

RED ALERT

UNDERSTANDING THE DEMAND AND SUPPLY SIDE OF GIRL CHILD TRAFFICKING USING A BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE APPROACH

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INTRODUCTION

Sex trafficking is a type of human trafficking involving the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbour or receipt of people, by coercive or abusive means for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual trafficking includes coercing a migrant into a sexual act as a condition of allowing or arranging the migration. Sexual trafficking uses physical or sexual coercion, deception, abuse of power and bondage incurred through forced debt. Sex trafficking is composed of two key aspects: human trafficking and sexual slavery. The two represent the supply and demand side of the sex trafficking industry, respectively.

Trafficking in women and children violates the basic human rights to life, liberty and freedom to chart one's own life course, and instead subjects the victims to cruelty, torture, dangerous and degrading work, and inhumane living conditions. It is estimated that there are 20 million commercial sex workers in India, and around 80% of these, i.e. 16 million women, are victims of sex trafficking (Zero Traffick, 2013). Kidnapped or lured from their homes, these women are forced to succumb to sexual exploitation as sex workers through a combination of coercion, torture, starvation and rape. Forty percent of these victims are adolescents and children (Zero Traffick, 2013). Moreover, massive influx of migrant workers in to the cities, due to widening economic inequalities, is rapidly escalating the demand for trafficked girls. The demand increases as the population of men vulnerable to the pull to purchase sex from a brother increases.

The dynamics of this problem must be understood and addressed in two separate domains - the supply-side and the demand-side. The supply-side refers to the rural ecosystem in the source areas from where these girls are trafficked, while the demand-side refers to urban hubs where trafficked girls are brought and forced into sex work to cater to the demand. The key source area for sex trafficking of adolescent girls is West Bengal, which accounts for 78% girls sold for commercial sexual exploitation in the country (Zero Traffick, 2013). The worst affected districts are Murshidabad, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Malda, North 24 Paragnas and South 24 Paraganas. Sixty percent of trafficked girls are aged between 12-16 years (Zero Traffick, 2013), and 90% of trafficked girls are from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Human Trafficking in India, 2010). There are several smaller hubs across southern states as well, the most prominent being Warangal located in the state of Telangana.

Destination hubs are major cities and towns across the country. Some of the biggest demand-side hubs are Mumbai, Delhi, and Kolkata. Sex trade in these used to be limited to certain red light districts, e.g. Kamathipura (Mumbai), GB Road (Delhi) and Sonagachi (Kolkata), but the situation is rapidly changing and sex for money is becoming available across the cities and in diverse settings, e.g. resorts/hotels, on the move like autorickshaws, to source girls and connect them to clients. To achieve a meaningful impact on the sex trafficking situation in the country, both the supply and demand of trafficked girls must be stemmed.

Final Mile Consulting, a pioneering firm engaged in practice of behaviour architecture, was commissioned to do research by Operation Red Alert of the My Choices Foundation, a network of organisations fighting trafficking on the ground in India. The approach followed by Final Mile was to apply learnings from cognitive neuroscience and behavioural economics to understand and influence the behaviour of at-risk families and men who buy sex.

Accordingly, this study was conducted with the aim of identifying the levers for behaviour change such that both the demand and supply of trafficked girls are checked, i.e. to prevent trafficking by sensitizing, alerting and empowering at-risk families in source areas, and to stem demand by changing the behaviour and attitudes of men at destination areas.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The decision to sell/force a girl child into trafficking or a 'marriage' at such a young age is not an easy one. It is not done in a split second. While there are many enabling factors, not every parent of a girl child in the same context is making the same decision. There is something different, therefore, about those making this atrocious decision. Both economic and emotional trade-offs exist. Understanding these trade-offs in the context of enabling conditions is critical to identify levers that can help reverse these decisions.

Equally, decision to pay for sex is not an instant one. While, it is a less difficult one, it is one where the young boy has to overcome shame, guilt and fear. While over a period of time, repeat behaviours reduce the role of such emotions, the idea of paying for sex is against the 'self image' most people have of themselves. Hence, this behaviour is also built over a lot of justifying narratives. Such justifying narratives may include: "the girl wants it or deserves it", "she is doing this because she wants quick money", and so on.

A comprehensive understanding of what drives these decisions is therefore required in terms of the mental models that are driving these behaviours, the contextual factors that are really enabling these decisions, and the role of specific emotions that enable these decisions. Hence, the aims of the research were as follows:

- To understand decision making among at risk families and identify levers that will make them guard/protect their girl child.
- To understand the decision making among young men/ boys with regards to visiting a brothel and identify levers that will stop them from such behaviour.
- To study the effect of Emotions, Context and Mental models in user and influencer behavior related to girl trafficking and visiting brothels.
- To elicit the scientific principles which, when brought into play as an intervention in the EthnoLab, have maximum potential in driving behavior change/ preference reversal.

A key consideration during the research was to ensure that the findings and insights can easily be extrapolated into applicable interventions on the ground. Hence certain additional secondary objectives were identified, as below:

- To identify appropriate media and communication channels, instruments and strategies for reaching target groups.
- To identify appropriate framing of information as per comprehension standards, cultural sensitivities, mental models, etc. of the target groups.
- To identify factors that will improve the salience and recall of information at appropriate time and place among the target groups.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Contextual research

The first stage of research mainly comprises of ethnography-style immersions and observations to understand the dynamic context within which the behaviour and agents are embedded. The key output of this stage is a set of hypotheses for understanding and changing behaviour. These hypotheses are generated and updated continuously to best reflect the ground realities and current level of understanding from behavioural and cognitive science perspectives, as well as previous research conducted in the domain. A number of parallel research activities are conducted to generate and update hypotheses, which include:

1. Immersion: Field visits were conducted to develop a good understanding of the context through direct interactions with at risk families, stakeholders, migrant workers, influencers, decision-making environments. Three villages in Warangal district in Telangana were visited - namely Kesamudram, Gudur and Vemanur. Warangal is a key hub for sourcing and trafficking girls. The interactions were disguised wherein the respondents were not informed about the particular nature of the research. The cover story used here was that we are doing a survey for an NGO in their village regarding the basic facilities like water, sanitation, hospitals and schools, survey of the thandas, as to what they have and don't have, working for the empowerment of their children and their education. Brief interactions were carried out with the villagers regarding their occupation, lifestyle, and education facilities available to their children.
2. Meeting NGOs and agencies involved in solving this problem: Due to the stigma and social shame attached to the issue, direct interaction with at-risk families alone couldn't reveal the full picture. To fill this gap, interviews and discussions were conducted with NGOs, government agencies and stakeholders involved in different aspects of the trafficking issue - prevention, protection and prosecution. The interviews were story-rich, i.e. many cases were

discussed in details. Client profiles and behaviours were also discussed. Information about clientele of trafficked girls and modes of operation were also discussed.

3. Finally, learnings were drawn from various programs deployed and research conducted to date, which include:
 - Human Trafficking in India: Dynamics, Current Efforts and Implementation Opportunities for the Asia Foundation by Sadika Hameed, Sandile Hlatshwayo, Evan Tanner, Meltem Turker, and Jungian Yang (March 2010)
 - Anti-Trafficking Report: India by Red Alert (2014)
 - Zero Traffick: Eliminating Sex Trafficking in India by Dasra (November 2013)
 - Comparing Sex Buyers with Men Who Don't Buy Sex by Melissa Farley, Emily Schuckman, Jacqueline M. Golding, Kristen Houser, Laura Jarrett, Peter Qualliotine, Michele Decker (2011)
 - Where Have All the Flowers Gone by Sanjog (2010)

Simulated hypotheses testing

Researching for behaviour is very different from researching to understand opinion, image, perception and thinking. To understand the latter, we usually rely on interviews, focus groups and questionnaires. But often, there is poor correlation between what people say and what they do, and therefore, the aforementioned tools are not sufficient to understand and predict behaviour. The poor correlation between self-reported behaviour/thinking and actual behaviour is on account of multiple factors, as follows:

1. Fear of value judgement and the desire for social approval makes us claim 'correct' behaviours.
2. Overconfidence in our ability to do the right thing in future leads us to make unrealistic claims about future behaviors.
3. Contextual factors have a lot of non-conscious influence and real life decision making is fraught with cognitive, financial and time related scarcities.
4. We think too much during such discussions whereas in real life the decision is likely to be impulsive and one that would rely on heuristics rather than one based on logical analysis and deliberation.

Evidence from Cognitive Neuroscience suggests that the bulk of the decision processing is a non-conscious activity. Therefore we have to be careful in taking introspective analysis and reports at face value. Equally, ethnographic research methodologies have certain limitations in terms of speed, scale and non feasibility across contexts. Hence, to study behaviour, there is a need for research techniques that can identify behavioural barriers and levers more accurately by being close to a real life decision-making environment.

FinalMile proprietary research technique involves a game that simulates the real-world context of the participants. This game was the medium through which context, emotions, and mental models that influence the behaviour of at-risk families and urban clientele were studied. The game was developed in digital form and a remote response system was used to collect the participants' responses. Audio instructions and narration were used, and no text was included, to suit the literacy and comprehension levels of target groups. Participants were invited to a central location where the game was played in groups of 10. A cover story was used to obscure the research objectives from the participants. The game consisted of 15 scenarios, with three options each to choose the response from. The scenarios included research hypotheses and dummy scenarios as per cover story, in the ratio of around 1:2. Each scenario simulated the real world context of the participants, and the decision had to be made within the time limit of 15 seconds.

The aim in the game was for each player to guess the most popular response in the group for each scenario, not their personal preference, and there was a reward of Rs. 20 for each correct guess for each participant. Therefore, if a participant's response was the same as the most received response from the group for a particular scenario, the participant would win Rs. 20 (30 cents) and the same applied to all scenarios in the game. This experiment configuration not only aligns the personal motivations with research objectives via incentives, but also takes care of fear of value judgement and self control bias, based on the principle that people are more realistic when it comes to other's behaviours. Separate games were developed and conducted for demand and supply sides at separate locations, details below:

Supply side

- Location - Lakshmikantpur, 24 South Parganas Distt., West Bengal, India
- Language - Bengali
- Target Group - 80 men from poor and/or vulnerable and scheduled caste households with teenage daughters; 20 women from poor and/or lower caste households with teenage daughters
- Cover - Testing of mobile games for rural audience on daily-life scenarios related to employment and migration, and care and upbringing of girl child
- 24 hypotheses tested

Demand side

- Location - Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Language - Hindi
- Target Group - 60 men between the age 20-30 years, married/unmarried, working as migrant labour in city; 40 men between the age of 20-30 years, unmarried, recruited in the act/in proximity to red light area, dance bar, porn movie theatre
- Cover - Testing of mobile games for young urban audience on daily-life scenarios related to love, sex and marriage
- 16 hypotheses tested

The game was followed by a hot state interview session which was designed to elicit emotions felt by the participants in this context by putting them through a series of deliberations. For each group, participants were segregated individually and in groups for interviews, based on their scoring assessments derived from the choices they had made during the game. These hot state conversations are crucial instruments for gathering insights and information about personal experiences and perceptions in relation to trafficking and purchasing sex, and how it had influenced the participants' decisions in the game.

Hot and cold states are defined in terms of the empathy gap in relation to specific behaviours or decisions. Research, primarily led by George Lowenstein of Carnegie-Mellon University, shows that people mispredict their own behaviour and preferences across affective states linked with decision/behaviour contexts. In affectively cold states, people fail to appreciate how hot states will influence their preferences and behaviour in the specific context, while people in hot states overestimate the stability of their current preferences. Interviews are usually conducted in cold state, i.e. in isolation from the decision/behaviour contexts and affective states. In the ethnolab, relevant situations from real life are simulated to put the respondents in hot-state right before the interviews, and thereby, bridging the empathy gap and eliciting more accurate prediction of their behaviour and preferences.

RESULTS

Final Mile's practice is based on the four key principles of Behavior Architecture:

1. Decisions are predominantly non conscious
2. Emotions guide behavior
3. Context influences decision outcomes
4. Heuristics and systematic biases moderate decision making

The research methods, strategy and design process are guided by these principles.

Research at Final Mile is intended to understand the context, emotions, biases and heuristics at play with respect to decisions. The findings of the research are organised using these four principles in the following sections.

Demand side**1. Context**

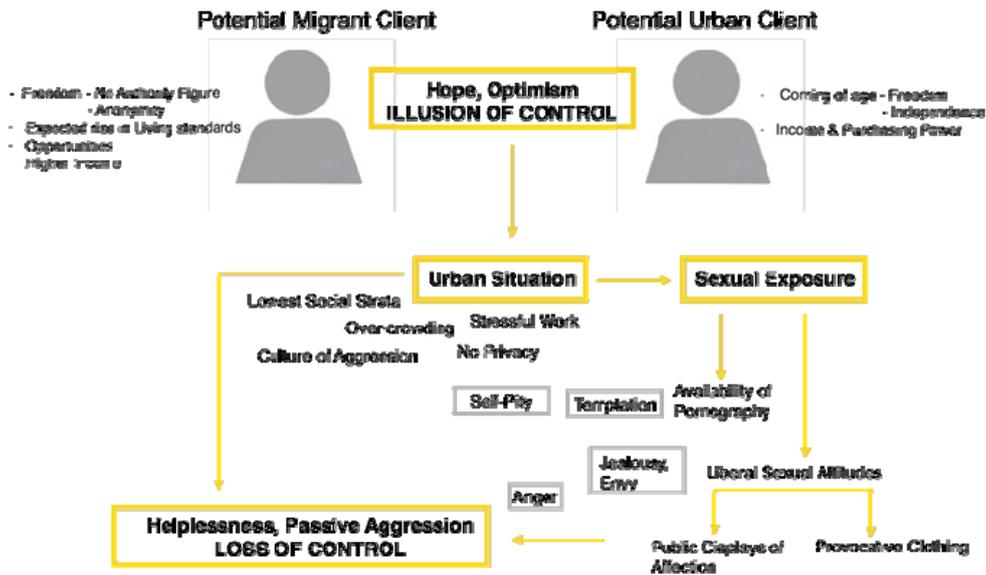
A potential client of sex workers in urban trafficking destinations is a young man, mostly in his 20s. Migrant workers from villages, engaged in casual, unskilled or semi-skilled labour, form a major part of this group. The other major category of clients is young men from lower-middle and lower sections of urban populace. This category is also usually engaged in casual, unskilled and semi-skilled labour. For many young men, purchasing sex is their first sexual encounter, and this usually happens around the age of 20-22 years. For married migrant workers living in the city without their families, a sudden lack of sexual activity due to separation from partners creates an unfulfilled need, which they satisfy by purchasing sex.

Now, for both categories of clients - migrant workers and urban youth - their situation in life elicits some degree of optimism, hope, and sense of control. A young man from village considers migration to the city a big step in social mobility. Similarly, a young man from lower urban strata expects adulthood and occupation to expand his freedom and control over his life. But the reality of the working and living conditions of migrant labour and lower sections in the city is far from these expectations. Life in the city for lower strata and rural migrants is characterised by loss of control over various aspects of life - overcrowding and lack of privacy at home, stresses and demands of work, and being at the receiving end of a widespread culture of aggression and domination. These conditions give rise to feelings of helplessness and self-pity.

The loss of control holds true for their sexual lives as well. In the city, these young men find themselves surrounded by sexual imagery and unfamiliar sexual attitudes/culture. Availability and easy access to pornography has increased the

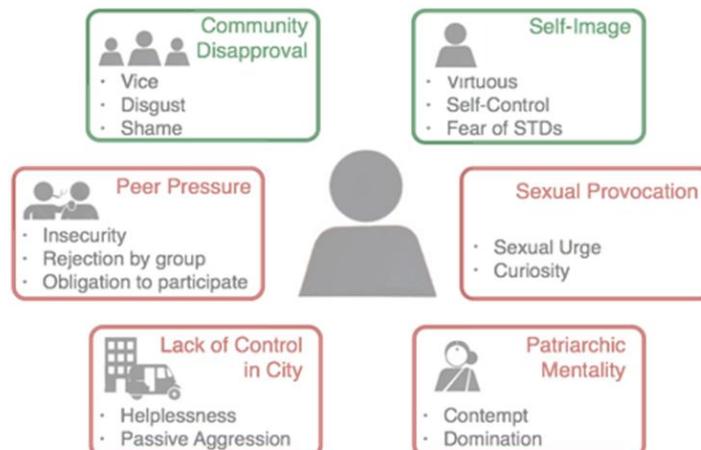
sexual appetite of these men, with very few options for outlet available to them. Masturbation is still looked down upon and many myths about its side-effects persist. Sexual attitudes in cities are increasingly becoming liberal and public displays of affection aren't as rare a sight as they used to be. But this transition is quite unequal, mostly affecting middle class presently. Rural migrants and urban poor feel excluded from this culture and the pool of sexually liberated women, which adds to their frustrations. Patriarchic attitudes and mindset channels these frustrations in to scorn and contempt towards women who they perceive to be 'sexually rogue' i.e. girls who have boyfriends before marriage, girls in skimpy clothes, promiscuous women and prostitutes. Now, the decision and behaviour of visiting the red light area for purchasing sex for the first time is usually embedded in a specific social context, i.e. peer group of young men. To understand why this is the case, it must be recognised that the traditional/religious social norms counsel against purchasing sex, sex before marriage and adultery.

FIGURE 1.



These in-group social norms act as the key barriers to these behaviours, by painting these as vices and linking them to negative reputation, thus directly targeting the self-image and social status of the person. In peer groups of young men, these social norms and pressures are reversed altogether. In these peer groups, sexual experience is encouraged and valued, while lack of it attracts taunts and teasing, creating feelings of insecurity and embarrassment. In this social context, indulging in such behaviour leads to in-group bonding and feeling of belongingness, as well as rise in social status and feelings of pride associated with it. Indeed, it is quite common for groups of young men to visit red light area together after consuming alcohol on their payday. It is in such groups, and under influence of alcohol, that first-time visitors shed their inhibitions and purchase sex. The next few visits continue to be in groups, but soon the men are confident enough to visit alone. Visits alone mark the beginning of the "habit", after which, it is very difficult to change the behaviour. Most men with the "habit" aspire to break the habit after marriage, but many find it extremely difficult, even after marriage, which leads to marital complications.

FIGURE 2.



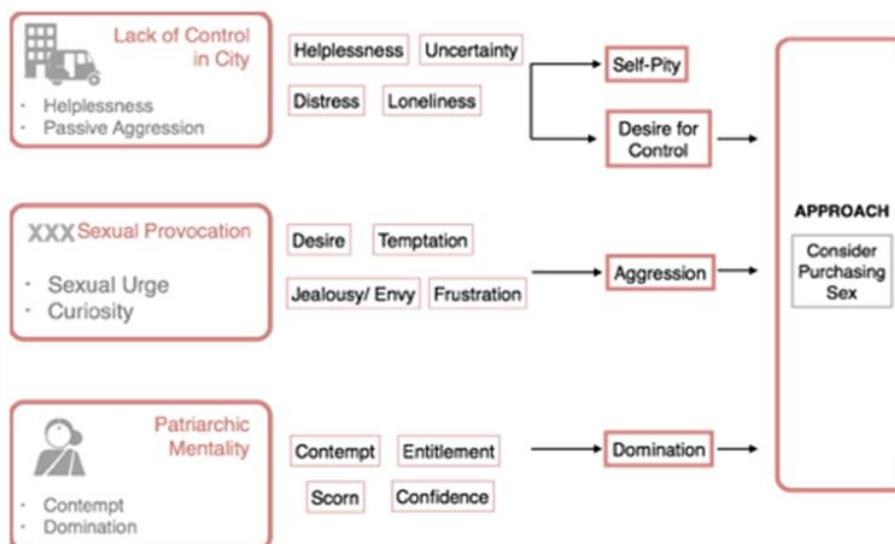
2. Emotions

Approach Tendencies: The living and working conditions in the city for rural migrants and urban poor young men are characterised by loss of control, leading to feelings of anxiety, distress and uncertainty. These feelings may be appraised towards avoidance if coping potential is low, leading to self-pity, submission and helplessness, or towards approach if opportunities to create and maintain an illusion of control are available, leading to aggression and domination. Purchasing sex and choosing from a variety of women provides one such opportunity.

The behaviour of purchasing sex is reinforced further by easy access to pornography, and also by feelings of temptation and envy due exposure to liberal sexual attitudes and public displays of affection in cities. Envy develops into frustration and anger, as these young men from lower stratas feel excluded from the pool of sexually liberated women, which is primarily a middle-class phenomenon presently.

Lack of control in various domains does not usually elicit approach tendencies in response, as coping potential for aggressive and dominating behaviour in other domains is low. But women become a soft target and an easy outlet for aggressive and dominating behaviour due to patriarchic attitudes and lower status of women in society. These attitudes easily lend themselves to objectification and dehumanization of women, leading to feelings of scorn and contempt. The patriarchic beliefs also give men a sense of confidence in their own ability to control and dominate. Sex workers bear the brunt of these approach tendencies.

FIGURE 3.

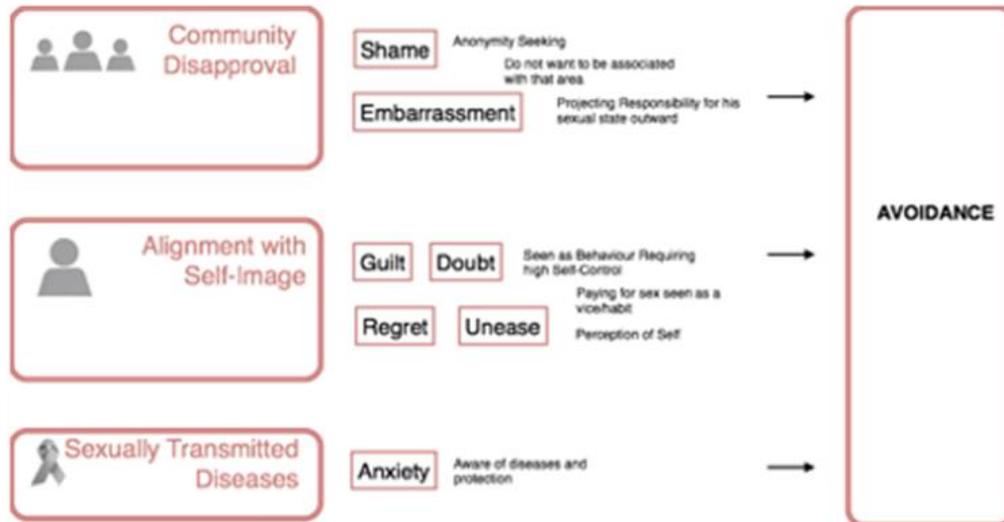


Avoidance Manifestations: The key emotional-motivational barriers to the behaviour of purchasing sex are the traditional/social sanctions against the act. Violation of these in-group norms is punished socially by shaming the person who commits such acts. So, anticipation of shame and embarrassment leads to avoidance of such behaviour. People fear loss of reputation and social status, and thus seek anonymity and are anxious about being caught in the act by a community insider.

The in-group norms and biases strongly influence the internal moral standards and self-image of the person. Therefore, the behaviour of purchasing doesn't align with the positive self-image which they desire, thus leading to cognitive dissonance. Hence, first-time users often experience feelings of doubt and unease about the act. Even after the formation of habit following multiple visits, the perception of the act as a 'vice' continues, indicating feelings of guilt and regret associated with it. But the rewards of the act itself - gratification, pleasure, relief, in-group status and illusion of control - reinforce the behaviour and thus, the cognitive dissonance and the negative emotions associated with the behaviour have to be avoided and rationalized by the user. Gradual erosion of cognitive dissonance and motivational barriers leads to formation of habit.

Lastly, awareness about sexually transmitted diseases largely exists and people report using condoms to allay those fears.

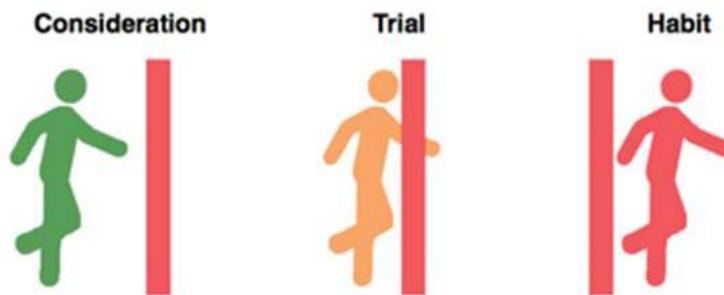
FIGURE 4.



3. Mental models

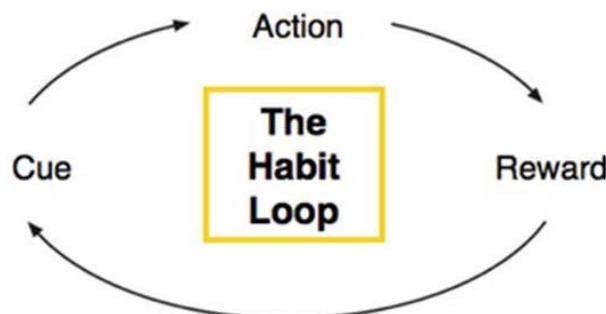
The dynamic interplay and interrelations between the context and emotions leading to development of habit can be seen as divided into three stages:

FIGURE 5.



- Consideration - Anticipation of pleasure and relief, along with desire for control, sexual frustration, and scorn for women are creating action tendencies for approach behaviour, while anticipation of guilt, shame and regret along with self-image concerns are creating feelings of doubt, unease and anxiety, which act as barriers to the behaviour. The person is undecided and doubtful about the act, even though there are strong pulls towards it.
- Trial - Feelings of doubt, unease and anxiety are addressed with various triggers/enablers such as peer group, intoxication, payday, etc. and the tendency is acted upon. The act leads to rewards such as instant gratification, confidence, relief, enjoyment, pride and sense of control.
- Habit - Sequence of cues, actions and rewards repeated several times leads to formation of habit. The cues in this case being the enablers, i.e. alcohol, salary, peer group, while the action being purchasing sex and rewards being the positive feedback from the act as discussed above.

FIGURE 6.



(Charles Duhigg, 2012)

Avoidance tendencies and motivational barriers are weakened by successive rewards, and on-going efforts to avoid and rationalize feelings of guilt and unease.

- Moral justifications: Portraying immoral acts as being in service of a valued social or moral purpose (Jo-Ann Tsang, 2002).
"They earn livelihood from this, so good for both parties."
"It should be noted that many of the girls send money back to their households living in severe poverty in Bengal. They get much more money in Mumbai than they would in their village. They have no other option."
"We don't prefer minors, but they usually come from deprived households and are forced into it for quick money. They'll make Rs. 2000 doing this, while she would make Rs. 50 back home."
- Advantageous comparisons: Comparing their own immoral actions with something worse (Jo-Ann Tsang, 2002).
"Some families put their own daughters into prostitution for a while to earn some quick bucks."
- Euphemisms: Use of carefully selected words and phrases that depict immoral actions as harmless and individuals as less causally linked with their actions (Jo-Ann Tsang, 2002).
"Sexual frustration from seeing skimpily clad women gets released on prostitutes. They aren't just sex workers, they are social workers, providing sex to frustrated and unsatisfied men."
- Obscuring personal causal agency: Separating the self from immoral action by obscuring personal causal agency through displacement or distribution of responsibility (Jo-Ann Tsang, 2002).
"Women wear such skimpy clothes these days, it provokes us. We get horny and go to brothels. Women must cover themselves."
- Disregarding/distorting consequences: Discrediting evidence of harm or minimizing perception of harm done through selective inattention and cognitive avoidance (Jo-Ann Tsang, 2002).
"Just enjoy and have fun. At weddings, sexual encounters between young, unmarried girls and boys are quite common these days, even in smaller towns. Sometimes these develop into relationships as well. But relationships are like job interviews - things like status, job, house matter. That's why we prefer going to red light area. No strings attached."
- Victim blaming: Rationalizing action by shifting attribution of blame from themselves to their victims (Jo-Ann Tsang, 2002).
"Prostitutes call you. They provoke you."
- Dehumanization/Objectification: Seeing and treating victims as subhumans or objects, without same feelings or hopes as the perpetrator, and thus one can rationalize that normal moral principles do not apply (Jo-Ann Tsang, 2002).
"Women are like men's toys. Prostitutes definitely are."
- Moral exclusion: Excluding the victims from one's moral community permits one to consider oneself as a moral person even while one engages in what would normally be considered depraved actions (Jo-Ann Tsang, 2002).
"Prostitutes are good for society. They act as safety valve, protecting good women from rapes."
- Social tolerance/normalization: Bystanders' ignorance or social tolerance can be used as rationalizations for immoral deeds (Jo-Ann Tsang, 2002).
"In Delhi, women call out from windows on GB road (red light area). But there, it's only restricted to one place. Police is more vigilant there too. After dark, they don't even allow you to sit with your girlfriend in a garden. In Mumbai, it's more widely available throughout the city - Rs. 200 in Juhu, Vashi. They travel in autos or stand at some points in public view. They come close casually and offer."
"Not restricted to red light area anymore, as prevalent outside in all corners of city. In public, CSWs tie red cloth on hand to signal to clients."

- Fragmentation and compartmentalization: Fragmentation of self-image into good and bad identity, along with global evaluation in favour of positive self-image, thus compartmentalizing the negative acts/self-image (Jo-Ann Tsang, 2002).
 - *"No way, very few people think of this. It's their profession, we pay and enjoy."*
 - *"Why should we care? They are not our relatives. Only people with very big hearts can act that way."*
 - *"You can't think about trafficking and victimisation of the girl you are having sex with. You have to ignore these things and enjoy."*

4. Decision levers

Habit is extremely difficult to break. Therefore, to prevent men from purchasing sex, they must be targeted at the consideration and trial stages. These stages are intimately linked with the context of peer groups. Behaviour of peer groups of young men, such as places they visit, activities they indulge in, etc., may guide the placement and nature of interventions. Peer norms may be addressed by portraying an interesting and relatable group of young boys talking about willpower and self-control, as a peer group of clients would talk of sexual experience. Alternatively, existing strong group affiliations e.g. sports team, celebrities, etc. may be used to create new norms.

Equating purchasing sex with rape/trafficking is not likely to work as strong rationalizations and avoidance mechanisms of self-attribution of blame are already available within peer groups. Advantageous comparison of self to traffickers/pimps/rapists/colluding parents is one of the strongest rationalization of purchasing sex. Message will be avoided and ignored. Instead, a positive self image should be promoted.

Traditional/moral framing and source is most likely to work. People avoid attribution of blame on self and try to rationalise their own moral self-image to avoid guilt and regret. Capitalize on tendency to see self in good light. Moreover, reminders of personal authority figures and family in the vicinity of the red light area likely to induce anxiety as well. There are various ways this may be used:

- Exclusion from Virtuous Crowd - moral authority figures and role models calling back.
- Choice between loving, caring family and a group of careless, outcast peers with vices.
- Talk of behaviour as vice, without attributing to the person, i.e. verb-focus in framing, instead of noun-focus, e.g. "don't lie vs. don't be a liar".
- Target the habit and reinforce perception of it as a vice, rather than targeting the person with negative self-image.

Examples of statements that may be used:

- Don't start something you won't be able to stop.
- Money flies away
- No breaking out, even breaks marriages
- Fuels demand for trafficking, ruins lives of innocent girls - Use empathy

Promiscuity with partner is the biggest emotional barrier to the act. Most men with the habit of purchasing sex want to give up the habit after marriage. Emotions of jealousy and envy in reaction to liberated sexual attitudes indicates desirability of the sexually liberated girls, but mostly for pre-marital "fun". But for marriage, most men desire traditional and morally conscientious women. Thus we see that ideals of love and sanctity of marriage play a role. This may be used for positive framing - "Sex for Love, Not for Money", "Wait for the special one", etc.

Supply-side

1. Context

Seventy-eight percent of the total girls sold for commercial sexual exploitation in the country are from West Bengal. The worst affected districts are Murshidabad, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Malda, North 24 Paragnas and South 24 Paraganas. Sixty percent of trafficked girls are aged between 12-16 years, and 90% trafficked girls are from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. A lot of factors contribute to the vulnerability of these communities, including poverty, illiteracy, seasonal unemployment, low risk perceptions, and social norms. Tolerance and widespread acceptance of child labour makes children easy candidates for migration for work. Also, traffickers prefer children as they are easier to control and manipulate. The trafficking network in West Bengal is quite strong and resilient, and works on standard operating procedures. Traffickers are patient and usually use informants/colluders embedded in the community who select a household and appropriate time to approach them based on criteria such as characteristics of girl, father, financial situation of family, character of father, etc.

The decision-maker in a rural poor household is the man - father, husband and so on. In rural communities, the social roles and responsibility of each member of the household are prescribed and enforced by the community, through peer pressure, community sanctions and reputation. The social role and responsibility prescribes for a father are as below:

- Maintaining appropriate living standards for family - nutrition, health, happiness, safety
- Providing appropriate education, skills and support to children for securing their future in terms of livelihood and life skills
- Getting daughter married into a good household (financially and culturally)

These men earn their livelihood from subsistence farming. But agricultural life in rural India is characterised with seasonal unemployment during monsoons. During the unemployment season, people have to migrate and look for alternative work, but they lack access to legitimate and affordable migration programs. Hence, their life is characterised by economic hardships, and struggling to fulfill their responsibilities and maintain a good reputation in the community. The traffickers exploit this situation by approaching the household during conditions of scarcity or crisis such as crop failure, death of breadwinner, serious disease, etc., and offering jobs/money/marriage for their daughters. This offer is congruent to the fulfillment of responsibility as head of the family and the father discussed above. It provides instant relief to the family suffering from a crisis situation, provides hope for the future, and releases the burden of the girl child from an overburdened household.

The decision to send a girl to the city for marriage or for work is highly influenced by a plethora of prejudices and biases that exist against the girl child in rural Indian communities. In patriarchic societies, there is a very strong feeling of men's ownership and control over women's sexuality and most other aspects of life, to the extent that girls' preferences and consent in such personal matters like love, sexuality, marriage, career and mobility are often completely ignored. Investments, financial or emotional, are only made with the goal of marriage in mind, as the returns on the investments are lost after she moves to another household after marriage. The girl is considered a perpetual outsider and temporary member of household, destined to become a part of another household. Responsibility and ownership over a girl child is only perceived to last till marriage, as she becomes her husband's responsibility after marriage. Hence they are often treated with indifference and their status and voice in the household are quite low. Moreover, costs involved in a girl's wedding such as dowry, rituals and ceremonies, are a cause of much anxiety in poor families. Due to these costs, girls are considered a burden and are often treated with scorn and contempt. Investment in a girl child is considered a bad investment because of socio-economic conditions as well, i.e. unequal pay for work, lesser opportunities, lower mobility, and higher costs in terms of safety, health, etc.

Traffickers use various tactics to lure the men into the offer and to ward off any suspicion or hesitation. Traffickers often approach as agents promising job for the girl in the city. They are often referred by an acquaintance in the community. Those that refer work as spotters for traffickers and manage to stay in the village in spite of collusion with traffickers by giving an actual job to a few girls for every girl trafficked. They might offer some upfront payment or pardon outstanding debt to lure the father. The agent for this job is often a trafficked girl who is tasked with recruiting more girls from her village. These women would lure the other families in village to send their daughters with her to work in the city by displaying signs of prosperity and exaggerating opportunities and living standards. Another tactic they use to reassure the family of the girl is to take many girls from the same village. Migration in groups is considered safer and genuine.

Another common tactic used by traffickers is to offer to marry the girl and take her out of the village. Traffickers may offer the bride money, pay for the ceremony or forgo a dowry. Wedding ceremony expenses and dowry are sources of major anxiety related to the girl child and hence, these are extremely strong lures for a poor man with the responsibility of marrying his daughter, at times of crisis. Alternatively, they may target the girl herself with false promises of marriage and love, and manipulating her into eloping. They weave fantasies of glamour, higher living standards and control, contrasting with her state of monotony and no control in the village. The spotters look for gullible and aspirational girls to trap with such tactics.

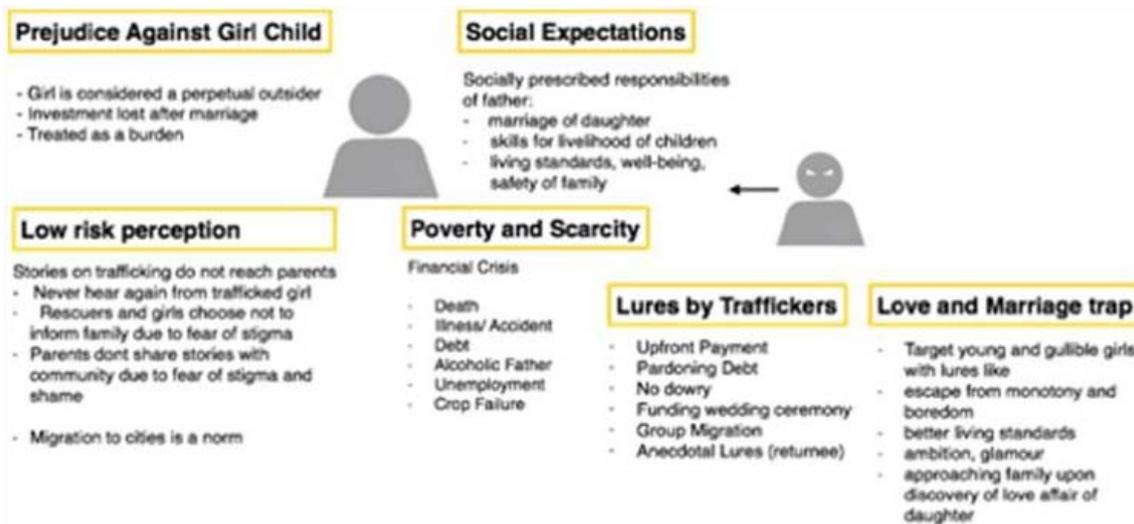
Now, in spite of the extent of trafficking in these source areas and standard tactics used by the traffickers, the risk perception related to the girl's migration to the city for marriage or for work remains low. This is because these risk perceptions are mediated by information about adverse outcomes that reaches back to the family of victims. But certain contextual and cultural factors obscure this information from the community.

- In most cases, there is no communication with the girl after she's trafficked, till she escapes or is rescued. As most trafficked CSWs are never rescued, the story of their trafficking and conditions never reach their families.
- Even when a girl is rescued, often the story of her trafficking and living conditions have to be hidden from the family due to shame and stigma attached to this issue.

- In cases where the girl is rescued and her family is informed about the trafficking, the family often chooses not to share the story with the community due to the shame and stigma attached to this issue.

Due to the above factors, people are not fully cognizant of adverse outcomes and their probabilities, and hence risks involved are underestimated.

FIGURE 7.



2. Emotions

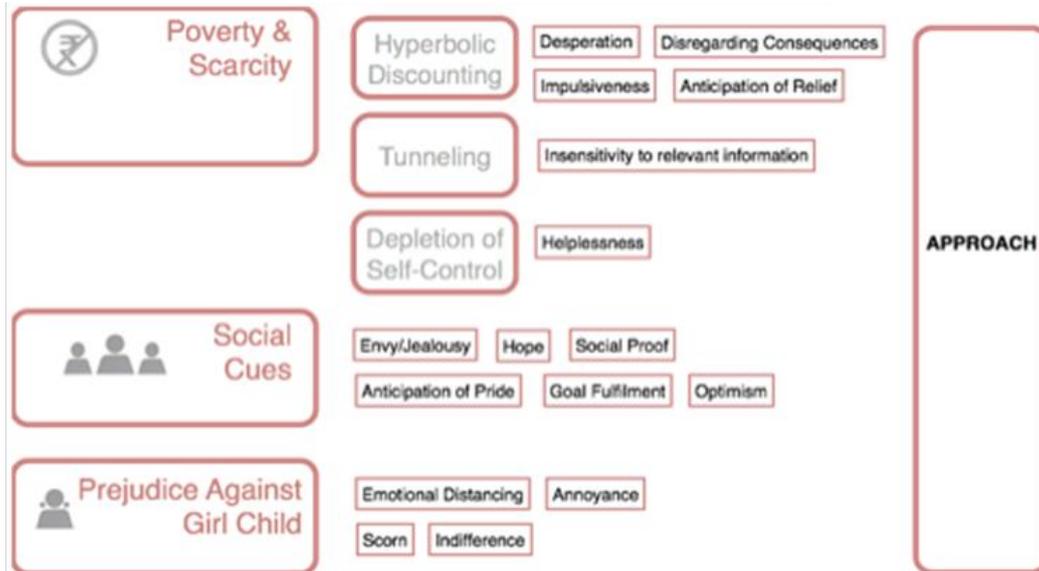
Approach tendencies: The social context in the source areas is favourable towards migration to cities looking for employment and better living standards. Feelings of hope and optimism are associated with migration outside the village. Also, there is a sense of pride and prestige associated with receiving an offer for marriage of the daughter from the city. These in-group biases and norms make the families in these areas susceptible to girl trafficking. Furthermore, within the community, feelings of jealousy and envy arise at other's prosperity, success or luck, and there is an anticipation of regret for missing a golden opportunity, especially something that could benefit another household in the village. Fear of failure to achieve goals (responsibilities as father) such as appropriate living standards for family, marriage of girl, livelihood for children, etc., coupled with fear of missing a golden opportunity, creates an anticipation of regret.

By approaching the household during conditions of scarcity or crisis such as crop failure, death, illness, etc., and offering jobs/money/marriage, traffickers exploit the cognitive and emotional effects of scarcity to trigger the desired behaviour. These emotional costs of scarcity are as below.

- Tunneling - Scarcity leads to attentional focus on the object of scarcity. The disproportionate focus adversely affects the information search process and decision-making/appraisal criteria, leading to insensitivity to relevant data and judgment criteria. Therefore, the father's judgment is impaired in evaluating the job or marriage offer as per relevant criteria.
- Excessive attentional focus on object of scarcity leads to cognitive fatigue and ego depletion, which adversely affects self-control and leads to distraction from goals. Therefore, fathers are easily lured into indulgences.
- Scarcity also leads to a strong focus on present needs and insensitivity to temporal and causal factors. The result of this is strong hyperbolic discounting (impulsivity towards immediate rewards) and impact bias (overestimation of emotional impact of an anticipated event/goal) work together to push towards impulsive and extreme decisions for instant relief and gratification.

Finally, traffickers are aware of the low status of daughters in the household and exploit it to their advantage by presenting the decision of sending their daughter out as a choice between the girl's interest and the entire family's interest. The feelings of emotional detachment, indifference, contempt and scorn towards the girl child play a big role in fathers' decisions to risk their young daughters' safety and well-being.

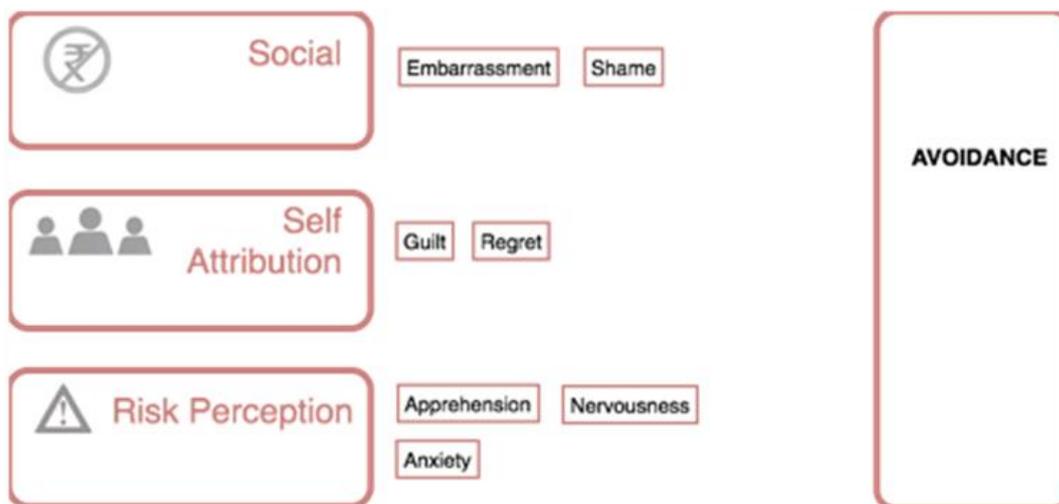
FIGURE 8.



Avoidance manifestations: As discussed in the 'Context' section, even though the availability of negative stories related to girl's migration to city are abundant, risk perceptions remain low as compared to actual risk involved, due to trafficker's efforts to muzzle the information about trafficked girls, as well as the social stigma attached to the issue in rural communities. But the risk perceptions do lead to feelings of anxiety, hesitation and anticipation of regret. These avoidance tendencies stem from affection and concern for daughter, as well as concerns about reputation in the community and self-image as a father and head of the household.

Moreover, due to lack of exposure outside the village and lack of familiarity with the city, the perception of control outside the village is extremely low for these men. This leads to feelings of helplessness and tendencies of inaction.

FIGURE 9.



3. Mental models

Anticipation of regret is instrumental both on approach and avoidance tendencies. Hence, anticipation of regret acts as the key mediating emotion for cost and rewards evaluation in the decision. Traffickers employ various tactics to turn the balance towards approach tendencies - strengthening the anticipation of regret for not accepting the offer or reducing the anticipation of regret for accepting it. In spite of the trigger tactics used by traffickers to bias the cost-reward evaluations for the decision, the risk perceptions still persist, and some anticipation of regret persists towards the decision to send daughter away. Hence, a lot of guilt avoidance and moral rationalization is involved in the decision and continues after words.

- Moral justifications
 - "Poverty doesn't even allow us to dispense our responsibilities as parents. I want to get her married in a good, well-to-do family, but because we have nothing to offer, it might not be possible."*
 - "Due to poverty, we can't provide her full and quality education or comfortable living standards. So getting them married soon in a well-to-do household is our only hope for their future."*
 - "Poverty forces us to go wherever work is available. We have to take risks."*
- Advantageous comparisons
 - "Some girls have to migrate to city for work due to the family situation. I know a girl who was sent to work in city at the age of 7."*
- Obscuring personal causal agency
 - "They meet the wrong sort of boys on trains, in city, etc."*
 - "I would be too scared to send her until she is married. After marriage, she is her husband's responsibility."*
 - "Some person usually fools these young girls into dreams of livelihood and living standards in city and takes them."*
- Blaming or dehumanizing victim
 - "Girls are gullible and are easily trapped in love and corrupted by the wrong sort of boy."*
 - "If the husband is mostly not at home and wife is always alone, she can get corrupted and develop vices or make big mistakes."*
 - "Have to keep an eye on her and scrutinize her movements and who she meets."*
 - "Men in poor households consider the girl child a burden, and hence want to get rid of her, so they get her married early."*
 - "We safeguard our children, but if they themselves are attracted to the wrong things and people, then no one can help"*
- Social Cues
 - "People go in groups to the city to look for work during the unemployment season"*
 - "In a poverty ridden household, if ever a good opportunity shows itself, we cannot afford to miss it."*
 - "Poverty forces us to go wherever work is available. We have to take risks."*

4. Decision Levers

Goal realignment - Anticipation of the social, emotional and financial costs of a daughter's marriage leads to anxiety among fathers regarding their responsibility, leading to avoidance behaviour, where father, reluctantly (due to social pressures), tries to push the responsibility off at any opportunity. The goal of ensuring happiness, well-being and safety of the daughter is obscured. This may be realigned.

- Induce protective instincts with images of innocent and cute younger girls
- An educated, bold and self-dependent daughter is valued. Portray potential of cute little girls to grow into an educated, bold girl.
- Counter emotional distancing with positive affective framing.
- Highlight trafficking risks subtly. Avoid negative framing.

Silent conversation to salient conversation - Risk perceptions remain low because open conversations about incidents do not happen due to shame and stigma attached to the subject. If father consults a few peers in specific case of an offer, trafficking stories may become available and risk perception may grow.

- "Don't rush in. Talk to family and community."
- Start conversations through public events like movie screenings, festivals, performances, etc.

Exploit hope, optimism with positive framing - Helpline may be promoted as a generic dial-in migration assistance service. Use aspirational and optimistic framing to capture at-risk families and then educate and assist them via helpline. Create a smart family mobile infotainment platform with conversational style and all family members included. Promote safe

practices along with providing useful entertainment in entertaining way. Use celebrities, role models. Exploit experiential and testimonial type framing.

Instead of highlighting adverse outcomes, attract suspicion towards the agent as caution and a smart practice. Participants in a game indicated the likeliness of this framing working.

- Safe migration framing along with focus on smart behaviours while migrations or sending a child to city.
- Decouple precautionary and protective behaviour from risk perceptions, which are low.

Strengthen girls' agency - directly target girls. Education is valued prominently, even for girls up to a certain level. Target young girls at school for simple and subtle risk communication. Approach father through participatory homework assignments, questionnaires, quizzes, etc.

Target public messaging at transport hubs and trafficking routes such as railway stations, bus stops, highways, buses. Messaging in the context of subject will be more salient. Side effect of fear among traffickers as they use public transport.

CONCLUSIONS

The research both on the supply side (focusing on fathers) and demand side (focusing on young men) reveals a common approach to solutions. The circumstances that shape and drive the compulsions behind the problem behaviors (selling and buying girls) have much in common, as do the methods through which fathers and young men can be influenced to make good decisions. The conclusions of the paper are categorized into three sections: vulnerability, compulsion, and messaging.

Vulnerability

The two key areas of vulnerability that traffickers exploit are poverty and mindsets that undervalue girls and women. A father who is resource-rich will never need to make the difficult decision whether to sell his daughter to ensure the rest of the family has food to eat. A father who believes his daughter is worth as much as his son, would never consider selling his daughter, even in times of resource scarcity. Likewise, young men facing resource scarcity, are typically much more afraid that they may never attain female companionship than young men who are resource-rich. Young men who value and respect women, would never buy sex under any circumstance, if they understand the degrading and painful lives these women lead to provide this service.

Compulsions Behind Behaviour

The most important objective of this paper was to understand the compulsions behind the behavior of men on the supply and demand side of trafficking, so that we can change their behaviour.

The decisions made by fathers are based primarily on the desire or burden to meet social norms and expectations of a good head of the household. As mentioned in regards to vulnerability, fathers are approached by traffickers especially during difficult times, when they would be feeling the stress of not meeting societal or family standards and expectations. The father makes his decisions on information available to him, and according to his biggest burden. Priority to maintain a certain standard of living for his family is one of the biggest drivers behind his behavior. This standard of living includes the basic resources his family enjoys as well as the opportunities he is able to afford them. Daughters are seen as a burden to their families because of poor economic prospects, marriage expenses, and dowry. Resource scarcity and the mindset that girls are not as valuable as boys cause fathers to bypass the risks involved with sending their girls away from home. Under the pressure of difficult circumstances they prefer to be hopeful that in sending their girl away, they can improve the future of their family as well as that of their daughter. Lack of information about what trafficking is, and generally being information poor, without resources to get better information is another driving force behind the behavior to accept the risk of sending a daughter away. Fathers justify their risk-taking because without significant evidence otherwise, it seems foolish to bypass an opportunity to improve family circumstances.

Thus, it is in the effort to be a good father that these fathers send their daughters away. These men do not maliciously send their daughters away, knowing the harrows awaiting them in red light districts. Rather, they mitigate the risk by self-assurances that it is the best option for the family, that he is doing his duty to his family by pursuing the best opportunity to maintain standards of living. It is not until much later, when the family receives no word or money from their missing daughter that the father realizes that he may have made a mistake.

The decisions young men make to buy sex from women or girls who may have been trafficked is likewise rooted in the desire for better things in life. Most of these young men are recent urban migrants from rural villages who are confronted with a myriad of difficulties upon arrival in the city. Desires for everything the city promises are agitated in young men by the constant bombardment by advertisements, films, affluent culture, etc. These young men feel a complete loss of control

and a lack of importance in the city that leaves them drowning in their own insignificance. City culture causes them to aspire to levels of wealth, power and sexual expression that they are not used to coping with, and not prepared to embrace. The frustration that this insignificance and lack of control creates coupled with peer pressure push young men towards sexual gratification and control through purchasing sex. Young men facing this decision are pushed towards it by everything city culture promotes. They are not held accountable to a moral standard that would otherwise discourage them, because they are disconnected with their community in the village. They also do not have education that would provide them with information to discourage them from exploiting women in the sex industry.

Again, the compulsion behind the behavior of men on the demand side of trafficking is based on the desire to measure up to societal expectations; to be good enough. However misplaced or detrimental the action is, it is largely due to the lack of positive reinforcement of other behaviors. These young men do not have firm identities, and this results in them being susceptible to the habit of buying sex in order to feel significant and in control of their own lives.

Messaging

The single most important outcome of this research to impact Operation Red Alert's approach was The Messaging recommended to change the behavior of men. The Red Alert approach started out with the goal of inciting outrage among the public over trafficking; outrage that this is happening in our country and communities; outrage that traffickers are tricking families into selling their daughters; outrage that our daughters are being sold and exploited in red light districts, hotel rooms, back-streets and alleys. In order to incite this outrage, our programs would need to focus on educating individuals on the negatives, and pushing the horrors of trafficking. An outrage-focused message is focused on the bad behavior of those who are a part of the problem, and using the resulting anger to catalyze action. The messaging proposed in this research paper is radically different.

Far from the problem-focused messaging required to incite outrage, the research suggests using a strong, positive message focused on the inherent and aspirational good in each person. The vulnerabilities that these men face are fixed, but our messaging can take these stress points into consideration and address them by strengthening decision-making processes. Focusing on the inherent good in men harnesses their desire to measure up to expectations, to be admired, and respected. It takes the focus off of the problems each man is facing - crop failure, poverty, fear of paying daughter's dowry - and repositions it into the ability of the man to make good decisions in spite of them. By championing the good in each man, it creates an aspirational value to doing good. The focus of a father making decisions for his family, or for a young man chasing significance in his own life is to make the best decision he can with the expectations laid on him and information available to him. Re-educating men on what good decision-making is, and providing them with the needed information to make these decisions helps them attain their own goals. By redefining "good decisions", men are encouraged to feel good about themselves because they are making well informed, long-term minded decisions.

In the light of this research finding, Operation Red Alert has developed messaging for both urban mass media as well as rural grassroots through two different initiatives. The most immediate of these initiatives, which is already making an impact across villages in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal, is the Village Toolkit. Operation Red Alert has used positive messaging for each major stakeholder through a first of its kind program. The key leave behind of this Toolkit is a Comic Booklet that includes a comic story featuring 4 heroes, and 1 flyer per stakeholder group. The stakeholders targeted through this messaging are the 'Good fathers', 'Informed Mothers', 'Guardian girls' (school-aged), and young men - 'Cool boys'. Operation Red Alert has developed avatars for each of these characters and turned them into heroes in the comic series. These Booklets are designed to educate key stakeholders on trafficking while inspiring them to believe in the innate potential of each individual to make a difference and stand up against this exploitative form of slavery.

Each character in the Comic Booklet is designed to look like an "everyday" character from rural India, familiar enough for our village audience to identify immediately with. Yet each character has a few qualities in their personality that stand out. So while they are immediately recognizable and relatable, they are also aspirational. This combination of relate-ability and aspirational qualities, it is hoped, will help inspire everyday people to make outstanding choices everyday. The suggestion of the research to develop positive messaging has entirely shaped the approach to Operation Red Alert's media and grassroots outreach.

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