



Family-Facilitated Child Sex Trafficking in India: A Nexus of Caste, Structural Vulnerabilities, and Desperation

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1 Introduction

Child sex trafficking, a form of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), is an international crime of profound proportions. Although prevalence is impossible to gauge, its global existence—in countries diverse in culture, economics, politics, and religion—and in innumerable manifestations, is undebatable [1–3]. A uniquely disturbing form of child sex trafficking involves family members as perpetrators—or collaborators—in the trafficking of minor kin. There is little reason to believe that the sex trafficking of children—facilitated by parents and other family members—does not also occur globally. Yet, from an empirical point of view, little is known about the commercial sexual exploitation of children when family members act as gatekeepers or perpetrators. Further, much of what is currently understood about child sex trafficking generally speaking, and facilitated by kin specifically, comes from studies in Western and developed countries—which—for all intents and purposes comprises a snippet only of the 360° view needed to effect culturally relevant localized change, globally. Small-scale ecologically contextualized investigations are critical for surfacing nuanced manifestations of family involved child sex trafficking. To add to the small but growing body of literature, in this chapter I synthesize my research on child involved sex trafficking in India as a means of (a) highlighting similarities and differences with the broader scientific literature, and (b) addressing research and practice needs for moving the field of scholarship forward in productive and meaningful ways.

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2 Defining Sex Trafficking for Use in a Global Context

The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNHRC; [4]) (aka the Palermo Protocol) provides the most comprehensive and internationally agreed upon definition of human trafficking.

- (a) “Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs
- (b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used
- (c) *The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article*
- (d) *“Child” shall mean any person under 18 years of age [italicized for emphasis]*

I highlight both (c) and (d) to emphasize that anyone under the age of 18 involved in the commercial sex industry (CSI) is considered a victim of sex trafficking according to the Protocol. The Palermo Protocol was ratified by the Indian Government in May 2011. Despite its global reach and ratification by 190 parties, it is not without criticism. Controversy surrounds the Palermo’s definition [5] which is important because definitional issues impact application. However, criticisms abound in many, if not most, written legal or political documents related to human trafficking. With regard to Indian legal directives, including the Immoral Traffick (Prevention) Act of 1956, Helpingstine et al. [6] write, “There is a multiplicity and overlapping of acts and laws and yet, none adequately addresses the complex issues related to [human] trafficking.” For simplicity, my research into sex trafficking—regardless of country in which data are collected—utilizes the definitions provided in the Palermo Protocol.

3 Family-Facilitated Child Sex Trafficking

Situations in which minors (anyone under the age of 18) are sexually exploited by a family member, or by a third party who is assisted by a family member, is referred to throughout this chapter as “family-facilitated child sex trafficking” (FFCST).

This is a specific type of child sex trafficking which is sometimes also referred to in the scholarly literature as “familial trafficking” [7], “family facilitated juvenile sex trafficking” [8], and “family-controlled trafficking” [9]. Although interest in this particular manifestation of child sex trafficking is increasing, the body of literature and subsequent field of knowledge remain in the nascent stages. This is largely due to difficulty identifying and accessing survivors (e.g., many do not realize they are/have been victims of sex trafficking, the human trafficking industry remains largely underground), as well as myriad additional challenges in conducting sensitive research involving *family* as perpetrators, including complex and multi-layered dynamics and emotional processes involving manipulation, coercion and control, and dependence and affection [9, 10].

Further, it is important to note at the outset that the empirical knowledge about family-facilitated child sex trafficking is from Western countries—which has implications for assumptions about family processes and dynamics as well as the commercial sex industry (CSI). With that in mind, a brief overview of the scholarly literature related to child sex trafficking is in order.

Although anyone could become a child victim of sex trafficking, certain factors place individuals at greater risk. These include poverty [11], forced and premature self-care (i.e., due to parental neglect/inability) [12], running away from home, homelessness, living in out-of-home placement, and migration [13–15], LGBTQ+ identification [16], history of sexual or physical abuse [17], and substance use [18–20]. Furthermore, compared to youth trafficked by strangers, acquaintances, or friends, those trafficked by kin are disproportionately more likely to experience familial involvement in the CSI, frequent relocation, and lack of child maltreatment detection [8, 21].

Outcomes of child sex trafficking (whether family controlled or otherwise) can be emotional, social, and physical and include the following: anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, suicidal ideation, self-harming behavior, conduct disorders, substance use/abuse, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and social/relational problems (e.g., attachment disorders) [13, 18].

4 Structural Vulnerabilities

Context matters. This is true regardless of the phenomena of interest—with those phenomena involving complexities of culture, human agency, and developmental pathways requiring greater attention to contextual nuance than those involving static and mechanical issues or phenomena amenable to physical manipulation and control. Further, it is undeniable that some contexts offer greater availability of and access to valuable resources (e.g., material, social, institutional) than others and that resource disparities have both direct and indirect implications for opportunities (and barriers) for optimal development. Structural violence is a term coined by Galtung [22], who defined it as the “indirect violence built into repressive social orders creating enormous differences between potential and actual human self-realization” [23]. Through time, the word “violence” has fallen out of favor and been replaced

with the term “vulnerability” [24] to allow for incorporation and assessment of broad structural forces (e.g., political, economic, cultural) that imping upon development. A structural vulnerability is a risk or threat to an individual, family unit, community, or society due to deficient resources including money, education, access to health care, or important/vital information. Included in the wider conceptualization of risk are social hierarchies, such as the Hindu caste system, which convey a taxonomy of worthiness as well as social in/exclusion. Quesada et al. [24] explain the ramifications as follows: “...the vulnerability of an individual is produced by his or her location in a hierarchical social order and its diverse network of power relationships and effects.” Not surprisingly, those most affected by structural vulnerabilities are marginalized and pariah populations [25].

Structural vulnerabilities rarely appear in isolation. That is, a single vulnerability (e.g., low socioeconomic status) tends to manifest with other vulnerabilities (e.g., poor/insufficient housing) and converge to create a risk environment—defined as a *physical or social* environment that either enhances or reduces risk for individuals associated with that environment [26, 27]. Conceptualization of risk environments encourages examination of factors beyond the individual such as neighborhood conditions (violence/crime), discrimination (e.g., racial, gender, caste), and economic and social inequalities that reflect the realities of the human condition. Environments characterized by substantial risk create additional vulnerabilities—by circumscribing individuals’ ability to act with *agency*. Quesada et al. [24] explain that structural vulnerabilities create risk environments which set the boundaries and conditions for how people live (i.e., because of choices that exist/do not exist) as well as “how goals are prioritized, what sorts of actions and responses might seem appropriate, and which ones are possible” [28]. Structural vulnerabilities play a profound role in family-facilitated child sex trafficking in India.

5 Caste and Structural Vulnerability

The Hindu caste system dates back about 3000 years and divides Hindus (and Indian society) into four main categories: (1) Brahmins (priests), (2) Kshatryia (rulers, administrators, warriors), (3) Viasya (artisans, merchants, landowners), (4) and Sudra (laboring classes, commoners), with some 2800 total castes and subcastes [29]. The Varna categorization has a fifth element including those people deemed to be entirely outside its scope (literally “outcast” or out-of-caste) and includes tribal people and “untouchables” (street sweepers, latrine cleaners). Today, “untouchables” are referred to as *Dalits*. Dalits are those who officially comprise the Scheduled Castes (SC)¹ and constitute about 17% of India’s total population. SC include about 1100 unique subcastes who collectively occupy the lowest rung on India’s caste hierarchy [29]. Historically, untouchables were denied social, economic, cultural,

¹Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (ST) are officially designated groups of historically disadvantaged people in India. Though differences between caste and tribe exist, for all intents and purposes, the term “caste” is used throughout this chapter.

and political rights, including rights to property and education. Despite the enactment of laws to abolish discriminatory practices against Dalits, caste discrimination remains pervasive across the country, especially in rural areas [30] and constitutes a profound social force that shapes life course opportunities and constraints. Dalit women face disproportionate challenges due to the compounded burdens of caste discrimination, economic deprivation, and patriarchy [31].

6 Family-Facilitated Child Sex Trafficking in India

My research in India has spanned two decades. In this time, three unique types of family-facilitated child sex trafficking have been identified (refer to Fig. 1). Careful analyses between the three reveals similarities (such as membership in one of many Dalit castes) as well as nuanced differences—differences which may have implications for developmental outcomes among those victimized by FFCST in an Indian context.²

Caste discrimination reduces individuals' access to educational, economic, social, political, and other tangible and non-tangible resources necessary to improve one's circumstances. Not surprisingly, the CSI in India is overwhelmingly comprised of lower caste, impoverished Dalit women and minors whose entry into the sex trade was either forced or coerced, or who lacked other viable options for generating income [32, 33].

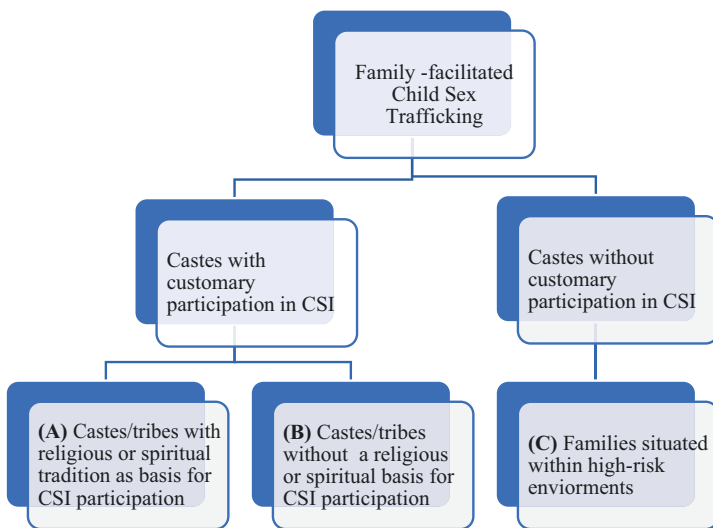


Fig. 1 Three manifestations of family-facilitated child sex trafficking in India

²Additional manifestations of FFCST may exist in India, although none has been described in the empirical literature, to date, that fall outside the framework depicted in Fig. 1.

6.1 High-Risk Environments and FFCST

My first empirical investigation of sex trafficking in India was aimed at better understanding the extent to which CSI entry was a product of *force, fraud, coercion or had occurred prior to 18 years of age* (i.e., that is, the extent to which women working in India's commercial sex trade were victims of sex trafficking; refer to Dalla and Kreimer [34] and Dalla et al. [35] for details). To address this question, in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 females (aged 23–40 years) working in two infamous red-light districts in Mumbai, India; interviews focused on childhood and early life experiences with specific attention to processes that led to CSI entry.

In terms of early life experiences, 29 of the 30 participants had migrated (or been brought) to Mumbai from remote and distant rural villages and were also from extremely impoverished, landless families and members of a Dalit caste. One participant described her natal village by saying, “I didn’t know anything...this [sex work] doesn’t happen.” She continued “...we [did] agricultural work...look after the cattle, feed them...collect cow dung, cut the grass and the produce.” None of the participants was literate. Formal education is considered an irrelevant and meaningless endeavor when day-to-day existence depends on harsh physical labor (if available) or scavenging for subsistence. In such contexts, children are expected to earn money as early as they are physically able. In this study, Pooja³ provides a case in point—at age 9 she joined her parents in the rock quarries cutting stone. Another participant explained “We didn’t have anybody to feed us. Every day...same roti [Indian bread] to eat, one set of clothes.” Not surprisingly, exhausting physical labor, crippling indigence, and lack of services and resources took a tremendous toll on participants’ families of origin. Abandonment, alcohol abuse, and early death were not uncommon.

Some caregivers responded by forcing daughters into early marriage. In fact, 16 participants (or 53%) were forced into marriage as minors (average age at marriage was 14.5 years, with an age range of 11–17 years).⁴ Other caregivers responded to the same high-risk environment (i.e., that created from a multitude of structural vulnerabilities including caste discrimination, impoverishment, gender discrimination, rurality, limited physical and social resources) differently—by selling daughters into the CSI. Of the 30 interviewed, 24 (80%) met the Palermo Protocol’s definition for having been victims of sex trafficking. Twelve of the 24 (or 50%) were sold as children (χ age = 12.4 years; range = 8–15 years) to work in the commercial sex trade. Six of the 12 were sold by a family friend or acquaintance, six others by kin, including: mothers ($n = 2$), sisters ($n = 2$), and stepmothers ($n = 2$). All 12 fit the definition of family-facilitated child sex trafficking (refer to Fig. 1[C]). The case of Zamekha is especially illustrative. She was sold to a brothel at age 12 and described being forced to stand, get dressed, and put on make-up. She refused, asking the brothel keeper, “Why? Why should I do any of this?” The brothel keeper

³All names are pseudonyms.

⁴Child marriage is a form of human trafficking [36] and constitutes a subset of child sex trafficking [37].

responded by slapping her across the face, and yelling: “Your mother has sold you to me. Your uncle has sold you to me!”

6.2 Caste-Based and Intergenerational Family-Facilitated Child Sex Trafficking

Beyond the inequities and limitations faced by individuals on the lowest rung of the Hindu social hierarchy that renders many vulnerable to the commercial sex trade; some Dalit castes are especially well-known for active participation in the Indian sex economy. Said differently, numerous Dalit castes actively engage in the commercial sex trade as a primary (or only) means of earning income. In these communities, work in the CSI is practiced intergenerationally (across many generations of the same family) and considered customary. In such castes, pre-pubescent/early pubescent females are “selected” to enter the CSI; their lives thereafter become devoted to earning income to support kin [33, 38, 39]. Often frequently justified as a tradition or custom of culture, caste-based sex work is nonetheless a unique manifestation of family-facilitated child sex trafficking [33, 40]. Although precise numbers are difficult to gauge, thousands—perhaps hundreds of thousands—of Indian women and children are thought to be involved in India’s commercial sex industry due *directly* to caste membership [38].

Some castes, including the Devadasi (meaning “servant/handmaiden of God” or “servants of the Divine” [41]) point to religious origins for their participation in the commercial sex trade (refer to Fig. 1[A]). Historically, female (and sometimes male youth; referred to as *jogini*) would be dedicated to the service of a temple and its deity and responsible for indulging in cultural activities related to the shrine (singing, dancing, lighting incense). In time, *joginis* became obligated to cater to the sexual needs of temple patrons and village heads in order to earn income for the temple. Through time, entire lineages would “dedicate” daughters of each generation to a deity—hoping for favors or a path out of poverty. Eventually, the once-religious practice devolved into a form of institutionalized form of FFCST, with pubescent girls “dedicated” to a deity (in theory) and devoted to a life in the sex trade (in practice) to support kin. The “dedicated” girls either stay in their rural villages or migrate to the red-light brothel districts of urban areas (e.g., Mumbai, Delhi) where greater profits can be made [42].

In the study discussed earlier [34], two of the 30 participants were initiated as children to carry on the Devadasi tradition. Simply put, it was their obligation to financially support their families via work in the commercial sex trade. To illustrate, as a Devadasi, Radha was financially responsible for her siblings and other family members. She began earning money in the CSI at age 12 after being sent to live with her Devadasi aunt who taught her “how to take customers.”

Caste prostitution *without* a religious basis or origin (as practiced among the Bedia, Nat, Bachada, and other castes), functions similarly (refer to Fig. 1[B]). Agrawal’s [43, 44] work with the Bedia of northern India and a handful of other studies [45–50] comprise the scant academic literature on this phenomenon.

Importantly, Agrawal [44] identified unique differences between the Devadasi (discussed earlier) and the Bedia. First, only the “dedicated” Devadasi girl earns income through prostitution—typically a single female from each generation. In contrast, there is no limit to the number of Bedia girls per family or generation who engage in the commercial sex economy. Second, Devadasi women are considered “married to the god/goddess,” whereas sex-industry involved Bedia females are considered “married to money” (although neither can formally marry). Third, men in Devadasi families are typically economically *independent* of their CSI-involved kin. In comparison, Bedia men rarely work and are, essentially, financially dependent upon their CSI-involved sisters and daughters. Finally, the Devadasi tradition of “dedicating” a female child dates to antiquity and is based—as noted earlier, in religious traditions; no such religious connections exist among the Bedia and the Bedia’s sex-based economy is estimated to be four or five generations old.

In 2018, I traveled to India for continued investigation, with my research focused exclusively on intergenerational family processes associated with child sex trafficking among the Bedia caste of rural Madhya Pradesh (refer to Dalla et al. [46] for complete details). I was fortunate to be hosted by Samvedna [51]. Headquartered in Bhopal, Samvedna is an India-based NGO established in 2005 whose mission is to mitigate caste-based sex trafficking. With assistance of Samvedna staff, I interviewed 31 Bedia women (\bar{x} = 31.6 years, with an age range of 16–65 years) who resided across seven different rural, mixed-caste villages. Twenty-six participants were actively involved in the CSI; five had exited (or aged out). Participants entered the CSI at an average age of 15.8 years (age range = 12–20 years).

As noted earlier (see Structural Vulnerabilities), the “risk environment” encompasses both social and physical contexts [27]. Results of this study revealed that both social and physical contexts place Bedia girls in harm’s way for CSI entry. Physically, the environmental context lacks basic resources considered necessary for well-being—indoor plumbing, access to education beyond the primary years, access to quality education, instructors, and educational tools (e.g., books, computers), and industry or means of earning money. Socially, gender and caste-based discrimination prevail as does pressure for females to enter the CSI which manifests in both direct (i.e., forceful) and indirect (e.g., manipulation, coercion) ways. Once initiated into the CSI, the life course of a Bedia girl is forever set in motion. She cannot marry⁵ and is burdened with the economic survival and sustainability of her entire family system. Escape from the CSI comes only after she can no longer earn income from clients and when a replacement (someone able to earn on her behalf) has been initiated into the commercial sex trade. Twenty-two of the 31 participants were mothers with an average of 2.2 children each (range = 1–8 children). Children ranged in age from 3 months to 23 years old (\bar{x} = 11.3 years, SD = 4.6). Six daughters had already entered “the line.” And, although the others did not *want* their daughters to participate in the CSI—there was no guarantee that

⁵This is a strictly endorsed cultural script in which *married* Bedia females are forbidden from entering the CSI and CSI-involved females are forbidden from formal marriage (refer to Agrawal [43, 44]).

they would not. As a case in point, one participant explained: “I am trying to get them [daughters] educated, [but] if there is no money...” The only guarantee a daughter would *not* continue in the line was to not have any. This was expressed by Geta, a mother of two sons, who remarked: “I don’t want any daughters because, who knows, if I die someday, she [daughter] will have to work [in the CSI].” Geta believed that if she had any female children her sons would force them into the sex industry.

6.3 Similarities Across the Three Manifestations

Structural vulnerabilities and environments posing significant social and physical risk characterize the contexts which allow all three manifestations of FFCST in India to endure.

It is important to point out that many of the structural vulnerabilities facing the families/castes/communities which perpetuate FFCST (e.g., caste discrimination, indigence, residential instability/lack of indoor plumbing or electricity, illiteracy), are, in large measure, issues which plague much of rural India [52]. Noteworthy too is that although education is one of the strongest pathways for movement out of indigence, monumental barriers render access nearly impossible. In fact, India has the largest education system in the world but 40% of its population is illiterate—most of whom are Dalits residing in rural villages [53].

Here, it is important to remember that the Dalits or Scheduled Castes were considered “children of God” by Mahatma Gandhi. The legacy has continued. Today, two broad types of social movements exist aimed at *changing* the social condition of Scheduled Castes in Indian and other (Nepal) countries [54]. One type has as its mission complete reformation of the caste system to solve the problem of untouchability, while the other type has as its mission the creation of an alternative socio-cultural structure via religious conversion (other than Hindu) or by acquiring education, economic status, and political power. Both types use political means to attain their objectives. Yet, “...despite efforts made by social reformers and provisions made in law,” writes Nath [55], “...the forces of the status quo [continues].”⁶

It Millions of impoverished, illiterate, unskilled people with extensive resource, infrastructure, and accessibility needs exist throughout rural India [58–60]. In fact, the “world’s worst poverty, hunger and malnutrition are to be found in India—with two thirds of the 1.1 billion population living in poverty and half the children suffering malnutrition” [55]. Yet, only certain families turn to the sex industry for income and only particular castes actively engage in the sex industry as an intergenerational, customary and community sanctioned practice. Furthermore, it is clear from prior work [33, 45, 46] that family/caste tradition works *in tandem with*

⁶It is far beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss Dalit identity or exploration of economic independence among *Dalits* in India—but, it is critical to not paint any one group as homogenous; heterogeneity exists among all groups, including the *Dalits* of India or Nepal [56, 57].

indigence—rather than as a distinct facilitator. That is, when viable income generating options are available, families are unlikely to push daughters into the sex industry *even if they belong to castes where sex industry involvement is customary*.

6.4 Differences Across the Three Manifestations

As a social scientist—with particular interest in family processes and long-term developmental outcomes, it seems absurd to not ask: what familial, psychosocial, and intergenerational differences exist across the three manifestations of FFCST explored here? Said differently, what hypothesis could be made about those who are victims of child sex trafficking due to membership in a *religious-based* caste (such as the Devadasi) versus those who are members of a CSI-involved caste without religious origins (such as the Bedia) versus those who are members of a Dalit caste that has no affiliation to the CSI? Based on my own research [34, 35, 45, 46] as well as that of others [61–66], several hypotheses can reasonably be made with regard to familial support, personal/psychosocial well-being, and child (next generation) entry into the CSI.

In terms of familial support, those who are members of castes with historical (regardless of religious basis) affiliations to the CSI garner tremendously more support from kin than their peers who are CSI participants, but not from CSI-affiliated castes. That is, when CSI entry is part of caste and family tradition, familial ties are not severed—and, in fact, families tend to *rely on* income generated from CSI-involved daughters/mothers/sisters/aunts. Young Devadasi and Bedia girls (Fig. 1[A, B]) tend to live in the same homes as their kin—sometimes even engaging clients in private rooms of the familial home. Conversely, family relationships among victims of FFCST *without* historical connections to the sex trade (Fig. 1[C]), tend to be distant and tense, or entirely estranged. Among those families, CSI involvement by any family member is considered a source of stigma and shame—even if that person was sold into the trade as a child and by a family member!

Differences in family dynamics among sex industry involved individuals likely play a significant role in individual psychosocial well-being. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that those with greater familial support (i.e., those with caste-based affiliations to the CSI; Fig. 1 boxes A and B) would fare better psychosocially than their peers (Fig. 1, box C). Furthermore, because those with family history and caste-based traditions associated with the CSI are tasked with financially supporting their kin, it is likely that they, in turn, receive financial support when they are no longer able to continue working in the industry (i.e., after exiting). These sources of support likely play significantly into individual health and well-being. I would hypothesize that the poorest outcomes, psychosocially as well as physically, would be among CSI-involved individuals who entry was family facilitated but without caste affiliation to the sex industry. Those individuals—sold or coerced into the sex trade by kin—uprooted from familiar environments (e.g., home/natal village) and lacking customary bases for CSI participation, face

extensive and oppressive stigma. Furthermore, these individuals would be expected to not have a system of economic support after exiting the CSI other than, perhaps, their own children.

Hypotheses can also be made about the children (next generation) of FFCST victims. Specifically, female children born to victims of FFCST and who are members of a *CSI-affiliated* caste (e.g., Devadasi, Bedia) are more likely to themselves be victims of FFCST compared to children born to victims of FFCST *without* such caste-based affiliations. Said differently, I hypothesize that the familial support expected to promote personal well-being among some FFCST victims (Fig. 1, boxes A and B) also put their daughters in jeopardy of CSI entry. Whereas the absence of familial support among other victims of FFCST (Fig. 1, box C) may serve as a protective mechanism against a destiny of CSI participation for their offspring.

7 Summary

In the United States, two primary forms of familial sex trafficking have been identified: intergenerational transmission of prostitution [67], on the one hand, and family members selling sexual access to children to obtain money, drugs, or something else of value [68] on the other. There is some overlap between these and family-facilitated child sex trafficking identified in India. That is, intergenerational transmission of prostitution exists in India as part of caste-based membership (e.g., Devadasi, Bedia) in high-risk environments. On the other hand, family members “selling sexual access” to children in India has not been documented in the extant literature—this is not to say it doesn’t exist, but that it has not been empirically documented. However, another manifestation of FFCST has been identified in India—that described here as resulting from low caste status with a high-risk environment—factors coalesce in female children forced into early marriage or sold outright to those associated directly with the commercial sex trade (e.g., brothel madams, pimps).

These conclusions lead to frightening realizations. That is, much of what is currently understood about FFCST, including “risk,” may not be generalizable to culturally unique populations. Further, although the scope of family-facilitated child sex trafficking is impossible to gauge in India, much less globally, is likely much more extensive and culturally nuanced than previously imagined. Further, current approaches to child sex trafficking—based in legal doctrine and law enforcement measures—are utterly failing [69]. Stated differently, it would be difficult to imagine the continuation of any of the three manifestations of FFCST discussed in this chapter if the structural barriers of indigence, illiteracy, and caste and gender-based discrimination (among many others) were removed. Clearly, culturally appropriate economic growth and anti-discriminatory (caste, gender) policies, with actionable field-based, ethical, and trauma informed strategies are paramount for change to occur.

Discussion Questions

- How can research be used as a tool to understand processes and contexts associated with FFCST?
- How can research-informed knowledge be used in practice to reduce harm and promote health and well-being among victims, families, and communities associated with FFCST?
- What can be done to instigate action from governmental bodies (local, state, national, and international) to eradicate structural barriers/vulnerabilities that create high-risk environments that *allow for the option* of FFCST as a means of survival?

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