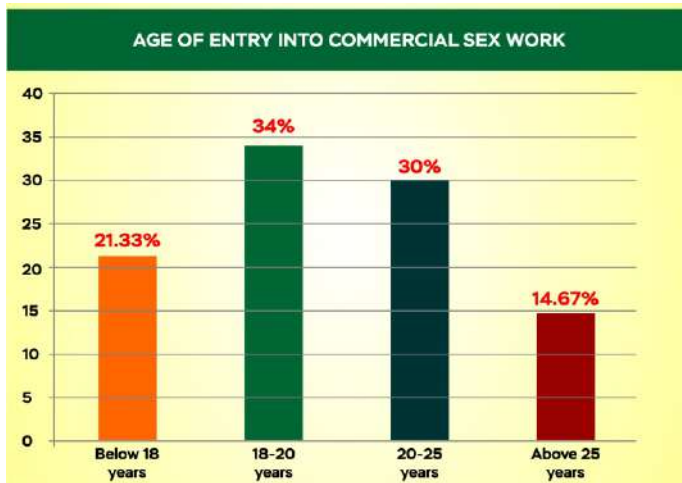
**Inference:** The findings emphasize the importance of tailored interventions and support mechanisms to address the specific challenges faced by CSWs operating in different types of prostitution.

### 1.2. Age Distribution of Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs) in Andhra Pradesh

**Inference:** This age distribution highlights the vulnerability of young women in the sex trade and underscores the need for targeted interventions to address their specific needs and challenges.

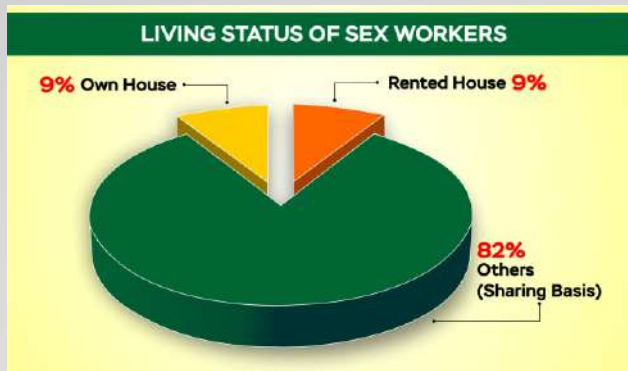


### 1.3. Understanding Age of Entry into Commercial Sex Work



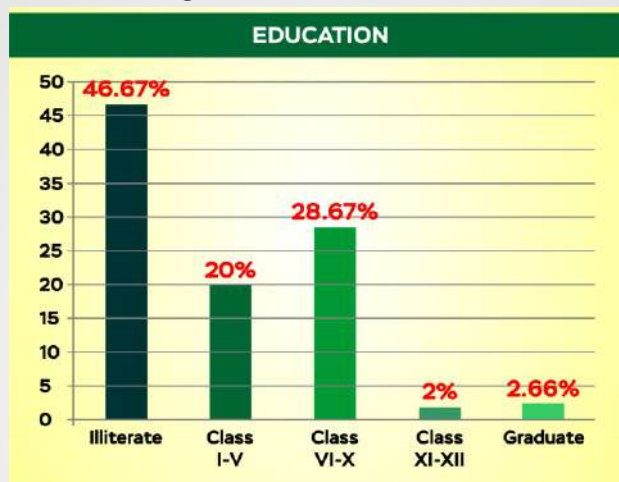
**Inference:** This data underscores the significance of understanding the age dynamics in commercial sex work, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and support mechanisms tailored to address the vulnerabilities and challenges faced by individuals entering the profession at different stages of life.

### 1.4. Housing Situation among Survivors



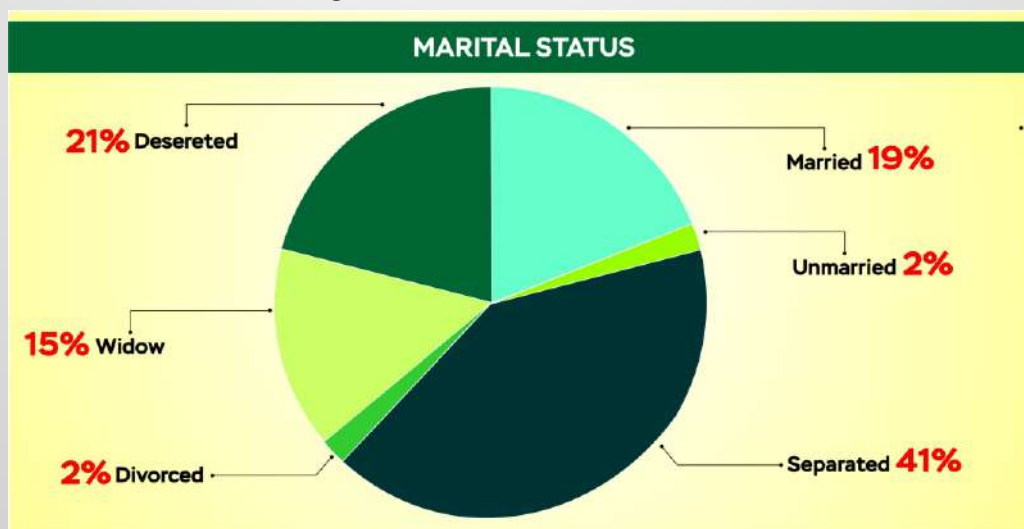
**Inference:** The overwhelming majority of survivors in the study, comprising 82%, rely on rental housing, underscoring the urgent need for interventions aimed at providing stable housing solutions and addressing the broader socio-economic factors contributing to their housing insecurity.

### 1.5. Education Status Among Sex Workers



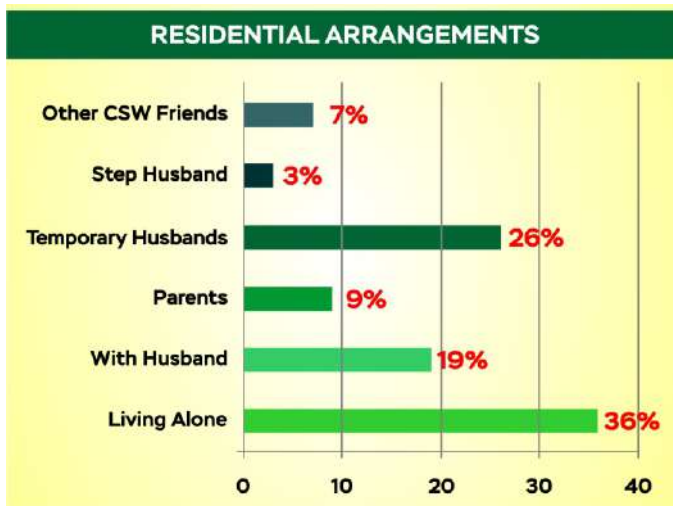
**Inference:** This highlights the urgent need for educational interventions to empower individuals and mitigate the risks associated with exploitation and trafficking.

### 1.6. Marital Status among Commercial Sex Workers



**Inference:** The finding highlights the profound impact of marital discord and family instability on women's entry into and continuation within the profession.

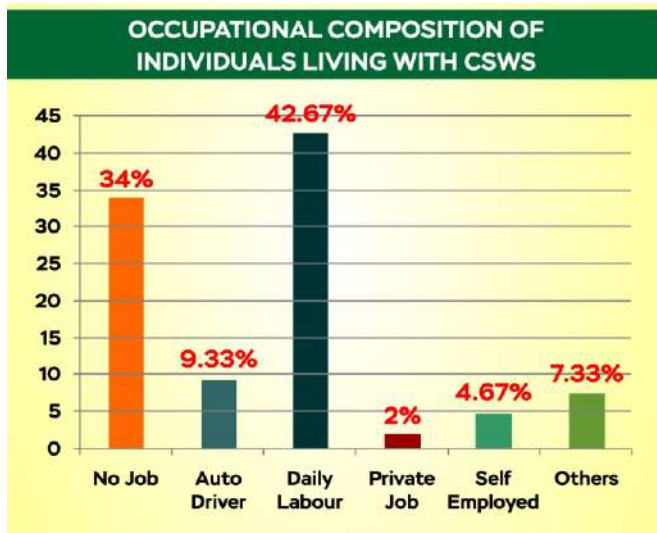
1.7. Residential Arrangements of Commercial Sex Workers



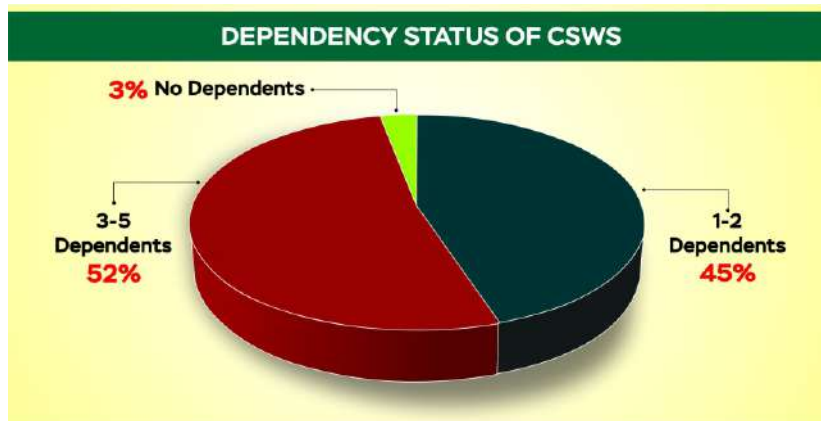
**Inference:** These findings provide insight into the varied living arrangements prevalent among CSWs.

1.8. Occupational Composition of Individuals Living with CSWs

**Inference:** Understanding their occupational profiles is crucial for implementing targeted support measures aimed at alleviating economic pressures and improving overall well-being.



1.9. Dependency Status of Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs)



**Inference:** This underscores the importance of addressing their financial needs and providing adequate support to mitigate the impact of their occupation on their families.

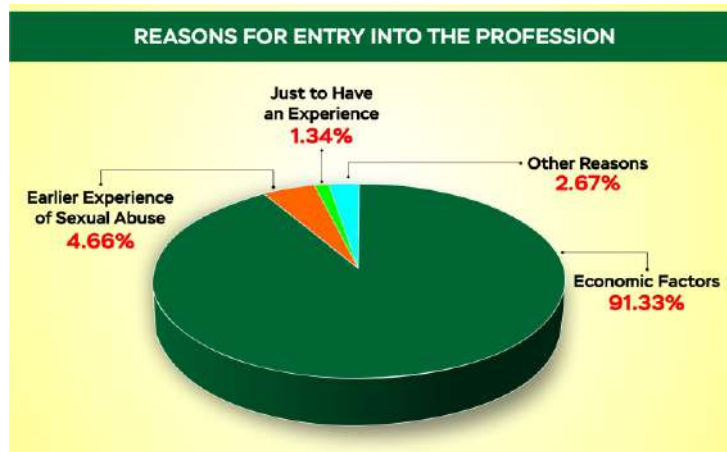
### 1.10. Duration of Engagement in Prostitution among CSWs



**Inference:** The presence of individuals continuing in the profession for over 15 years underscores the need for comprehensive support and interventions to address the complex challenges faced by long-term CSWs.

### 1.11. Reasons For Entry Into The Profession

**Title: Economic Adversity and Trauma: Influences on Entry into Commercial Sex Work**



One of the reasons why economic factors stands high among the reason for entry into the profession may be attributed to increased industrialisation, coupled with labor displacement due to mechanisation. This has created a scenario where traditional avenues of employment are scarce. This "no option" status

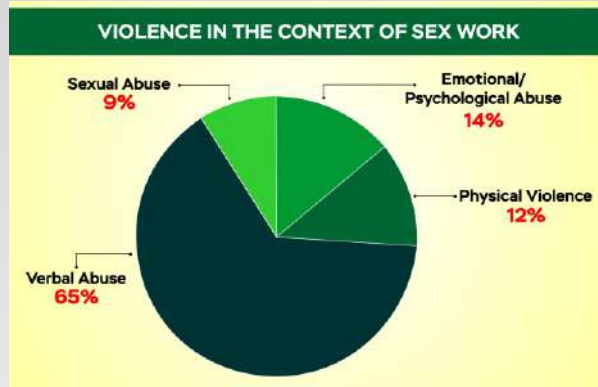
prevailing in the area often compels women to enter the sex trade, indicating a prominent form of soft trafficking driven by policy and dominant models of development.

Trauma and life events also play a significant role in pushing individuals into the profession, with 4.66% of respondents citing such experiences as reasons for entry. It is crucial to recognize that girls and women typically do not choose to enter the profession willingly; rather, compelling circumstances force them into it.

**Inference:** Economic adversity and traumatic life events emerge as significant drivers behind women's entry into commercial sex work, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive interventions addressing underlying socio-economic factors and structural inequalities.

### 1.12. Understanding Violence in the Context of Sex Work: A Data Analysis

PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST FEMALE SEX WORKERS	
Agents	Per centage
Clients	28
Police	7
Family Members	24
Pimps	9
All of the Above	22
No Response	10



The connection between sex work and violence against women is often overlooked, despite operating in reciprocal dynamics. Sex work perpetuates the notion that sex is an entitlement for men, treating women as commodities devoid of personal agency. Violence, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), encompasses physical, sexual, and emotional harm inflicted intentionally, posing significant risks to individuals' well-being.

In light of this intertwined relationship, documenting the violence experienced by female sex workers becomes imperative.

**Inference:** The study highlights the pervasive violence experienced by female sex workers in India, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive legal reforms, law enforcement training, and support mechanisms to safeguard their rights and well-being.

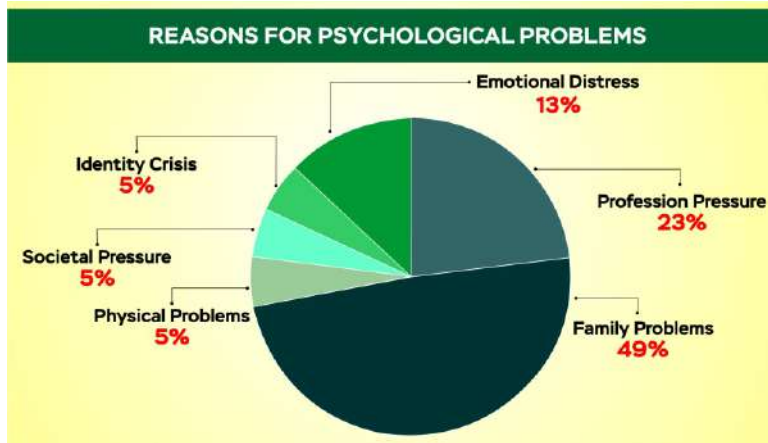
### 1.13. Mental Health Challenges Among Female Sex Workers: An Urgent Call for Action

In India, mental health poses a significant challenge, with approximately 13.7 percent of the general population experiencing various mental disorders, and 10.6 percent requiring immediate interventions. However, despite the prevalence of severe mental disorders affecting three out of four individuals, there exists a

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS FACED BY SEX WORKERS	
Problems	Per centage
Mood Disorder/Depression	24.70
Trauma	1.30
Alcohol/Drug Dependency	1.30
Stress/Tension	33.30
Suicidal Tendency	0
Anxiety Disorder	7.30
Anger Issues	26.30
Social Phobia	4.80
Seeking Emotional Support	1

considerable treatment gap exceeding 60 percent. The economic burden associated with mental disorders leads affected families to spend nearly Rs.1,000-Rs.1,500 per month, primarily for treatment and accessing care. Stigma surrounding mental health issues further exacerbates the problem, with almost 80 percent of those affected not receiving any treatment despite their illness (Yasmeen, Afshan, 2016).

While physical health problems like STIs/HIV have received attention among female sex workers, their mental health issues have been largely overlooked. The profession often leads to trauma, anxiety, phobias, depression, anger issues, and mental illness among female sex workers. Societal stigma and disapproval of sex work can hinder their willingness to seek mental health services. In the Indian context, the situation is alarming, with insufficient focus on the mental health of female sex workers. The challenges they face, including social exclusion, financial dependency, fear of infection, leading a double life, problems in intimate relationships, customer demands, sexual problems, and adverse working conditions, contribute to their unhealthy mental state.



**Inference:** These findings emphasize the urgent need for increased awareness and access to mental health services for sex workers, addressing their unique challenges, and providing support for their psychological well-being.

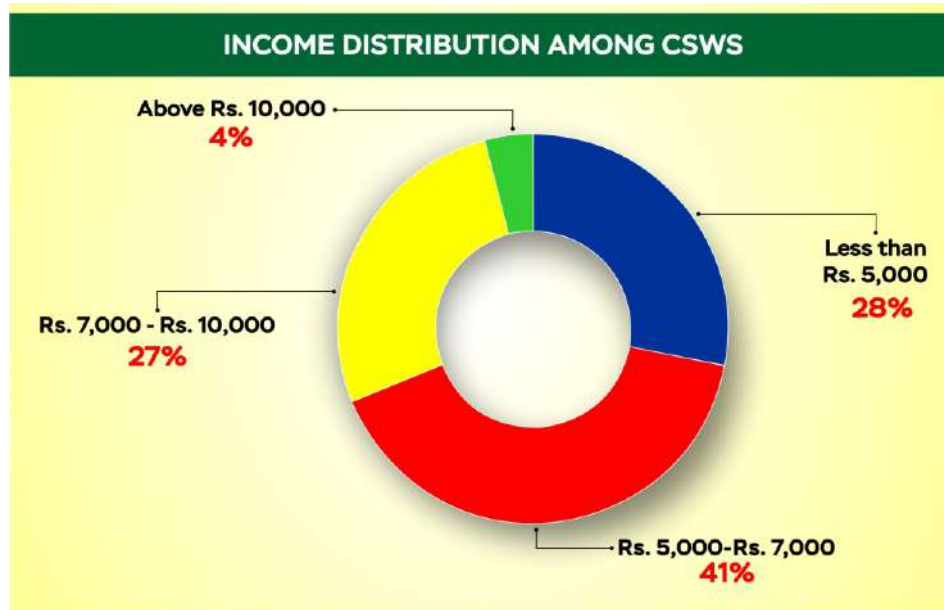
### 1.14. Understanding Factors Influencing Continued Engagement in Commercial Sex Work

Literature abounds with information that lures for easy money, the absence of any supportive mechanisms for rehabilitation, ignorance, and a lack of skills create problems for alternative arrangements as reasons for keeping girls and women in the field (Women, 1997; Child Abuse and Prostitution in Tamilnadu, 1998; Child Prostitution in Karnataka, 1998: The Velvet Bluse, 1997: A Study report on Commercial Sex workers and their Children in Coastal AP, 2002).

**Inference:** These findings underscores the predominant influence of economic factors on the continuation of commercial sex work among the surveyed individuals, with 36.67% attributing their ongoing engagement to economic pressures and loan repayment obligations.

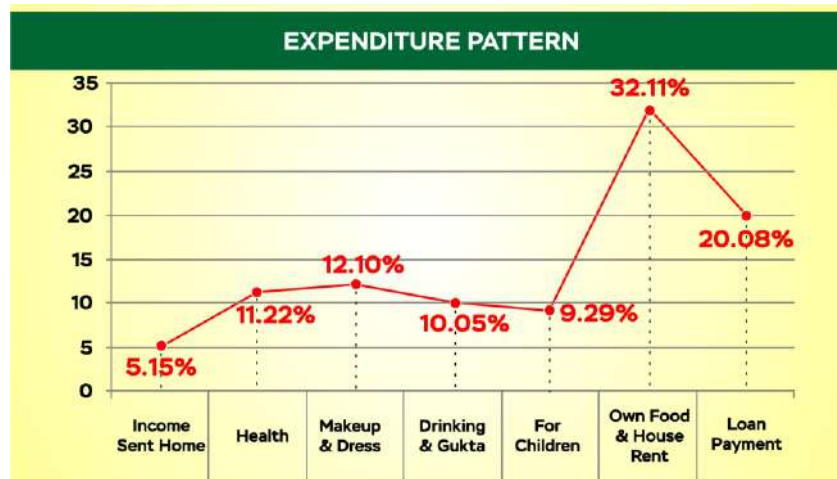


1.15. Income Distribution Among CSWs: A Comprehensive Analysis



**Inference:** The income data underscores the diverse economic circumstances experienced by CSWs, with a significant portion earning modest incomes below Rs. 7,000 per month. However, a notable proportion also falls within the higher income brackets, indicating variability in earnings within the profession.

1.16. Expenditure Patterns Among CSWs: Insights and Implications



**Inference:** The expenditure data highlights the complex financial decisions made by CSWs, with a significant portion of their income allocated towards basic needs, debt repayment, and personal well-being. These insights provide valuable understanding into the economic dynamics within the profession, informing targeted interventions aimed at addressing the financial challenges faced by CSWs.



## 2. FACILITIES AND RIGHTS

### 2.1. Social Entitlements

SOCIAL ENTITLEMENTS		
Entitlements	% Yes	% No
Ration Card	70	30
Voter Card	76	24
Aadhar Card	85.33	14.67
PAN Card	85.33	14.67
Gas Connection	63.33	36.67
Cast/Income Certificate	64	36

**Inference:** These findings underscore the importance of addressing discrepancies in documentation and access among CSWs. While the majority participates in civic duties and possesses key identification documents, the lower

proportion of caste and income certificates highlights a potential barrier to accessing certain benefits and services. Policymakers should prioritize initiatives aimed at closing these gaps, ensuring equitable opportunities and fostering greater inclusion within society.

### 2.2. Utilization of State Welfare Schemes Among Commercial Sex Workers

**Inference:** Notably, there are significant gaps in the utilization of schemes exclusively designated for CSWs. This highlights the need for improved outreach and awareness initiatives to ensure equitable access to welfare programs tailored to the needs of CSWs. Policymakers must address these disparities to enhance the overall well-being and social inclusion of CSWs in society.

ACCESSED GOVERNMENT SCHEMES		
Entitlements	% Yes	% No
Abhaya Hastam	32	68
Sukanya Samruddhi Yojana	8	92
Kalyana Lakshmi & Shadi Mubarak	2	98
Housing Schemes	12	88
GO Ms No. 1	1.33	98.67
GO Ms No. 28	1.33	98.67
Victim Compensation	0	100

## 3. FINANCE SECURITY

### 3.1 Banking Access and Participation Among Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation

**Inference:** Efforts should be directed towards ensuring universal banking access for all CSWs, as it not only facilitates financial transactions but also promotes financial inclusion and empowerment within this demographic area.



### 3.2 Financial Asset Ownership Among Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation

**Inference:** This underscores the need for initiatives aimed at promoting financial literacy and encouraging saving behaviors among CSWs to enhance their financial security and resilience.

DETAILS OF DEPOSIT	
Postal Deposit	
<b>YES</b> 2%	<b>NO</b> 98%
Fixed Deposit in Bank	
<b>YES</b> 0.67%	<b>NO</b> 99.33%
Public Provident Fund	
<b>YES</b> 0%	<b>NO</b> 100%
National Savings	
<b>YES</b> 0%	<b>NO</b> 100%
Kisan Vikas	
<b>YES</b> 0%	<b>NO</b> 100%

### 3.3. Saving Practices Among Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation

SAVINGS		
Medium of Savings	% Yes	% No
Self Help Groups	62.67	37.33
Cooperative Society	0	100
Shares/Mutual Funds/ Company Bonds	0	100
Private Chits	83.33	16.67
Friends/Relatives/ Family Members	0.67	99.33
Vaddi Businessmen	0.67	99.33
Bank/Post Office	0.67	99.33
Others	0	100

**Inference:** Efforts to enhance financial literacy and access to formal financial institutions could further empower CSWs to secure their financial futures more effectively.

### 3.4. Participation in Self-Help Groups Among Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Though 62.67% of the Commercial Sex Workers said to save through SHGs yet only 63% of the CSWs are members of the SHGs. It means that only 62.67% of the 63% who are members save through SHGs.



**Inference:** Efforts to promote and facilitate participation in SHGs could enhance financial resilience and social cohesion among CSWs, ultimately contributing to their overall well-being and empowerment.

### 3.5. Asset Ownership and Investments Among Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation

**Inference:** Efforts to support and facilitate these endeavors could further enhance the economic empowerment and well-being of CSWs within their communities.

OWN ASSETS		
Types of Assets	% Yes	% No
Gold/Jewellery	3.33	96.67
Land	0.67	99.33
Place/House	1.33	98.67
Own Petty Business	1.33	98.67
Others	1.33	98.67

### 3.6. Financial Challenges Among Commercial Sex Workers



**Inference:** By empowering CSWs economically, we can work towards improving their overall well-being and socioeconomic conditions.

### 3.7. Economic Challenges Faced by Female Sex Workers: A Comprehensive Analysis



Poverty emerges as a primary factor compelling women to engage in sex work. Women facing economic hardships, often with low educational levels, become vulnerable to entering the sex trade (Gadekar, Umesh, 2015). Economic difficulties persist both before and after entering the profession, with many hoping to improve their lives through sex work.

The economic struggles of female sex workers persist, as they are compelled to share their earnings with various individuals associated with the sex trade, including pimps, police, family members, and influential figures. For the current study, economic challenges such as poverty, low payments, household expenses, debt, and rent for sex work premises were considered



### 3.10 REASONS FOR NO PAY

Reasons	Per centage
Health Emergency	17.33
No Alternative Income	44
High Rate of Interest	20.67
Education Expenses for Children	10
Other Reasons	8

**Inference:** Understanding the economic challenges faced by sex workers is crucial for developing targeted interventions to improve their financial well-being and overall quality of life.

It was seen that the financial problems faced by the CSWs were perennial in nature and intricately linked to several other problems thus creating a vicious cycle. When there are acute financial problems in their profession, the CSWs have no other alternate income source but to take money on loan at high interest (61% resorted to taking loans) 23% resorted to fasting for the lack of money. As of October 2023 around 33% of the CSWs had loans amounting to Rs. 25,000 and above.

But it was seen that 20.67% CSWs were unable repay loans due to its high interest. 44% could not repay since they had no other alternate income.

Efforts to provide financial education, access to affordable credit, and sustainable livelihood opportunities can play a crucial role in improving the economic well-being and overall quality of life for female sex workers.

A holistic approach is essential to mitigate the economic vulnerabilities and enhance the livelihoods of CSWs, ultimately promoting their economic empowerment and social inclusion.

## 4. THE RESILIENCE AND POTENTIAL OF CHILDREN OF SEX WORKERS

Research into the lives of children of sex workers reveals a narrative of resilience and untapped potential amidst challenging circumstances. Despite the societal stigma and economic hardships associated with their parents' profession, these children demonstrate remarkable adaptability and strength.

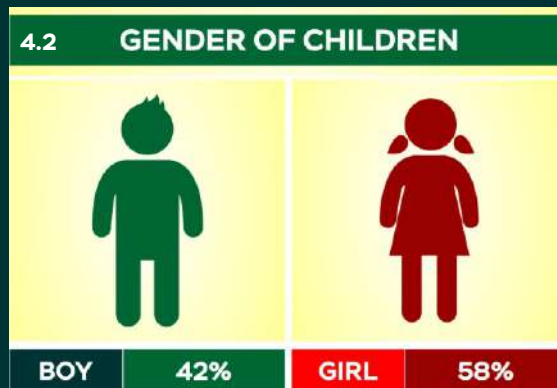
#### 4.1. Parenthood , Gender, Age and Status of Education of Children of CSWs

**Inference:** Understanding the dynamics of parenthood among CSWs is crucial for developing targeted interventions and support systems that promote the well-being of both parents and children within this community.

Among the Sex Workers 86% have children and remaining 14% does not have any children (4.1). Of the children 42% are boys and 58% are girls (4.2). Around 42% of these children are between 10-15 years of age and 9% are below 9 years (4.3).

Finally 55% of these children attend some form of school and the rest remain at home with no formal education.

Some studies have delved into the challenges faced by CSW children attending school, revealing high dropout rates and irregular attendance. Mothers,



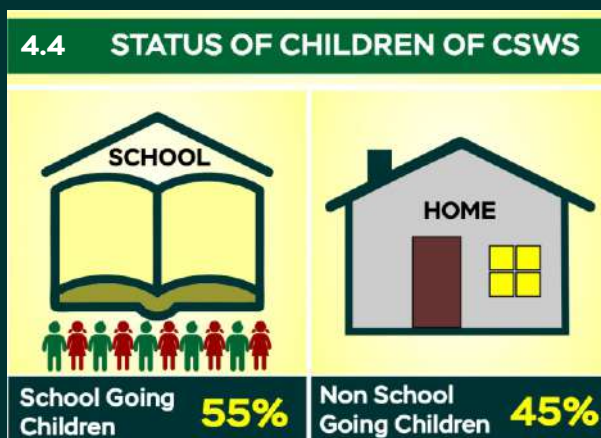
4.3 AGE WISE CHILDREN STATUS	
Age Range	Per centage
Below 5 Years	9
5-10 Years	42
10-15 Years	38
Above 15 Years	11

often exhausted from their night work, struggle to provide adequate support for their children's education, leading to difficulties in feeding, dressing, and getting them to school on time.

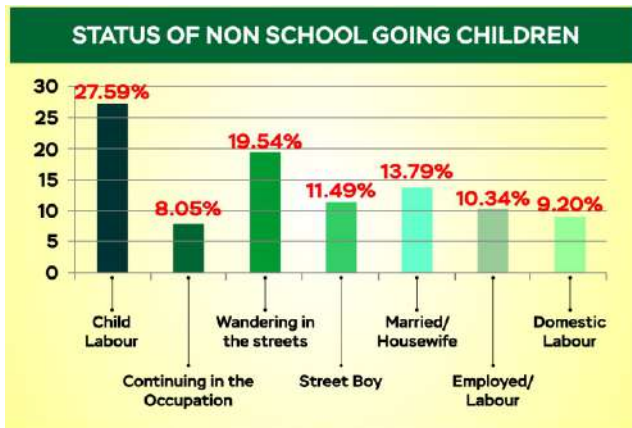
Additionally, as first-generation learners,

these children lack supervision at home, leading to academic struggles and reprimands from teachers. Moreover, exposure to the realities of their mothers' profession adds psychological stress and emotional complexities, further hindering their educational experience.

By recognising and addressing gender and age-specific challenges, interventions and support, programs can be tailored more effectively to promote the well-being and empowerment of all children. This will enable them to achieve their full potential in education and beyond.

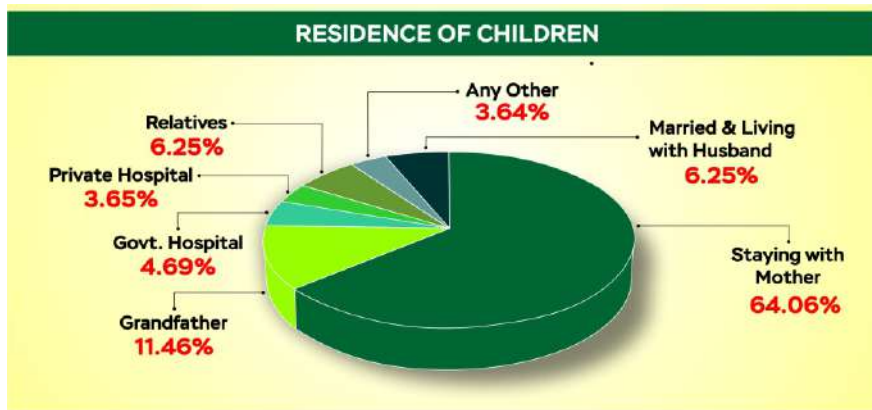


#### 4.5. Socio-economic Realities of Children (Status of non-school going) in CSW Families: A Comprehensive Analysis



**Inference:** By providing access to education, vocational training, and social services, we can empower these children to break free from the cycle of exploitation and create a brighter future for themselves.

#### 4.6. Living Arrangements of Children in CSW Families: A Detailed Analysis



**Inference:** The presence of child marriages among CSW families underscores the need for targeted interventions to protect the rights and well-being of these vulnerable children. Efforts aimed at strengthening family support systems and providing alternative care options are essential for promoting the holistic development and safety of children in CSW families.

### 5. REHABILITATION OF CSW's

The rehabilitation of sex workers is a complex and multifaceted issue. Central to successful rehabilitation efforts is the recognition of sex workers' rights and dignity, empowering them to lead fulfilling lives free from exploitation and marginalisation.

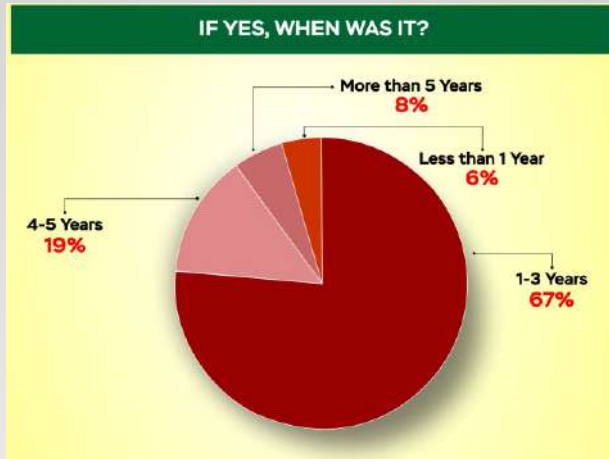
#### 5.1. Transitioning Out of Commercial Sex Work: A Shift in Perspectives

**Inference:** Understanding and supporting the aspirations of CSWs to leave the profession is crucial for facilitating their transition to alternative livelihoods and promoting their overall well-being and autonomy.



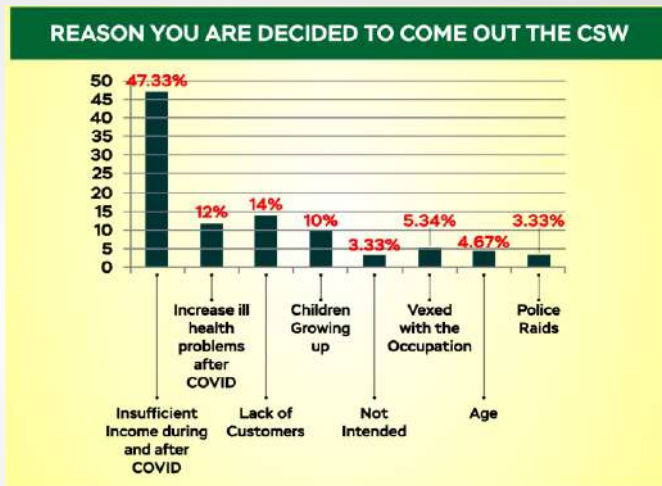
### 5.2. Longing for Exit: Duration of Desire to Leave Commercial Sex Work

**Inference:** Addressing the barriers to exit and providing support for their transition are essential for empowering CSWs to realize their aspirations and lead fulfilling lives beyond the confines of commercial sex work.



### 5.3. Impact of COVID-19 on Commercial Sex Workers: A Comprehensive Analysis

**Inference:** Addressing these challenges requires holistic interventions that provide financial support, access to healthcare, and alternative livelihood opportunities. Empowering CSWs to navigate these challenges is essential for ensuring their resilience and well-being in the face of ongoing adversities.

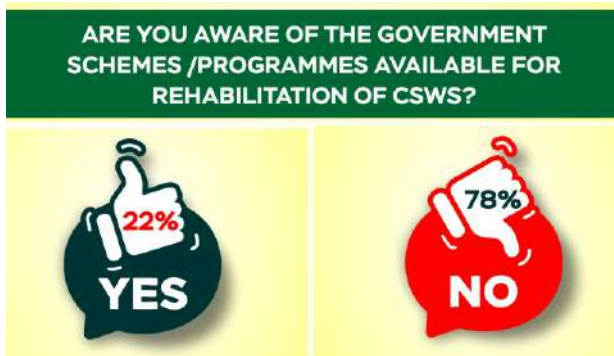


### 5.4. Factors Influencing Continuation in Commercial Sex Work: A Comprehensive Analysis



**Inference:** By empowering CSWs with the necessary resources and support networks, we can facilitate their transition out of commercial sex work and promote their holistic well-being and empowerment.

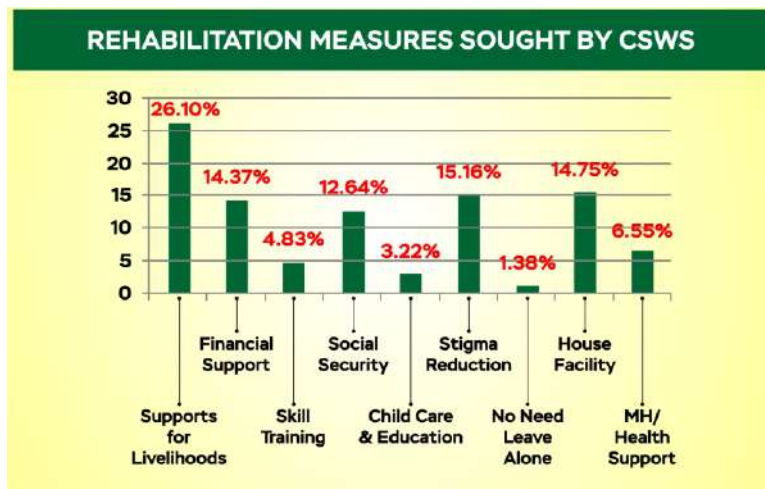
### 5.5. Lack of Awareness about Government Rehabilitation Schemes Among CSWs: An Analysis



**Inference:** By enhancing awareness and facilitating access to rehabilitation programs, we can empower CSWs to seek assistance and transition to alternative livelihoods, thereby improving their overall well-being and socioeconomic status.

### 5.6. Rehabilitation Measures Sought By CSWs: Insights And Analysis

**Inference:** By prioritizing these rehabilitation measures and providing holistic support, policymakers and stakeholders can empower CSWs to rebuild their lives and transition to dignified and sustainable livelihoods.



## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Economic

1. Economic empowerment programs should be rights-based, not centered on 'rehabilitation' and should not require sex workers to exit the sex work industry.
2. Enhance accessibility of economic empowerment programs by offering flexibility in attendance and other requirements to accommodate the unique circumstances of sex workers. Provide compensation for missed work if necessary and organize childcare for those with dependents.
3. Ensure the meaningful involvement of sex workers in the design and implementation of economic empowerment programs, recognizing their expertise and lived experiences.
4. Economic empowerment projects should provide opportunities for supplementary income and realistic alternatives to sex work, offering vocational training and skills relevant to local labor markets or improving conditions within the sex work industry.

### Legal

5. Revising the legal framework is essential to support sex work; therefore, it is imperative to amend The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, decriminalizing



activities related to sex work and fostering a conducive work environment. There is a need to enact comprehensive legislation to combat human trafficking effectively.

6. Providing viable alternatives and exit strategies for individuals engaged in prostitution to facilitate their transition into mainstream society with access to social rights and entitlements.
7. Establishing a dedicated collective of survivor leaders empowered to advocate for justice and safeguard fundamental human rights, supported by adequate financial backing and support.
8. Implementing stringent measures such as prohibiting the acquisition of sex and introducing a licensing system for private residences to deter prostitution and human trafficking.
9. A prominent demand highlighted by the survey is for the government to acknowledge sex work as informal labor, granting sex workers access to worker benefits such as social welfare provisions and legal protections.
10. Access to essential services should be provided to sex workers based on their citizenship and context without subjecting them to discrimination or risk. Mandatory access should be ensured while safeguarding their rights and dignity.

### **Social**

11. Prioritizing the provision of education and rehabilitation facilities for current victims and future generations at risk of exploitation, aiming to break the cycle of exploitation and foster long-term societal change.
12. Implementing regular sensitization programs across all public offices is crucial to destigmatize sex work and promote acceptance of sex workers, thus mitigating the risks of violence, harassment, and discrimination stemming from societal biases.
13. Understanding the multifaceted impact of the pandemic on sex workers' livelihoods is urgent, necessitating dedicated relief measures to mitigate the substantial loss of income and address the vulnerable working conditions they face. Given that household expenses constitute a significant portion of their monthly expenditure, improving sex workers' access to government schemes for essentials like ration, clean fuel, housing, and sanitation is essential in establishing a social security net for them and their dependents.
14. The survey has underscored a significant demand for the government to recognize sex work as informal labor, thereby granting sex workers access to worker benefits, including social welfare provisions and legal protections.
15. Respect and leverage sex workers' existing skills by providing training that builds upon them, whether within sex work or in other occupations where their skills may be valuable.
16. Establish core, long-term, and flexible funding mechanisms for sex worker organizations, empowering sex workers by shifting decision-making power to sex worker-led organisations.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the recommendations outlined above provide a comprehensive framework for supporting the economic empowerment of sex workers. By prioritizing rights-based approaches, enhancing accessibility, and ensuring meaningful involvement of sex workers in program design and implementation, these recommendations address the unique challenges faced by individuals in the sex work industry.

Moreover, by advocating for core, long-term, and flexible funding for sex worker organizations, these recommendations aim to shift decision-making power to those with firsthand experience, fostering a more inclusive and effective approach to economic empowerment within the sex work community.

It is through the collective efforts of policymakers, stakeholders, and advocates that meaningful progress can be achieved, ensuring that the voices and needs of sex workers are recognized, respected, and addressed effectively.



Society for HELP Entire Lower and rural People (HELP) is an award-winning developmental organization committed to the protection of women and children from violence, sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking. Started by a group of service-minded professionals in 1994, HELP has been recognized as an important policy influencing organizations in the country. HELP envisions a stigma free society for survivors of trafficking and victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (women in prostitution) where they could be able to access and enjoy their rights and entitlements. Strengthening accountability of the criminal justice system to survivors of human trafficking including efficient investigation by the police and prosecution of traffickers in source and destination areas by the court of law in protecting survivors` rights to rehabilitation and Elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against survivors of human trafficking in families, communities, institutions.



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