

Social Perspective and Causal Factors Influencing Women Prostitution in Iran

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Abstract

This article reviews some factors leading to women prostitution in Iran. Efforts to address this phenomenon in every society must firstly be directed at the individual, the family, and also at economic, social and cultural factors to determine the extent they contribute to sexual crimes. In Iran, sexual offences receive significant attention because of Islamic injunctions application. The country does not permit or tolerate such offences. Since the sexual offences incidents are increasing in the world, this resulted in adverse consequences such as insecurity, the weakening of family structure, offending of public feelings and the prevalence of lawlessness. This makes it necessary, to identify the causal factors that stimulate the occurrence of such offences and to consistently eradicate them. This is an analytical study on the determined topic, to find out how women become manipulated sexually because of the causal factors that influenced them into prostitution activities. Despite the fact that Islamic legal jurisdiction is comprehensive and progressive and prostitution is recognised as an offence in Iran, unfortunately, it seems the offence is sometimes occurring.

Keywords: women prostitution, violence, sexual offences, causal factors

1. Introduction

The history of the romantic relations between men and women has been the most wonderful and complicated one in human life since creation. Such romantic acts occur in different forms, for example hugging, and are epitomised by sexual intercourse between men and women. As the most obviously perverse example of sexual relations between two sexes, men and women, prostitution is one of the oldest and gloomiest tragedies in human history (Moslemi Bidhendi, Agha Bakhshi, & Esmaili, 2012).

In recent decades, even as religion, morality and intellectuality have developed, materialistic and immoral trends have tended to increase, rather ironically. Prostitution or sexual exploitation is one of the major moral abnormalities, and has been exacerbated by the introduction of liberal beliefs to sexual relations, despite awareness about its potentially damaging consequences for society. As a result of this permissive attitude, prostitution has tended to increase.

The social reality is that perhaps, not as many women, as presently observed, would choose such a debased lifestyle as prostitution, if there were equality in society. This is because a person whose conduct runs against the cultural norms of a society and persists in immoral acts, will inevitably meet with regret, emotional suffering, self-condemnation and lack of prosperity (Sotoudeh, 2010).

Generally, in society, not everyone would behave in ways that conform to legal requirements. Some people just do not have the ability, as well as purity in their essence to embrace only permissible conduct, and would rather deviate to prohibited activities. This is precisely the case with prostitution. It is an unlawful way to obtain valuable social interests (Hayati, 2004). In this study, the data are obtained from library reference and the analytical method was used (Yaquin, 2007). The main objective is to reach a better understanding of the causal factors leading to women prostitution and the prevention of this phenomenon.

2. Individual Factors

2.1 Psychological Factor

From the perspective of psychologists, there are mental differences between women prostitutes and normal

women. Most women prostitutes have personality problems. It seems that such women have anti-social behaviour, as well as personality disorders, and they typically act in violation of set rules. A person with personality disorders contravenes established norms and exhibits behaviour that inflicts harm both on herself and others. Among women prostitutes, it is useful to identify those with mental disorders such as psychosis and neuroses, mental deficiency, and bipolar temperament disorders; those who are usually eager to fulfill their desires quickly, easily and without discretion, as well as those who are sex deviants and epileptic patients. These are among the individual factors responsible for the propensity of some women to prostitution (Hayati, 2004).

Lombroso and Ferrero (1895) tried to justify the low involvement of women in crimes based on their mental features:

- (i) low intelligence and talent;
- (ii) lack of creativity and innovation arising from low intelligence;
- (iii) higher moral standards in comparison with men;
- (iv) being conservative;
- (v) being passive; and
- (vi) being subordinate and obedient

Giddens (1985), following Lombroso's (1895) work, introduced two groups of instincts, comparing them:

- (i) powerful instincts with features such as irascibility, self-confidence, curiosity, happiness, sexual power; and
- (ii) weak instincts with features such as passiveness, sadness, elegance, obedience and vulnerability (Najafi Abrand Abadi, 2005).

Giddens (1985) believes that women commit crimes less than men because they have weaker instincts. They are more likely to be crime victims. After Lombroso (1895), the mental status of humans received more importance, and the ensuing explanations were far from those biological theories in which crimes had been attributed exclusively to biological factors. In some theories, human needs got more importance, while in others, the focus was on mental-biological features (Ghahfarokhi, 2013). The mental aspect is the inner basis for behaviour, though not the only reason for it. Hence, this factor may lure some women into prostitution. It should be observed that the most important thing in sexual relationships for women is the emotional aspect, and they are interested in going into such relationships as a means of attracting more kindness. This does not mean that they have no instinctive needs. It is worth noting that, here, the emphasis is on "the most important thing." Now, if women find themselves to be mere tools for men, after a long period of time in prostitution business, they will begin to consider themselves as nothing but mere objects for sexual exploitation by men, even though they opted for prostitution voluntarily (Alasvand, 2006).

Generally, the psychological factors identified among prostitutes are:

2.1.1 Mental Retardation

By mental retardation is meant an IQ of between 50 and 70 out of 100. This is not very high, of course, and such girls are usually sexually abused. They normally need a caretaker, but when they fail to have a suitable one, they become vulnerable to prostitution. Sometimes, for these women, other conditions also intervene to lead them into prostitution. For example, because of their mental retardation they are not well educated, and lack the means of sustenance, as well as social respect. These factors worsen their retardation problems, and render them more susceptible to sexual abuse (Alasvand, 2006).

Oswald (1896) believes that most women prostitutes suffer from mental deficiencies and disorders, but the most important one exhibited by them, is the tendency to relapse quickly back into their childhood. This is usually manifested in childish behaviour. Mental-sexual growth in these women has stopped, and they are emotionally retarded. In fact, intellectual deficiencies prevent them from being conscious about human values or to even perceive such values. People who are not able to understand humanistic values and standards cannot choose a good and admirable way of life which is acceptable to society. They are affected by unfavorable environmental factors and become corrupted (Allahyari, Fakor, & Tabatabaie, 2002).

2.1.2 Neurosis Disorder

Neurosis disorder affect a wide group of prostitutes, and the main characteristics are instability in different aspects of personality, including relations with people, behaviour and temperament. These prostitutes are not insane, but neither are they rational in their behaviour. They exhibit instability in behaviour, identity and emotions. Such women fall in love with men very quickly, but also abandon the relationship soon afterwards

because they are bewildered or bored. Persistent sadness annoys them, and they may resort to some adventurous and antisocial behaviour. Unpredictability, sexual shocks, gamble, drug and alcohol abuse, as well as robbery, are the other symptoms.

2.1.3 Schizophrenia

This disease makes people to lose their motivation for growth, severs their relations with the peripheral environment, denies them social skills for social relations, and also causes them to display abnormal behavior (Ghahfarokhi, 2013).

Schizophrenic people are deprived of attention from other people because of their special problems, such as hallucination, mazing, lack of growth and suitable skills for social relations. As a result, in addition to their inability to satisfy their economic needs, they are not chosen for marriage, and if they were ever to marry, they would experience an unstable life and most likely find themselves at the edge of divorce. All of these factors can create conditions that are conducive to commission of crimes and involvement in prostitution (Alasvand, 2006).

2.1.4 Bipolar Disorders

Most psychologists consider this causal factor to be effective in promoting prostitution. Maniac people think that everything is easy; they do not pay attention to social rules and have a pleasure-seeking behavior. Even in cases where the disease is not drastic and the person has not been diagnosed of a maniac condition, she will still exhibit behaviour that tends towards abnormality.

2.1.5 Antisocial Personality Disorder

According to psychologists, this form of disorder is closely related to prostitution. A person who has an antisocial personality is not desirous of accepting individual and social rules, and seeks pleasures that provide short term satisfaction. Such people exhibit abnormal sexual behaviour quite early in life. Some of the main indicators of this type of personality, other than lawbreaking, are cheating and deceit, unpredictable behaviour, irritability, aggression, irresponsibility and lack of remorse that manifests as indifference. Most women prostitutes exhibit these characteristics. Of course, the corrupt men that play the role of dealers in the prostitution business can also be subsumed under this group (Alasvand, 2006).

3. Family Factors

Undoubtedly, family plays an important role among social entities and institutions. No society can claim being safe, if it is constituted by insecure families, and no social damage is devoid of consequences for family (Soleimani, 2010). Family, as a social entity, is responsible for the preservation of generations, socialisation of children and provision of a friendly and affectionate space for family members. It also plays an effective role in preventing individuals from involvement in criminal activities. It is possible to maintain social stability through family as it tries to curb the causal factors that engender crimes through its involvement in the process of child growth, improvement of the children's life conditions, and provision of a generally safe environment (Varavayi, Niazkhani, & Kalaki, 2010).

Most social perversions in cities occur due to lack of care in family. This is because family is the first causal factor influencing children's behaviour. The negative consequences of family breakdown expose children to criminal and other corrupt activities under appropriate conditions (Hosseini & Aghaei, 2008).

Thus, family is the primary and most important entity for the socialisation of children. There is a direct relationship between family disjuncture and youth deviance. Breakdown in family, absence of close parental supervision and living in a morally corruptive environment, underline the perversion observed among children, particularly teenagers (Sotoudeh, 2008).

Before the onset of prostitution, family was one of the causal factors on which experts placed emphasis. As women started to head households and take responsibility for their dependents, as well as other expenses, they became vulnerable to prostitution. This group of women who are saddled with such obligations, are at a higher risk of resorting to prostitution. Disorganisation in family, separation of parents, the absence of one or both of them and the presence of a prostitute among family members, are the most important family factors that encourage prostitution (Ghahfarokhi, 2013).

A person's style of attachment plays a vital role in her relations with other people during teenage and adult life. By "style of attachment" is meant a deep emotional bond forged by a person with others. This link makes a person happy when she interacts with other people, and also makes her relaxed under conditions of stress and helplessness. Psychologists classify attachment into three categories: "secure", "unsecure-avoidable" and "unsecure-bidirectional." The relationship between spouses has a special importance in family system. The style

of a person's attachment and the model of parent-children interactions play a special role in the formation of safe and stable relations between spouses and within the family as a whole. Therefore, disordered lines in that pattern may result in disruptions in spousal and family relations. One of the causal factors that may challenge relations between spouses and the style of attachment is involvement in extra-marital affair by one of the parties (Ghahfarokhi, 2013).

In traditional societies, the support systems for individuals and the supervisory mechanisms are both strong. In the event of family differences, divorce, bankruptcy, or the death of the male spouse, family members or relatives normally consider it their responsibility to support the woman emotionally and economically. By contrast, in modern societies, the traditional structure of personal security and effective supervisory mechanisms has been lost. The culture of modern societies has changed into one of mindless individualism and self-centrism (Nejad, 2006).

Conflicts between parents and children or between spouses compel children's minds to drift to the outside environment, or force them to escape altogether from home. Most of those women who eventually became professional prostitutes did not enjoy stable and affectionate families as young girls (Alasvand, 2006).

In families suffering from vacuum in terms of affection and supervision, children get attracted to the opposite gender when offered even the slightest affection. When a girl is humiliated in her family and her self-esteem is suppressed, she may end up being lured into socially perverse activities in response (Varavayi, Niazkhani, & Kalaki, 2010).

Thus, as humans are socially formed in family, if a family suffers disorder and abdicates its main function of education, the socialisation process would be unsatisfactory. In such situations, when a person finds herself in a new social arena, she will suffer identity crisis and be unable to abide by socially accepted values or behave appropriately (Varavayi, Niazkhani, & Kalaki, 2010).

The measures often used to control the behaviour of girls and prevent them from engaging in sexual offences, may be effective for some of them. These measures may expose them to other forms of felony such as their outburst against traditional barriers to deviant sexual behavior as well. Those girls may begin to seek refuge in a variety of unlawful activities as a way of getting rid of pressure arising from preventive measures, which they consider intolerable. At the same time, if families fail to supervise the conduct of their daughters and leave them to behave as they choose, they will sooner than later slide into sexual deviation and the trap of prostitution (Varavayi, Niazkhani, & Kalaki, 2010).

3.1 Divorce

Family is a social system, which has developed formally in all societies. In fact, in anthropology and sociology, the social structure is often integrated with the concept of family and relatives. Lines of disintegration and disorder in social structure are construed as a breakdown of family unit or the structure of social functions, due to the inability of one or more members in the family to perform their functions (Goode, 1973). In addition to its negative impact on criminality in general, divorce also has different negative effects on sexual offences, including prostitution. For example, a divorced women facing financial difficulty in meeting her personal needs and those of her dependents may be forced to resort to prostitution or some other criminal behaviour such as drug trafficking. Further, divorcees may not want to remarry, and prostitution may become a means of satisfying their sexual need. This is particularly the case for women. In the Iranian society, divorced and widowed women face additional problems. Given their special situation as single women, they become victims for men who try to prey on them for sexual pleasure. Although some of these women may be morally upright and generally not desirous of indiscriminate sexual relationships, they may eventually succumb to men's sexual overtures out of sheer pressure (Varavayi et al., 2010). Also, the negative physical, mental, moral and social effects of divorce exert influences on divorced men, women, children and society. Among the social consequences suffered by men and women after divorce, is the loss of social identity. Mental and emotional effects of divorce such as failure, distress, worry, fear, anxiety, anger and the like, make parties exposed to damage (Takhti, 2003).

Divorce is a phenomenon associated with criminality, especially wrongful sexual behaviour. Men who divorce their wives and fail to remarry, divorced women, and children with divorced parents, may inclined to prostitution. Women and children are more exposed to damage from divorce than men due to lack of access to financial support and the general negative attitude of society towards them. Such women are driven to prostitution by these forces (Alasvand, 2006).

The effect of divorce is particularly complex on children as it stirs them towards undesirable distractions, which they can neither understand nor withstand. Giddens (1997) believes that children suffer from severe anxiety after

the separation of their parents. Overall, among the direct social consequences of divorce are women prostitutes, street children, fugitive girls, suicide, single women and orphan girls. Robbery, drug addiction and trafficking, as well as murder are other consequences of the phenomenon (Sokhtanlo & Nazari, 2015).

3.2 Lack of Affection and Cordiality among Spouses in Sexual Relations

Every group of bad-tempered, jealous, addicted and immoral men with mistrust, especially the lewd ones, predispose their own wives to unlawful sexual behaviour. Similarly, frigidity in women, poor personal upkeep including obesity, and inattention to their husband's social character lure men into prostitution. Women's disrespect for their husbands and men's inattention to their wives' complex sexual needs are also some of the important causal factors explaining the tendency of men and women towards extra-marital affairs (Alasvand, 2006). In such situations, a kind of emotional distance and cold relationship will gradually set in between the spouses, and with time, they will come to accept that emotional distance. Lack of concern and interest in each other's affairs culminates in the loss of affectionate and continuing sexual relations between the spouses.

As a result, they may resort to unlawful relations to enjoy the needed affection and satisfy their sexual desires. Some spouses are simply not prepared to cope with certain problems or concern themselves with resolving them. Such problems may include sexual inactivity, impotence, chronic premature ejaculation, late ejaculation, rejection of lovemaking advances, lack of sexual libido and affectionate lovemaking ability. In these cases, spouses leave the problem unresolved due to lack of awareness, or simply because they are too shy to seek special medical attention. Instead, they try to meet their sexual needs by engaging in unlawful relations. Some believe that it is humanly impossible for men to stick to sexual relations with just one wife for a long term. They feel that this type of loyalty is unfair and outmoded. Therefore, it is sometimes claimed that resorting to illegitimate sexual relations is spurred by the need to experience a new and exciting sexual life (Shirdel, 2006).

3.3 Escape from Home

Escaping from home, whatever it takes, lures girls into prostitution. It is followed by exclusion, is one of the most common routes to a potentially ruinous life (Samadi Rad & Saberi, 2008). Based on socio-cultural norms in Iran, the escape of girls is considered a social deviation. An act is deemed a social deviation when it is not compatible with expectations in society or, at least, with the opinion of one of the major social groups in society (Lin, 2009).

Escape means voluntarily leaving home or a controlled environment to avoid some unfavourable conditions or to achieve favourable goals. One of the approaches used in the definition of the concept of fugitive girls is to classify them based on the motivation for escape. According to Whitbeck's classification of the phenomenon of escaping from home, "escaping from" refers to those, who escape because they have problems with their parents, while "escaping to" is for those who are attracted by the subcultural excitements and attractions offered in the streets (Tyler, Whitbecky, Hoytz, & Johnson, 2003).

The reasons for escaping from home may include violent and discriminatory relations in family, absolute restraint, absolute freedom, and economic problems. Escape may occur by the way of self-expression, getting rid of pressures, obstinacy or threat. This can be a factor for the increase in social damage such as divorce, addiction, disease, as well as mental and physical harm (Daghgheleh & Kalhor, 2010).

Presently, escape from home, especially among girls, is more prevalent, and its consequences are also more serious. There is a consensus of views that girls' escape from home occurs because they are unaware of the adverse consequences that lie ahead. After escaping, they are faced with vagrancy to their shock and frustration. In the end, they fail to attain their expectations, which may turn out to be no more than a mirage. However, because they are ashamed to go back home, or have not the motivation to do so, they inevitably bond with corrupt groups, and gradually sink into this moral swamp by engaging in sexual relations. In addition to this, they are exposed to stress and depression, which may ultimately lead to suicide (Sokhtanlo & Nazari, 2015).

3.4 Violence

One type of violence that has been little considered due to social and cultural factors, is sexual violence. Undoubtedly, violence is one of the most important factors responsible for deviations exhibited by women. Violence of different degrees is experienced by most women both during life with their parents and after marriage. Violence in family plays a key role in causing deviation among women, far more so than ruptures within families (Soleimani, 2010).

Violence against women is an abnormal sociological phenomenon rooted in numerous moral, social, economic and even political factors. Issues relating to behavior towards women in family or home, once a private affair, have now become an important human rights concern. They have been taken out of the private domain of

spouses, and given attention by states, governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, professional entities and international organizations. For example, Amnesty International, an international non-governmental human rights organization, has clearly stated that “women’s rights are human rights and their violation is the breach of human rights.” (Amnesty International, 2005). Violence against women is rooted in both economic poverty and moral-cultural poverty. According to a United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) report, the development of states goes hand in hand with violence against women and girls as the most prevalent form of human rights violation (Gharachorloo, 2006).

3.4.1 Violence against Women in the Family

Violence in the family, called domestic violence, is usually inflicted on women by their life partners or previous partners. It includes physical and mental violation by family members. The first kind of domestic violence is physical violence against women and rape committed on young children below 6 years old.

The Special Rapporteur of the UN General Assembly, Radhika Coomaraswamy (2003), in writing about violence against women, defined internal violence as violence, which “occurs in a private environment often among individuals with legal and blood relations.” Regardless of the apparent neutrality of the word, violence in the family amounting to a crime is mostly associated with the special gender of women, and is inflicted by men in the family. The most common forms of violence against women in the family involve mental and physical torture of women, rape of girls in the family by fathers, step-fathers or brothers, sexual exploitation of women and girls in the family, especially immature girls, and the murder of girls by their own fathers, brothers or relatives because they have been violated by strangers (honour killing).

3.4.2 Violence against Women in Society

Sexual, physical and mental forms of violence in society include sexual exploitation and rape of women and girls in workplaces and educational centres, rape against women in society, sexual assault of women, compulsory prostitution, perpetration of violent acts against women at workplaces forcing them to leave such places, insult women, swearing at women, selling women and trafficking in them for the purposes of prostitution, and sexual threat to women (Gharachorloo, 2006).

According to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO), sexual violence against women resulted in problems such as:

- (i) increase in dangerous sexual assaults among youths and teenagers;
- (ii) unwanted pregnancies;
- (iii) excessive pain in sexual relations;
- (iv) transmission of HIV/AIDS virus;
- (v) increase in the cost of therapeutic care for women who have been violated, particularly in respect of the treatment of diseases and related health problems;
- (vi) creation of insecurity, unsafe space and fear in the community; and
- (vii) premeditated murders, serious injuries and suicide (Gharachorloo, 2006).

3.5 Sexual Harassment

Most people think that the risk of harm is greater for those women who have been isolated from family and relatives. But the reality is something different. These events, that is, sexual harassments, usually occur in the deepest and hidden parts of women’s subconsciousness. They are increasing worldwide, although in Iran, having had long established religious dogmas and traditions, it seems not many women are affected. However, that is not to say that Iran is an exception. The low incidents may be traced to factors such as the unwillingness of sexually harassed women to speak out for the fear of social stigma, lack of information on how and where victims of sexual harassment can make reports, poor compilation of official reports of sexual harassment by concerned organisations, or the unwillingness of such organisations to make reports available to researchers. Therefore, this cannot be taken to mean that Iran is free from sexual harassment (Maljoo, 2009).

The sexual abuse of girls has significantly damaging impacts on them. Sexual aggression against girls mostly occurs in families. Those girls who get sexually abused usually suffer from depression, aggression and some degrees of neurosis because of living in constant fear of its disclosure. Definitely, the repeated experience of harassment adds more complications to the issue (Ghahfarokhi, 2013).

Madani (2013) believes that those girls who have been sexually abused and maltreated in the family are mentally prepared to be abused again and again. Also, he maintains that sexual exploitation causes young girls to consider

themselves as invaluable creatures, making them more likely to resort to prostitution. From Miller's (1939) point of view, sexual exploitation during childhood causes girls to develop negative emotions and feelings of guilt, but they eventually slide into prostitution, without any remorse (Ghahfarokhi, 2013). Adults, who sexually encroach on children, retard their mental-physical growth, which results in sexual disobedience, feeling of shame and guilt, and the loss of self-respect (Samadi Rad & Saberi, 2008).

4. Social Factors

4.1 Relationship with Friends

Establishing relations with friends plays a significant role in acquiring social skills "through common experiences." According to the coincidence theory, if there is a lack of effective support of the family, teenagers' trust in their parents is lost. They no longer rely on their parents for help, and the tendency to communicate with friends and get social support from them will increase. The peer group is considered an important factor for the socialisation of people. In fact, a person lives in two worlds: parents and other adult world and peers world. The peers world is a subculture, in some way, which is affected by a bigger world in which a person grows, but it may, in one way or another, produce its norms and influences on that person (Ghahfarokhi, 2013).

4.2 Drug Addiction

Although drug abuse and addiction have for long been among the most important social problems in the Iranian society, addiction has generally been presented as a manly problem, because there have been fewer addicted women than addicted men. Also, addiction has been prevalent only in a special group of women, for example, prostitutes. In recent studies, women's addiction has been attributed to other problems faced by them (Madani Ghahfarokhi, 2013).

From a pathological point of view, drug is a multifaceted threat, a specific part of which becomes more obvious at particular times. For example, if a man is addicted to drugs, this may at one time threaten the relationship between him and his spouse. At other times, this threat may be manifested by the abuse of his children. The addiction may also be transferred to his close friends. Eventually, this threat may endanger not only the security of the affected individuals, but also national security as a whole (Seyf Aldini, 2008). Another dimension to the multifaceted nature of the threat of drug abuse is that previously, the problem was restricted to older men, whereas in recent years, with the rise of the young population in Iran, drug abuse has become more prevalent among the youth, including young girls, despite efforts to combat the problem (Mousavi, 2010). This phenomenon may at different times lead to higher levels of suicide, divorce and prostitution.

Among the different strata faced with the problem of drug addiction, women suffer more harm than men and have greater sensitivity to the consequences, which take the form of mental and spiritual problems, feeling of failure, weakness of will, regret, diminished social position, social isolation, humiliation by others and unstable family relations (Garosi & Abadi, 2011).

Prostitution and drug addiction have a direct relationship with each other. On the one hand, some addicted women resort to prostitution when they are not able to meet the cost of their addiction. Therefore, it can be said that, as the number of addicted people has increased in recent years, so too has prostitution (Motamedi, 2016). On the other, drug usage among women who are already prostitutes is a means of making them compatible with a life full of stress and problems. In this way, they can tolerate sexual and physical abuse much better than before, and also free themselves from any feeling of regret for indulging in prostitution. As explained below, there are two different patterns of the relationship between prostitution and drug addiction.

- (i) The addicted men, who are unable to pay for drugs from their job income, their crimes, or parental assistance, make their wives to become addicted to drugs, and eventually force them into prostitution to meet the cost of their addiction.
- (ii) The addicted divorced women or those who have gotten involved in unofficial marriage resort to prostitution to provide for the cost of their addiction (Fatehi, Sadeghi, & Ekhlas, 2010).

5. Economic Factor

5.1 Poverty

The relationship between crime and economic factors is among the oldest viewpoints in analysing criminal behavior. Thus, even before the recent criminological and scientific perspectives on the study of crimes, philosophers and scientists had considered the effects of poverty in this regard. With the new criminological and scientific approaches, different viewpoints have emerged, which point to a direct relationship between prostitution and economic factors.

Marx and Engels (1884) made ideas about poverty and crime methodical through the foundation of the Conflict School. According to this School, economy is the foundation of social life, and other things such as politics, law and culture are the superstructure. Thus, Marxism, that is, the Conflict School, insists that economy is the most important factor accounting for the occurrence of crimes.

Burt (1966), however, maintains that criminality is not necessarily the end result of poverty because there are many poor people, who do not become criminal, even though most of them are needy with a low financial status (Burt, 1996). Etienne De Greeff argues that economic factors appear to have an indirect effect on criminality. Poverty is not directly the cause of the crime, but it can be indirectly influential. This is because it prevents people from natural development, causes sadness, disorder, as well as lack of discipline in families, and generates aggression and conflict that are, by nature, the causes of certain types of crimes (Keinia, 1994).

Lamont (2010) concludes that prostitution is, in some way, the product of the limited opportunities for women to earn money, and their lack of economic independence in industrial societies. Prostitution could be attractive to the group of women, who are economically dependent on men, or to governments as a means of revenue generation. Most women can earn a higher income from prostitution than through legitimate jobs (Vago, 1994).

Merton believes that most crimes are probably due to goals traditionally considered important in society, particularly wealth, because this goal is heavily emphasised. People understand that they cannot easily get wealthy through legal means. Hence, they try to attain this goal illegally. They may resort to such illegal methods as gambling, prostitution or drug trafficking. In each one of these means, people simply conform to the values and goals of society, in this case, becoming rich. However, they seek for this wealth in an unlawful manner (Varavayi, Niazkhani, & Kalaki, 2010).

Based on Merton's idea (1942), it can be said that women prostitutes respond to social pressures in two ways: innovation and isolation. Innovative prostitutes are actually merchants, who accept the goals existing in society and strive to attain them with the limited tools they have. As a shortcut to the attainment of their goal, they resort to prostitution. But there are some isolated prostitutes, as well. This group ignores both the goals driven by public culture and the tools for reaching them. The two groups are the victims of unfair and cruel conditions in society (Varavayi, Niazkhani, & Kalaki, 2010).

Among the reasons for women's tendency for involvement in prostitution, experts believe that poverty and inequality are the major ones. Nevertheless, it is clear that poverty is not the only causal factor responsible for prostitution because the number of women, who live in poverty, is not comparable to that of prostitutes. Also, there are always women among prostitutes who are not absolutely poor, and the reason for their propensity to prostitution must be sought elsewhere. In sum, the factors that propel women into prostitution may relate directly or indirectly to poverty or women's financial status (Ghahfarokhi, 2013).

Some believe that poverty is not just economic. It is a cultural matter that includes the feeling of poverty. Thus, the threshold of economic satisfaction in life, which is called the poverty line, differs with times, places and cultures. The feeling of poverty is mostly due to comparisons in economic status among people, even where a person possesses the basic necessities of life. The increase in the threshold of satisfaction encourages young people to seek different ways to get closer to the wealthy class of society, and for this reason, young girls may resort to prostitution. Misdirected economic and cultural policies in recent decades which have increased purchasing power, without due attention to the importance of controlling needs and decreasing consumption, can be included among the causal factors that effectively exacerbate poverty. The reduction of poverty in society can be achieved when income exceeds needs, or when contentment surpasses income (Nejad, 2006).

A sense of poverty can be a factor for personal ambitions which lures a person into sexually deviant acts. Most fugitive girls are attracted to corrupt groups after escaping from home, and those that end up as prostitutes are the ones whose families could not or did not want to meet their growing desires. Unfortunately, also, the satisfaction of most of children's needs makes them to become necessary. Thus, as children and their desires grow, families lose the ability to fulfill them. Consequently, when children come of age, they are unable to tolerate any slight hardship or other forms of pressure, and eventually leave their homes on the pretext of causal factors such as ill-treatment by parents, only to get entrapped in immoral activities (Alasvand, 2006). Due to financial and economic constraints, some women go into prostitution as a kind of resistance against or response to poverty. In other words, sometimes, prostitution is an active strategy against poverty because in a world where men have more rights than women, prostitution is probably the only means that dependent women can use to sustain their lives (Allahyari, Fakor, & Tabatabaie, 2002).

Dollard (1941) believes that people usually react because of their internal conflict arising from poverty. But the important point is that economic deprivations motivate harsh and antisocial reactions. Poverty minimises the fear

of punishment, and deprived people usually relate their antisocial behaviour to the lack of social organization (Rostamzadeh, 2016).

6. Cultural Factors

6.1 *The Adverse Effects of Publications in Mass Communications and Obscene Shows*

Today, despite the positive role played by the media and its effect on the communication of information and thoughts in human society, it must be kept in mind that the media also has the potential to propagate immorality, violence, prostitution and other moral misrepresentations. The media can play a great role in culture-building and normalisation of societies through the dissemination of new information, as well as the provision of an enabling environment for the exchange of public thoughts and opinions. Therefore, if the media is compatible with culture in society, it can produce positive human values, and prevent the occurrence of many crimes and other problems. On the other hand, if its content is designed without due attention to positive values, the media will have negative impact on society and resulted in the occurrence of crimes and other social misrepresentations (Abedi & Afshari, 2011).

The media can be divided into two categories.

- (i) Hot Media. This is usually full of information, and the user plays only a passive role in utilising it. This hot media includes film, radio and books (Navakhti Moghadam & Mirzanejad, 2013). Publications, articles and obscene photos not controlled by the authorities may have adverse mental effects on teenagers and lure them into immorality (Shahbandi, 1967).
- (ii) Cool Media. This covers those in which the user engages in the process of conveying the experience. It means that the user is required to play an active role to be able to use this type of media. Examples of the cool media are the Internet, computers and related applications (Shahbandi, 1967).

Most media display obscene and pornographic photos to attract the interest of viewers, with financial motives in mind. Some even go as far as directly propagating scenes of sexual intercourse. Satellite and Internet services, which promote criminality through the display of criminal behaviour are implicated here (Moazami, 2003). The obscene pictures disseminated through satellite devices intensify immorality in society. It is for this reason that Iranian legislators have banned the use of satellite equipment in the country. Under Article 1 of the Satellite Equipment Ban Act 1993, the “import, distribution and use of satellite equipment are forbidden except for cases determined by law.” It seems, that by adopting this measure, Iranian legislators have only opted for the easiest way out of the problem. A more effective solution would be to build the right culture in families and society, and in so doing, to establish a proper foundation for the appropriate use of satellite facilities in the country.

Similarly, with the advent of the Internet, some crimes against public decency and morality have found their way from the physical to the virtual world. Most of these crimes do not, however, fall under computer offences since they have not been criminalised by Iranian legislators. These are called decriminalised misrepresentations, an example being Internet sexual addiction. In such a crime, the offender uses the computer as a tool to enable his act (Ghodsi & Soleymani, 2010).

As indicated before, the Internet is part of the cool media. Certainly, the cool media boasts a greater attraction because they actively involve users. Some researchers are of the view that the Internet advances a form of addiction such as internet sexual addiction. It facilitates virtual sex, a new phenomenon by which individuals can meet each other in cyberspace and enjoy sexual relations, even without physical contact (Shojaei, 2008).

In general, the media account for sexual violence against women in two ways:

- (i) The conversion of women as commodities through advertising in which a woman’s beauty is used in commercials, and different kinds of private sexual intercourse are represented as natural in shows, theatres and documentaries; and
- (ii) The representation of sexual abuse as normal.

To sum up, in the Iranian society, there is a direct relationship between women’s sexual freedom, as well as their representation as commodities in the Western sense, consciously and unconsciously, on the one hand, and sexual violence, on the other. For example, an Iranian woman who interacts freely with men, or who allows herself to be used to advertise goods at public exhibitions would be viewed like a Western woman, and her conduct may expose her to sexual abuse by men. The accuracy of this assumption is easily demonstrable by comparing decent and obscene media, and the frequent warnings by human rights advocates against the use of women in commercial advertisements, that is, using them as advertising tools (Alsan, 2006).

7. Conclusion

It is a mere absurdity to assert that prostitution can ever be eradicated. However, it is plausible to reduce it by eradicating the significant causal factors such as individual, family, economic, social and cultural, and also attempt to eliminate the harmful effects that lured women into prostitution. This is because the existing criminal laws almost do not prevent prostitution. The focus on stopping demand from both sexes could be one way that may be successful. Equalization of political opportunities in which women are educationally, and economically empowered, is assumed may significantly reduce women prostitution.

In Iran, the privatization and free market economy witnessed between 1989 and 1997 have created privilege for some people. The upper class in the society enjoys an aristocratic lifestyle, which has become the target of societal prejudice and opposition in the post-war years. According to newspaper reports, about 90% of the country's wealth is in the hands of just 10% of the population, while only 10% of the country's wealth is in the hands of 90% of the population. Such an unbalanced situation causes widespread poverty, which is attended by negative consequences such as prostitution. The prostitution of poor women caused international authors to write about the female dimensions of poverty and to draw special attention to it. At the same time, the poverty of single young men intensifies women's prostitution. When marriage is not possible for young men, they become consumers in the prostitution market and make this market more vibrant. This becomes a very good opportunity for procurers who serve as middlemen by bringing both the buyers and sellers of sexual services together, thereby expanding the prostitution business.

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