

This publication summarises the characteristics of prostitution, a form of violence against women.

## **DEFINITION**

Prostitution is the oldest and most fundamental of the institutional systems of violence against women. The main objective of prostitution as a system of institutions is to produce income. Of course, public opinion thinks that prostitutes are the women who offer themselves, their bodies or their sexual services for sale. In contrast, the truth is that the controllers of prostitution, those active in human trafficking, pimps and madams sell these children and women.

## **THE ACTORS IN PROSTITUTION**

### ***ACTOR #1: THE CLIENT***

The person using prostitution, the client, who is usually a man, is an unavoidable actor in prostitution. He is the creditworthy demand, his demands define the whole activity. Prostitution works exactly the way as a market where the demand defines the supply, so if the client wants a little girl or wishes to have sex with a pregnant woman, the forces of prostitution will ensure the necessary subject. Ensuring the anonymity of the client is part of the service.

### ***ACTOR #2: THE PROSTITUTORS***

Other actors in prostitution are the procurers, room renters, “bodyguards”—everyone who draws a financial benefit from the prostitute’s body. Their activities are called parasitic crimes in law. The very apt epithet, parasitic, pertains to the fact that this person has a considerable share of the money produced with the prostitute’s body by sticking to her. The phenomenon of trafficking in human beings needs to be mentioned here. “Trafficking in children and women is a modern form of slavery. Thousands of women and children are trafficked from one country to another, often from Eastern Europe to Western Europe as part of a type of trafficking in human beings. The primary aim of this kind of human trafficking is sexual exploitation, but it may also create an illegal workforce. Human trafficking is one of the severe forms of sexual violence which in no way can be reconciled with the principle of equality between the sexes. Trafficking in human beings, which

is organised by criminals motivated by profit and often participating in organised crime, particularly endangers women and children living in poverty. Human trafficking is a severe form of organised crime and is an act that is in breach of human rights.” (Norwegian Child- and Family Ministry)

### ***ACTOR #3: THE PROSTITUTE***

The prostitute is the person who provides the sexual service to a variety of clients in exchange for remuneration. Thus, the client buys the body of the prostitute in exchange for some kind of remuneration. The remuneration is money in most cases, but can be something else that has a value for the prostitute: a bowl of food, a bed for the night, etc. The conditions of the sexual act are usually agreed upon earlier but the client need not observe this agreement.

The most important characteristic of the act is that one of the parties, the prostitute, does not want it. It is not part of the agreement that the woman should desire the client or has to feel attracted towards him. Perhaps she is not screaming in protest but it is an obvious characteristic of prostitution that only the client and not the woman wants the sexual act that is the subject of the trade.

Sex that one of the parties does not want. Rape. The institutional system of prostitution offers rape for sale. The women who are to serve the client have been beaten, intimidated, broken. Their parents, guardians, pimps and dealers have repeated to them just enough times that they are no longer good for anything else and that no one is interested in what they want. These women know exactly that if they are not readily accessible, if the daily income is not produced, then comes the beating, their faces get smashed, they lose their children, their relatives will be injured or the women will be reported to the police. Thus, the prostitute makes herself available with these considerations in mind, and whispers softly to the client that really she is a university student and only came here today to earn some pocket money, and because she loves sex and has been dreaming exactly of such a cutie as he is.

Research has proven that the overwhelming majority of prostitutes—according to some 70%, according to others 85%—were regularly and severely abused as

children or at a very young age, and a significant portion were repeatedly victimised sexually, whose perpetrator came from the victim’s immediate family or friends’ circle. That is the a significant majority of prostitute women grow up and develop their personality, self-esteem and self-worth in an environment where they are surrounded by adults who regard their bodies as a sexual objects and use them for their own purposes. It is a result of this early traumatic experience that the victims who receive no support to process what happened to them, will continue to live in a way where they considers it natural to let other people use their bodies for sexual purposes, and are happy if that is enforced not with beating but in exchange for some financial remuneration

As can be seen, the family background of young girls largely defines their further fate. Many process the experience of violence through considering their raped and corrupted bodies as if they did not belong to them. This is one of the important philosophies of their lives.

### ***THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE PROSTITUTE AND THE PROCURER***

In order to have a more elaborate view of the phenomenon, it is important to be acquainted with the relationship of the prostitute and the procurer.

A characteristic socialisation process takes place as a result of the emotional, physical and sexual abuse suffered in childhood. Children who grow up among such circumstances learn that their bodies are not to serve their own selves but are to serve other people’s aims. Many prostitutes find a surprisingly warm and personal environment as mates of their procurers’ in contrast with their homes that meant emotional bleakness and physical and psychic abuse. These young people, who grow up in a confusion of interests and values, are very vulnerable in all cases, and many end up in the hands of their procurers as a result of their escape that was attempted as part of their adolescent revolt. And the procurers are exactly aware of this and systematically work on this relationship. With the preliminary courtship, the praise of the girl, her overvaluing, the procurer gets the woman to become attached to an illusion. Later, when it becomes obvious that he wants to turn her into a prostitute and the woman wants to leave or escape from the situation,

much graver methods are used: threats, physical abuse, and rape. This is followed by some more courtship so that the procurer could apparently improve the situation. This is how the pimp manipulates, threatens and forces the prostitute all the time to produce him income by offering her body for sale.

#### **ACTOR #4: THE STATE**

The state is responsible for leaving women and children to be exploited, for regarding prostitution as natural and for regulating and institutionalising it in tolerance zones and brothels, for legalising it, or for combating it.

Decision makers have several choices to choose from which are full prohibition, legalised and regulated prostitution called reglementation, or abolition named after the abolition of slavery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

It is worth considering what role the state takes on when it enters the regulation of prostitution itself and prescribes further “rules of conduct” for the prostitute. The pimp’s?

The regulation model listed last here, abolition, names the actors: it punishes the client, who is the perpetrator, it also orders to punish the pimp, who forces the prostitute, but provides the prostitute, who is the victim, with help and support.

The majority of prostitutes go through inhuman suffering and even if they had the chance to break out of prostitution, the process of rehabilitation is terribly difficult. Society must ensure the institutions of rehabilitation and reintegration (shelter, care, training, etc.) for them.

After all this, can it be said that women choose this activity of their free will? Is it possible to imagine that women who are healthy in their body and soul want this when they daydream about their future? Which of us would suggest that our daughter should choose this activity?

Prostitution equals the full denial of the woman’s human rights—to self-determination, life, health, etc.—and her sexual exploitation!

#### **HELP**

If you are a victim of prostitution or want to help a victim, you may ask for help at NANE’s hotline: 80/505101 (18 to 22 h). NANE provides safety information for young women seeking employment abroad at the phone number 06-80-630-125 between 2 and 6 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday.

In case of a legal problem you may seek our assistance: [jogsegely@habeascorpus.hu](mailto:jogsegely@habeascorpus.hu), or 30/9965666 (16 to 18 h Wednesdays).

If you are a man and contribute to the maintenance of the institutional system of prostitution but would like to change your behaviour, or you want to take an active part in eliminating violence against women and children, you can talk to trained volunteers of the Stop Male Violence Information Hotline (Stop-Férfierőszak Információs Vonal), which you can call anonymously, between 6 and 10 p.m. on Thursdays at the phone numbers: 06-40-200-744 or 06-1-344-3802.

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What is prostitution?**

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