

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

History of prostitution can not be considered as the conventional history, rather it is better to call it a rubric in subaltern studies but not yet duly addressed.

Women's vulnerability to seduction has been a stark reality in any society. Now-a-days, when different discourses on women history are emerging out in the academic arena, the issue of prostitution of women may be taken as a viable and examined as a subject of study resorting to valid evidences as much as available. For doing so, the whole of the social and political scenario related to the issue may be depicted in such a way that the basic object of the study never loses its connectedness with history.

Before entering into the main context, it is necessary to mention that women whether in eastern or western countries, have been denied any honour and dignity. 'The male bias manifested itself from time to time in the views and acts of misogynist intellectual and thinkers, preachers and priests, soldiers and rulers, fathers and husbands.'¹

Prostitution is bound up with wider social process and permitted by assumptions current in society at large. The institution of prostitution has existed in one form or another in all class-based patriarchal societies. In ancient times, female prostitution in several societies was closely linked to religious practices. By contrast prostitution in modern times tends to be associated with promiscuity, crime and social condemnation.

The last few decades have seen female prostitution, in South-East Asia in particular, undergoing dramatic changes. Not only has the scale of the phenomenon reached alarming proportions, but the forms in which prostitution manifests itself have become widely diversified. In particular, evidence suggests a correlation between militarization in these regions and the growth of prostitution. An increase in prostitution as a result of the development of the tourist industry is another recent phenomenon. In countries where the sex business has assumed the dimensions of an industry, it has been suggested that prostitution makes a significant contribution to the process of the economic development at the macro-level through income remittances of prostitutes to their village families.

In the past, North Bengal was like a mofussil with a little population. The area was suffering from murderous beasts and animals, diseases like malaria, black water fever (*Kala-jwar*) etc. at the beginning of colonial period. Not only that, after the great famine of Bengal in 1869-70, this part of Bengal became actually a 'nomans land' due to desertion of the inhabitants, there grew thick and vast forests, impossible to penetrate and badly infested by robbers, *fakirs*, *sannyasis* (monks).

Slowly but steadily the scenario of North Bengal had been changed. The strategic as well as the geographical situation of North Bengal played an important role to make it prominent in the map of world. The grandeur and scenic beauty of the towering snow-capped mountains peaks of Himalaya, its salubrious climate, balmy breeze, the orchards, orchids, flora and fauna, ever-changing environment with mist, cloud sun and rains successively a beautiful illustration on a vast evergreen canvas and unparalleled in the country attracted the foreigners. North Bengal became the tourist destination. Tea, timber, tourism tempted the businessmen from different parts of India; even Europeans to invest capital in this part of Bengal. Extension of railway, immigration of evacuees from Bangladesh, Assam, Nepal made it crowd.

Gradually the introduction of market economy, globalization, establishment of international air-port enhanced the population of North Bengal. Presence of rich people like *zamindars*, *jotdars*,² British civilians, British troops patronized the practice of prostitution. Specially the people who didn't bought their family, used to go to prostitute to satisfy their natural sexual desire. Poverty which was the disease of society, forced those women (prostitutes) to gratify their demand by sexual service. Trans-border area of Northern Bengal also encourage trafficking of young girls for the purpose of prostitution.

There are several laws intended to govern the whole issue regarding prostitution. State even in the days of *Kautilya*, could not remain indifferent to the problem. Obviously, the welfare state at present cannot remain aloof to this class of women engaged in such profession.

As a natural social phenomenon the practice of the profession i.e. prostitution existed in North Bengal. The socio-economic condition in different phases enhanced the practice

of prostitution and the crisis gave birth to the movement of these women for legalization of the profession with the target of being termed as sex workers with the help of different organization.

Bengalee culture is somehow confined within Kolkata and its adjacent areas. But we can not ignore that the only one native state existed in the northern portion of Bengal. Nineteenth century *Babu* culture was not reflected in this region as it was in Kolkata, which extremely patronized and helped to flourish prostitution in Bengal. Although the above mentioned socio-economic situation of North Bengal was enough to enhance such a vile profession in this region.

Overview of Literature :

Prostitution though developed in Northern Bengal, the issue is yet to be addressed and brought under academic investigation. For developing the proposition, books dealing with the profession in general may help to find out the research gap and to develop a well defined structure of the study.

Barthwick, M., *The Changing Role of Women in Bengal 1849-1905*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1984 : It is an attempt to focus on the changing role of women in Bengal where some welfare and voluntary deeds for prostitutes had been mentioned. But nothing has been mentioned about this region of Bengal.

Kumar, A., *Medicine and The Raj : British Medical Policy in India 1835-1911*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1988 : It examines the growth of hospitals and pharmacy in India. Even this book referred the importance and necessity of lock hospitals in Bengal to resist venereal diseases. But it did not mention anything about the British lock hospital in Darjeeling, which was one of the important among the four others lock hospitals in the rest of Bengal.

Sen, S., *Babubrittanta*, Dey's Publishing, Kolkata, 1991 : It is an attempt to describe the connection between prostitution and Kolkata *Babu* culture.

Sleightholme, C. & Sinha, I., (eds.), *Guilty Without Trial Women in the Sex Trade in Kolkata*, Stree, Kolkata, 1996 : This is an exhaustive and intensive work on sex workers, but at the same time it is entirely Kolkata centric.

Banerjee, S., *Dangerous Outcast : The Prostitutes of Nineteenth Century Bengal*, Seagull Books, Kolkata, 1998 : Though the title of the book connotes the whole of Bengal but practically the northern part of Bengal escaped his attention.

Gathia, J., *Child Prostitution in India*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1999 : In this book the author tried to trace the origin of child prostitution. He mentioned that prostitution has been noticed popping up around mainly military bases. In this context he has mentioned the name of Siliguri which is considered the capital of North Bengal but has not dealt in detail.

Banerjee, S., *Ashruto Kanthaswar*, Subarnarekha, Kolkata, 2002 : The work deals the culture of *varbanita* (prostitute) society in colonial Bengal but the work is entirely Kolkata centric.

Joardar, B., *Purono Kolkatar Anya Sanskriti*, Digangan, New Delhi, 2009 : This is considered as a unique work on prostitution but the author does not bear any reference to the condition of prostitution in North Bengal.

Bhattacharya, M., *Veshyaparar Panchti Durlobh Samgraha*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2011 : This work deals with the *bot-tola sahitya* (literature) of Kolkata. It described the *choudha ayin* (Act XIV), its implementation and reaction. But nothing has been written about North Bengal in this context.

Bagchi, A., *Social Situation of Women in North Bengal through the Ages : Ancient and Early Medieval Period*, CWS, NBU, 2015 : Professor Bagchi's book happens to an in depth analyses on the situation of the women in this region of Bengal. Her research work touched the points on which the study of prostitution in North Bengal could gain some inspiration or rather said impetus.

However; there are some others books like *Prostitution a bibliographical synthesis* by **Biswanath Joardar**, *Babu Gourober Kolkata* by **Baidyanath Mukherjee**, *Atmakotha* by

Hirak Roy, all these works are more or less dealing with the topic of prostitution, though these titles are not concerned in dealing with the studies in the history of prostitution in North Bengal.

As because a significant number of women has taken this profession as a livelihood in this area, an analytical study of the issue situating it in the proper historical perspective is highly needed. Hence, an attempt will be made to prepare a history of prostitution in North Bengal in this project. The lack of conventional sources conducting the advocacy of alternative sources for writing the history of prostitution in North Bengal.

Definition of Prostitution :

‘If you see a woman who is always laughing, fond of gambling and jesting, always running to her neighbours, meddling with matters that are no concern of hers, plaguing her husband with constant complaints, leaguering herself with other women against him, playing the grand lady, accepting gifts from everybody, know that, that woman is a whore without shame.’ - The Perfumed Garden³

It is an admitted reality that, prostitution, as we understand it today, is a product of civilization and a by product of the marriage institution. The earliest history of every civilized nation testifies to the existence of this oldest profession of the world. India, the seat of ancient civilization is no exception to this rule.⁴

The lowering of the status of women and the social construction of women being the ‘property of men’ is not entirely unconnected with the question of prostitution. Promiscuity in the case of women came to be extremely condemned. On the other hand men could enjoy a great deal of sexual permissiveness in the form of polygamy and prostitution. An aspect of patriarchal arrangements that accompanies the structures of reproduction in any society is the institution of prostitution.⁵

Prostitution, known as the world’s oldest profession came to be recorded throughout history. While this is undoubtedly true it does not explain under what condition and exactly at what point of time it became institutionalized in a given society. We have no

way of knowing how and when prostitution arose as a recognizable profession in the ancient society. The problem still remains to identify factors that led women into prostitution. Historical inquiry is hampered by limited information available on certain aspects of these women's domestic or private life. Still, it might be helpful to focus on one striking feature i.e. their social origins.

In 'Arthashastra', *Kautilya* says that prostitutes were recruited from four sources : either they were born as prostitutes' daughters, or they were purchased, or captured in war, or they were women who had been punished for adultery. According to *Kautilya* public using prostitutes were called *Ganika*, women who lived by their beauty called *Rupajivas* and *Pumshali* perhaps meaning concubines.⁶

In general parlance the word 'prostitution' is used to describe the selling of sexual favours. Historically and generally, women are the objects of this activity. Oxford dictionary defines prostitutes as 'person who offers himself/herself for sexual intercourse for money.'

The word 'prostitute' has been derived from the Latin Word *Prostibula* or *proседа*. The houses of ancient Greek harlots were allowed to be opened in the afternoon. The girl stood or sat before the *lupanaria* to attract and entice passers-by. Therefore, they were called *prostibula* or *proседа*.⁷

The dictionary meaning of the word 'prostitution' is the act of practice of engaging in sexual intercourse for money and the word 'prostitute' connotes a person, usually a woman who engages in sexual intercourse for money.

The Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act (1956) defines 'prostitute' as a female who offers her body for promiscuous sexual intercourse for hire, whether in money or in kind; and 'prostitution' means the act of female offering her body for promiscuous sexual intercourse for hire, whether in money or in kind.⁸

The Act was amended in 1978, wherein the definition of the word 'prostitute' was omitted and the expression 'prostitution' was redefined as the act of a female offering her body for promiscuous sexual intercourse for hire, whether in money or in kind, and

whether offered immediately or otherwise and the expression 'prostitute' shall be construed accordingly.⁹

Mamoria defines prostitution as sexual union by a woman with a person who is not her husband, for some consideration in cash or kind and prostitute is a woman who sells her sexual favours indiscriminately and takes money or other valuables for each act of intercourse; and who has no psychic involvement.¹⁰

The gist of the problem is that 'it is more or less a promiscuous sexual intercourse' that is; all women who are guilty of intercourse outside the marriage state may be regarded as prostitutes.

According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 'prostitution' means the practice of engaging in relatively indiscriminate sexual activity, in general with someone who is not a spouse or a friend, in exchange for immediate payment in money or other valuables.¹¹

Also most definitions of prostitution, including that contained in the Indian law define the phenomenon as promiscuous sexual intercourse, either habitual or intermittent, for mercenary 'inducement'. It is thus characterized by payment, promiscuity and emotional indifference. This suggests moral acceptance of sexual intercourse within these unions is unpaid for. Thus sexual intercourse which is not paid for, which involves emotional attachment and occurs within socially prescribed institutions is morally accepted, while sexual unions outside these are morally condemned.

Other definitions indicate broad agreement among researchers that the element of payment is most basic, but that the economic criteria alone does not suffice. Disagreement revolves around the social confines in which prostitution manifests itself. Thus Davis argues that since some form of payment is found in social arrangements such as marriage and courtship, the element of promiscuity must be retained in the definition to differentiate prostitution from other types of relationships. This view is extended by Polaky who defines prostitution as the granting of non-marital sex as a vocation.¹²

Gagnon defines prostitution more precisely as ‘the granting of sexual access on a relatively indiscriminate basis for payment in money or in goods, depending on the complexity of the local economic system.’¹³ Payment is acknowledged for the specifies sexual performance,’ with a view to differentiate the professional prostitute from the mistress or from females who accept a range of gifts while having sexual contract with a male. However, as often pointed out, this differentiation is an artificial one, since in patriarchal societies, the structural relationship between men and women in such that the control of women’s sexuality and female prostitution are two sides of the same coin-male domination. The separation between the wife (the respectable woman), the mistress (the kept woman) and the prostitute (the fallen woman), only serves to divide women, strengthen patriarchal ideology and conceal women’s consciousness of their common condition of dependency on men.

Kathleen Barry presents another dimension to our understanding of prostitution. She writes: ‘Female sexual slavery is present in all situations where women or girls cannot change the immediate conditions of their existence, where regardless of how they got into those conditions of their existence, they cannot get out and where they are subject to sexual violence and exploitation.’¹⁴

Though Barry’s definition draws out a very important dimension of prostitution ignored by others, namely coercion, it is at the same time too wide and too narrow. First, although slave labour in prostitution continues to exist to date, it is not the only form of prostitution. Second, not all women who are subject to sexual exploitation can be considered slaves, even when they cannot get out of the situation. Slavery carries with it connotations of social outcast, property and compulsory labour. In many societies however, there are women who are purchased as a piece of property through marriage, must perform compulsory labour, may be sexually abused, but are not social outcast.

According to the social scientist Truong, prostitution is the provision of sexual services in exchange for material gains.¹⁵ Thus provision may be induced by one more of variety of conditions : physical coercion, socio-economic coercion and individual decision. Prostitution can take many different forms, the delineation of which involves

the following criteria : (a) the number of men to whom services are provided, (b) the nature of payment, and (c) the institutional confines.

Depending on the forms, the institutions and the people involved, prostitution can be simultaneously condoned and condemned in every period. At one extreme prostitution may be disguised in the legal institution of marriage through which a woman is contracted to be sold or contracts to sell herself to a man in exchange for social conformity, economic security and some limited rights. In this case sexual services form only a part of the relationship. At the other extreme, prostitution is a practice involving the exclusive provision of sexual services on a relatively indiscriminate basis, in a manner similar to the sale of any form of unskilled or semi-skilled labour. The *hetaera* including courtesan who provide sexual services to a select number of parties, sometimes as a form of exotic art, and usually on payment, which ranges from money, expensive gifts or access to social mobility. Equally there is the mistress or hired wife is maintained by a partner in exchange for the occasional provision of sexual services, without a binding marriage contract and its legal implications. The social conditions of women who practice prostitution are determined by the institutional confines, e.g., slave labour can exist in brothels while within hetaerism women can have limited social mobility and can be largely free of moral condemnation. The institutions in which prostitution manifests itself vary according to socio-economic changes and equally, relations of exchange in prostitution are also transformed in relation to institutional changes.

The following five main issues emerge from this definition :

- (1) Sexual services in prostitution cannot be conceptualized as being limited to sexual intercourse, but must be extended to include other dimensions of human existence such as leisure and nurturing, which are often included in the services provided by prostitutes as professionals and as women.
- (2) Material gains cannot be seen only in terms of money or gifts but must also be seen in terms of social mobility for the individual as well as for groups.
- (3) The social conditions of prostitutes be assessed beyond the institution of slavery and brothels, so as to include other institutions because each institution is

governed by a different set of social relations, which determine the status of the individual prostitute.

- (4) The act of prostitution must not be seen only at the level of individual motives, but must be analyzed in relation to the structure of the social relationships between men and women and the class structure of society because these structures generally condition the act itself.
- (5) The conditions governing the lives of individual prostitutes are subject to changes. The personal dimensions of such change include the physical attributes of the individual prostitute and her consciousness of her social situation and the institutional dimensions include the legal and the socio-economic structure of society in which they operate.

Foremost among these assumptions is that prostitution is the oldest profession, a universal and inevitable social evil, necessary to satiate an uncontrollable male sexuality. Prostitution is therefore considered society's safety valve against the rape of 'innocent women' and the disintegration of the institution of the family. Late Sir Gurudas Banerjee considered it as a moral safety-valve to the social organism as a whole.¹⁶

Prostitution is a kind of sex satisfaction which a prostitute grants her client with full consent in exchange of money. It differs from sex shows and pornography etc. as it normally provides sexual satisfaction to the client through direct physical contact of some sort. It is a commercial or mercenary sex activity. The Marxist view of prostitution is that a woman is forced to sell her sex by economic necessity. According to Marx bourgeois marriage is no less a product of capitalist social and economic relations. He calls it a marriage of convenience, not of love. The supporting view may be that prostitution is not worse than marriage of convenience and if such marriage is perfectly legitimate then prostitution also belongs to the same category.¹⁷

Ingredients of Prostitution :

The important ingredients of prostitution, according to Weaver, are¹⁸ :

1. Promiscuity, barter and emotional indifference;

2. It is different from the broader concept of sexual immorality due to the commercial nature of the relationship, and

3. It is distinguished from illegitimacy, which invariably involves an illicit sex relationship but refers particularly to the production of a child outside the social approval.

There are many women, mostly from the first world, who claim it is their right to work as prostitute. But the women from the third world or developing countries consider themselves victims of economic crisis. Poverty and economic insecurity can be considered the single most decisive factor that drives women into prostitution. However, there are other contributory factors also. The traditional practice of sexual slavery of women and girls is prominent among them.

Merely with the modification of socio-economic background, this profession is being changed in its characteristics.

Tracing the origin of prostitution in India and Beyond :

For self protection people used to live in a clan. From this stage of human life there was free sexual relationship between man and women. In that system each and every male members of a clan enjoyed the same right upon the women members of that race. This state of affairs reminds us of the days when the concept of monogamous family or private property did not surface on the screen of history.

In Savagery period we found group marriage. In Barbarism there was pairing family and in civilized society we found monogamy. This was the chronology of marriage system in human life. But here, the Marxian philosophy opined that, from the internal feud between man and women, the monogamy came. According to Marxist philosophy, the women were not subordinate to men at the beginning of human society. Even there was existence of matriarchy. Marx emphasized, class exploitation was the main reason of women subordination. And the class exploitation gradually led to economic exploitation and the creation of private property right. From this period the men used to treat the women as their private property. When people turned towards agricultural production, the

surplus production was gathered to a particular section of man. The women were pushed to domestic life. They become dependent on man for their livelihood. The end of matriarchy marked a revolution also. “For this revolution - one of the most decisive ever experienced by mankind-need not have disturbed one single living member of a gens.... The over throw of mother right was the world historic defeat of the female sex. The man seized the reins in the house also, the woman was degraded, enthralled, the slave of the man’s lust, a mere instrument for breeding children.....”¹⁹

There is no strong evidence regarding the origin of prostitution in Indian civilization. From the opinions of some scholars regarding the nature of the bronze image of a dancing women in Mohan-jo-daro we may get an idea about the antiquity of this profession. The oldest literary work *Rigveda* mentioned the term ‘*Hastra*’, and ‘*Agru*’ as prostitute.²⁰ In the ‘*Mahabharata*’ and ‘*Matsya Purana*’ we are given fictitious accounts of the origin of prostitution.²¹ *Vatsyana* refers them as *Ganika*, *Rupajiva* in ‘*Kamasutra*’.²²

Coming to the context of prostitution in ancient India, *Kautilya’s Arthasastra* appears to be a very important source. The setting up of the brothel was recognized as a state activity in the *Arthasastra*.²³ There is categorical provision for an office under the control of *ganikadhyaksa* who would remain in charge of the courtesans or prostitutes. The provisions of the *Arthasastra* throw light on a grey area of history involving the structural relation between the state authority and the women engaged in sex works. That the physical charm and beauty of such women mattered much is known from the text. It is said that the officer in charge of this department was expected to appoint the chief courtesan preferably a young, beautiful woman, well versed in arts. Furthermore, the specific guideline for transfer establishment of a deceased or run away courtesan to her daughter, sister or mother etc. makes it clear that the state did not stay indifferent and took steps for assigning the household to another by following the textual prostitutions. But whether the real picture corresponded with the said norms can not be decisively said at present. Besides the *Arthasastra*, two more texts of ancient India are most vital to be alluded to understand the courtesanal tradition of India as well as other sex workers in the ancient past. An examination of the texts relating to the early historic period suggest

that the presence of the courtesans as well as the sex workers known by different nomenclatures was intrinsic to urban culture.²⁴ These two texts are *Kamasutra* and *Mrichhakatika*. Exploration in these texts help us to examine and get at the entire gamut of relations between the courtesans and their clients and at the same time the hierarchical structure of the sex workers having heterogeneous social and economic background and clientele resources.

Kumkum Roy rightly pointed to the *Vaisika* section of the *Kamasutra* in order to delineate the differences amongst women who earned their livelihood by rendering sexual services. The list at the end of the said section begins from the lowest rung like *Kumbhadasi* (water carrier/slave women) goes on to different categories in the middle and finishes with the *ganika* at the top of the hierarchy. Roy's interpretation makes it evident that this list attempts to combine economic and socio-sexual criteria as markers of status.²⁵

There are many causes for taking prostitution as a profession according the view of the feminist critique of prostitution. Such as - inequality, exploitation, oppression in the socio-cultural context. The society of ancient India had depicted the picture clearly. Once upon a time women had the license of free sexual relation with others and the most surprising was that the license given by their husband.

From the above mentioned incidence it is cleared that the performance of rites of the males and females were approved in different ways and it was the pattern of the patriarchal society. But if we discuss about the *Manu's* rule the condition of the women was very degraded. In the society governed by *Manu*, the adulterous women were brutally treated and tortured. In that society adultery of females was strictly restricted. But there was no restriction on male's promiscuity. While *Manu* repeatedly asked the women to become home bound; the male's had not yet changed their attitude and life style. As a result the brothels were naturally flourished here and there all over the country. There may be development or progress of a country in economic and cultural terms but the system of the prostitution operates in the same traditional form that indicates institutionalization of the use of women as commodities to satisfy the aggressive lust of the male.

In the ancient Buddhist society the prostitutes were considered as intelligent, educated and accomplished in many virtues. That was why sometimes their counsel and advice were given importance in administrative sector. The prostitutes increased the glamour of any kind of social festivals, feast by their presence. They were cordially invited by the organizers of such functions. Those ladies were given honorable titles namely *Janakalyani*, *Nagarshavini* etc. Their free movement was allowed everywhere. They attended the speeches of *Gautam Buddha* sitting before the legend. *Buddha* founded the women organization 'Sangha'. *Avaymata*, *Gurakesh*, the female from prostitute community were the members of 'Sangha'. The liberal religion of *Buddha* accepted the so-called outcasts where transformation of character set examples for others to follow and thereby help the progress of the society.

Prostitution had been started at the primitive age. At that phase people used to involve in illegal sex and at the later period prostitution became a regular practice in the name of religion. Bechofen said this custom is still practiced among a few groups of tribes in India, South Arab, Madagascar and New-Zealand. Those unmarried tribal girls had to sacrifice themselves to the entire clan. Prostitution was considered as a part of religious function in Babylon, Lidia, and Phonisia.²⁶

There was a law in Babylon (the capital of Babylonian) that, each and every unmarried girl had to visit the temple of Goddess *Mylitta* and entertain all the male pilgrims of the temple.

Goddess *Anaitis* was also worshipped in the same way in Armenia. The same was practiced in Egypt, Syria, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Karthez, Greece and Rome. Prostitution was a religious custom in the Jewish, The Old Testament proved it. Without any hesitation Abraham received award from Pharaoh in exchange of her wife Sarah.²⁷

In Lidia, Karthez and Cyprus, the unmarried girls earned their dowry by prostitution. Cheops, the king of Egypt made a pyramid. The Pyramid was constructed by the money which was earned by his daughter from prostitution.²⁸

In previous days, Greece used to keep brothel publicly. At 594 BC, Solon opened brothels in Athens as the govt. institution. That was why his contemporaries appreciated

him and said: “thanks Solon. You bought prostitutes and protected the town. Otherwise the young generation would violated the morality of the town and they might disturb the aristocrat women”.²⁹ Thus the adultery activities of the male were accepted by the law of the state while it was punishable and humiliating for women. Solon could punish or even give to death sentence to a woman if she enjoyed sex with her lover. Even her husband could sell her as maid.

A valuable temple was dedicated to ‘*Hetaera*’, the goddess of prostitutes, in Athens.³⁰ The Greek term ‘*Hetaera*’ means woman companion. The word used to denote ... If a woman does at all times use fair moderate language, giving her services favourable to all who stand in need of her, she from her prompt companionship does earn the title ‘*Hetaera*’. Or regular professional *Hetaera* - those who are able to preserve a friendship free from trickery; whom Cynucius does not venture to speak ill of, and who of all women are the only ones who derived their name from friendship, or from that goddess who is named by Athenians, Venus *Hetaera*³¹ In 400 BC, at the time of Plato, there was about one thousand prostitutes (Hierodules) at the temple of Aphrodite in Corinth and it was famous for its luxury and grandeur all over Greece as in the middle of 19th century Hamburg was famous among the Germans. The *Hetaeras* were famous for their beauty and intellect - as Phryne, Lais of Corinth, Gnathoena and Aspasia (who later became the wife of Pericles) were patronized by the dignified people. They were accompanied at royal dinner and legislative assembly. The housewives of Greece were home interned. There was *pardah* system for them. They were neither well educated nor beautiful. The married people were very much fond of prostitute rather than their legal wives. Ironically the males were the guardians to look after the purity of their family life.

Demosthenes described the sexual life of Athens. He described - wife as the machine for producing children and a reliable care-taker of house. In his own words - “Mistresses, we keep for pleasure, concubines for daily attendance upon our person, wives to bear us legitimate children”.³² Plato believed in group marriage system. Socrates regarded the homosexual relationship was the good characteristics of a highly civilized society. Once

the people of Greece also thought the same way and there was equal number of male pros-quarters as that of the female.

In Bourgeois society, the sexual life of man was viewed as being divided between marriage and prostitution. When a person can not get satisfaction he turns to prostitute. On the other hand, an unmarried man is also attracted by prostitutes. It is the social system where the man can satisfy his sexual desire by any means. But all these substitutes are prohibited for women. Engels had said about the marriage institution of Bourgeois society - ' ... the wife differs from the ordinary courtesans only in that she does not hire out her body, like a wage-worker, on piece-work, but sells it into slavery once for all'.³³

According to the natural rule woman conceives the child, the man only enjoys, and he has no responsibility here. And taking this advantage, a huge part of male section are engaged in sexual adultery, transgressing the legal rules. As a result, prostitution becomes the essential profession of the society constituting of police, army, church, capitalist etc.

It has been already mentioned that how did the ancient society treat prostitution. At that period it was considered as essential. Greece and Roman state controlled the pros-quarters. Even, St. Augustine, the pillar of Christian religion, opined that if the pros-quarters would be removed; the society might be deluged by sexual adultery. 'The Provincial Spiritual Council' of Milan stated the same in 1665 AD. F. S. Hegel had mentioned in his book titled '*History, Statistic and Regulation of Prostitution of Vienna*' that with progress of civilization the profession of prostitution would be well furnished but never be wiped out. Wichern of Rauhe Haus near Hamburg, Palton of Lyous. William Tret of Edinborer and Parent Duehatelet of Paris (the famous researchers on prostitution) had stated the same that it was impossible to wipe out prostitution as it was an inseparable organ of society and it should be controlled into state. But it is more surprising that, none of them said that the society should be changed which needs no such a defiled profession.

J Kuhn, the Police Sergeant of Leipzig, had mentioned in his book namely '*Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century from the Stand Point of the Sanitary Police*' that, though prostitution is harmful, but there is no way but to tolerate it.³⁴

As the German State and France did not approve or control this profession, however, it still existed there. Federal banned all the pros-quarters by the council law. As a result a huge applications were submitted to Reichstag to control adultery and syphilis disease. Reichstag sent a commission of Doctors to examine the issues. Lastly, they sent the applications to Imperial Council to approve prostitution for saving the moral life and the health of the society.³⁵ All these prove that there is no way to get rid of this soiled profession.

Recently the eighteen years old Elina Persina, resident of German sold her virginity in cost of 13 thousand 827 dollar to a mid-age businessman of Italy. She was born and brought up in German. Before that incident she has also given an advertisement in online to sell her virginity.³⁶ It proves prostitution or flesh trade was no illegal in German.

In Florence 12 percent women were nun, 15 percent family had at least one widow member and every 300 had a courtesan. In 1490 BC, at the city of Rome, there was 6,800 registered prostitutes when the total population was 90,000. The stories of mistresses, aristocrats and high profile prostitutes are attached with the rich merchants, artists and humanists.³⁷

At the Venus temple in Corinth, the prostitutes gathered at the time of prayer. This city at that time celebrated occasional festival on the goddess Aphrodisia. This was a different festival where the courtesans enjoyed feast.

At the time of economic rising, the Thailand king declared it would be accepted by god and society if the girls of his country adopt prostitution as their profession. And it also imports the most precious foreign currency.³⁸

In several countries including India specify the 'Red Light Area' for prostitution. But the scenario in Bangladesh is somehow different. The prostitutes or sex workers of teen

ages in Dhaka used to giving service to their clients wherever they could find place even in jungles. They did not possess any floor or roof and just used a bed sheet on the ground.³⁹ It proves this primitive profession don't have any compulsory necessity of brothel or red-light area for its survival.

At the period of group marriage system, even, after the introduction of monogamy, the free sexual relationship between man and women still existed like the ancient period. Ultimately *Hetaerism* abolished this system. According to Morgan, the *Hetaerism* was the free sexual relation between a man and an unmarried woman. Gradually this system gave birth to prostitution. Through the group marriage system and the female ritual offering in religious purposes, the *Hetaerism* took birth. Offering her body in exchange of money became the part of religion. In the temple *Hetaera*, this business was going on and all the money came from this business stored in trusty for religious sake. The slaves of *Anaitis* temple in Armenia, Aphrodite temple in Corinth, *Devdasis* (dancers of Indian temple) and the so-called *Bayads* (Portuguese *Baila Deira* - a section of dancing women) were the first prostitute in this world.⁴⁰ At the first stage it was the duty of women to dedicate herself as a *devdasi*. Later only the worshipper of temple sacrificed herself for this system. In a single word we can say, prostitution was the extreme result of Monogamy and *Hetaerism*. On the other hand, this practice of *Hetaerism* adversely affected the fate of wife. She came to be treated with negligence as the husband found pleasure and happiness in pros-quarter. Monogamy created the transgressing husband, side by side the paramour of wife.

German philosopher Emanuel Kant opines that the differences between a prostitute and a wife is that a prostitute has no dignity in her job as she sells her body exchange of money but a wife has the dignity in the society.⁴¹

Morality in Prostitution :

The moral status of prostitution in Indian society from the socio-cultural aspect is a big question. Actually the question of morality and immorality may be raised since this type of contractual sexual service where the satisfaction of the client's sexual demand is the main priority to a sex worker. Because exchange of certain amount of money for

sexual satisfaction plays a vital role in a civilized society. Depending upon varying contexts the question of both right and wrong may be arised regarding the same action or practice. Prostitution has been condemned or considered as a vice in many societies. But if we go through the book namely '*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*' by Frederic Engels, we can see the family structure rather it is better to call the social structure may have been the cause of prostitution. Monogamous family is the establishment of men who also framed the patriarchal society. Engels said : 'We have then, three forms of marriage, which by the large, conform to the three main stages of human development. For savagery - group marriage; for barbarian - pairing marriage, for civilization - monogamy, supplemented by adultery and prostitution'.⁴²

To maintain a life is very difficult for a prostitute, particularly in matters like finding a room-mate, setting up a family and even in renting an apartment to live and work. The question of price of the prostitute is her greatest stigma. Although the countries like Germany and Austria are exceptional in this context as prostitution is regulated by law in these countries.

Let us look at the feminists' view regarding this occupation. There is a contrast in their thinking between the liberal and radical feminists. The liberal feminists do not accept the rejection of prostitution by the radical feminists. A question may arise about the feminist approach to prostitution as an occupation of women. A 'prostitute' does not necessarily refer to a 'female' alone, there are male prostitutes as well in some countries.

Two arguments in this context may be placed. The first one is mercenary sex is impersonal and it is more or less acceptable in our society. But the answer would be that we have personal relation only with a limited number of people; our family, friends and acquaintances, all our remaining social transactions and relations may be impersonal. From the another point of view there are a clear difference between a client of prostitution and a rapist. The clients' attitude to the prostitute is purely instrumental. Being a customer rather than a rapist he gets sexual gratification from her for a change on the basis of a mutual understanding. The prostitute has a vital role that she does her part in the bargain willingly.

The question of morality is strongly attached with prostitution, pornography etc. The amendment to the Immoral Trafficking Act has some distinctive features. There is no doubt that the Immoral Traffic Act is obviously ambiguous. It would be more meaningful if it was 'social traffic act' instead of 'immoral traffic act',

The world of prostitution exists on the mutual relation of the prostitutes and their clients. From this point of view the relation of both of them is complementary. In this society the prostitutes are only considered as outcasts, but not the clients. Prostitutes are being criticized by the elite society as well as by the government. It is only recently that the amendment has been made in Immoral Trafficking Act, 2006 accusing the persons who used to go to the brothel or work as agents in the brothels.

The issue of morality and immorality regarding prostitution should be assessed on the basis of the factors which contribute to the existence of flesh trade. Once upon a time women took this profession for the sake of their survival. Economic necessity or poverty is undoubtedly one of the causes of prostitution. But it is not the only reason of prostitution today. There are other push factors behind the sustenance of this profession. Let it be discussed later in detail.

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