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Prostitution in Modern India: Historicity, Modernity, and Contemporary Offshoots

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Abstract

Sex work has been a bone of contention between those who practice it, and the governmental discourse. Sex work is also deemed to be a derogatory profession in the Indian society. Although vehemently opposed by the society, there are numerous instances where those who dismiss sex work as a profession are seen indulging in the same. It is due to these reasons, exchange of abuses related to sex work, the womb, and females in private and public spaces became a game of verbal domination in the Indian society in modern and contemporary times. Moreover, sex work is also one of the most controversial topics in Indian academia. By surveying the primary and secondary sources related to sex work, attitudes of politicians and the society towards the profession, and sex workers' demands, this paper is an attempt to trace the devolution of a sacred Hindu prostitute (*devadasi*) into a modern prostitute.

Keywords: devadasi, prostitution, sex work, sex work feminism