

# PROSTITUTION: THE PROBLEM OF SOCIAL PROBLEM\*

By

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I have chosen the topic: “Prostitution: The Problem of Social Problem” because of my conviction that:

- (1) many sociologists shy away from tacking the problem of prostitution because of its derogatory implication or because of the derogatory public attitudes towards the prostitutes
- (2) many highly placed reformers are known to visit the prostitutes in secret but in public, assume the garbadine of pontiffs, condemning what they patronize
- (3) because of the inability of society to accept the obvious state of nature, prostitutes are condemned without being understood
- (4) it is hardly possible that we can legitimately label what we do not understanding and categorize it as social problem, even when there is wide disagreement among scholars as to what is being labeled.

Lemert, Schur and Cressey, to mention but a few, have all touched the problem of prostitution rather tangentially. The question remains unanswered as to who a prostitute is, and how prostitution relates to social problem.

Social problems are expressed in terms which refer to the objective social conditions and the subjective attitudes of the society towards the objective conditions. People look at the conditions and see the conditions in term of what the conditions have contributed positively or negatively towards the social structure. From a functionalist point of view, if the objective social condition makes a positive contribution to the society, then it is not a social problem. But if this contribution is functionally negative, then it should be regarded as a social problem.

But the crucial issue is: who is to decide what is positive and what is negative to the society? If we look at it from the value point of view, we would see that both the practitioners of prostitution and the definers of prostitution are in two opposing positions and should not be expected to have any congruence in terms of their value judgments or interpretations of the objective social conditions.

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It is because of this conflict in value interpretations and the conflict in the analysis of the functional contributions of the objective social conditions that one looks at prostitution as a problem for which sociologists have not dared a solution.

In discussing the moral premises of social pathology, Carl Rosenquist (1940) contends that the concept of social pathology is untenable since it actually points to nothing that can be studied because there can never be any agreement on what may be objectively defined as pathological states. The concept of social pathology as reaction to social problems presumes the existence of a normal society. Unfortunately, **normality is an ideal and not a social fact**. There is nothing therefore that the prostitutes can be accused of deviating from. The health of one sector of the society depends on the ill – health of other sectors of the society. As Bertrand Russell pointed out, stable marriages must be supplemented by prostitution. Broken marriages only help to crystalize the lustre of successful marriage.

I do not intend by this paper to be the devil's advocate. But as a Sociologist I do not feel convinced that I understand the basis for declaring prostitution a social problem. Most writers on social problem show notable bias in predictable directions. For example, when we talk about social problems as John R. Seeley, (1970: 85 – 95) rightly point out, we represent in our studies categories of persons sufficiently powerless to offer small resistance to violation by our inquiry. In principle, he goes on to say, by making and taking on the problem we cause the behaviour complained of as deviant.

Thus,

*If we establish that children lie because they are uncontrollably terrified of terrifying parents and if we stop there, parents had better change or be made to change. And if we later establish that parents act terrifying because of economic insecurity and stop there, likely the remedy for children lying will be seen to lie in the taxable pockets of the economic elite and so on.*

When we say that a lady is a prostitute, we are saying, that members of the larger society have stigmatized certain categories of people as practitioners of prostitution and have, by imposing their own value judgments on the practising minority, condemned their own value judgments by which the practising minority see some benefits in their act so labelled by the society. Thus, if the minority are driven by

economic insecurity into prostitution it does not occur to members of the larger society who, because of the capitalistic orientation of modern society, have imposed some cash economy on the minority, such that their competition within the context of the economic situation becomes uneven with the definers of societal morality to examine their own objective conditions. As a matter of fact, it is even questionable whether the definers of prostitution have all visited prostitutes.

### **Concern Over Prostitution**

It is clear that most people who talk glibly about prostitution do not even know who a prostitute is. The definition of the term prostitution has varied from one society to another and categorization has ranged from sacred prostitution to street walkers, depending on time and place.

While sacred prostitutes had sexual relations with priests and religious leaders generally in temple, street walkers expect monetary rewards, sacred prostitutes had no such expectation; theirs was an integral part of their religion. This differentiation is necessary because, sociologists are now questioning Lemert's definition of prostitution and its validity in terms of contemporary research. Lemert (1951:238) relied heavily on the Encyclopedia of the social Sciences and defined prostitution as sexual intercourse characterized by barter, promiscuity and emotional frigidity. But we do know that sacred prostitution was neither for barter nor was it promiscuous, and emotional frigidity is certainly not peculiar with prostitutes.

Dr. Magdalena Jasinsca ( p. 373) pointed out that of the girls she studied only 30% were emotionally frigid. A good proportion of girls had sexual satisfaction even with chance customers. How does one of them know when a prostitute is emotionally frigid? Wayland Young (1959:21) in his interview with some prostitutes revealed that to be emotional and caressing is part of the business, otherwise the client would not come back. In my previous research (Ijomah 1974) it was found that even if we accept the operational definition of what characterize prostitution to be barter, emotional frigidity and promiscuity, we observed that some people could be promiscuous without being frigid; some could have sex for monetary reward without being promiscuous. I therefore decided to look at the self – conception of prostitutes or what

image the prostitutes have of themselves on these three operational criteria and compare this with the public conception of the women stigmatised as prostitutes.

**Fig. 1**

	Promiscuity	Barter	Emotional Frigidity
Self – Conception	Promiscuity	X	
	Barter		X
	Emotional Frigidity		X
	Public Conception		

A few years ago a union was formed in Nigeria, known as the Nigeria Union of Prostitutes. Here we have a classic example of a class of people who in their own self – conception categorised themselves as prostitutes and thus have labeled and stigmatised themselves as a members of the profession. Now that we have people whose self – image of themselves corresponds with the public conception, we are in a position to study some of these people so labeled. But this does not mean that there are no other women who perform the prostitute’s role without the public conception. Within themselves they know that they are either exchanging sex for cash or other things or that they are promiscuous. But they go under the illusion that the public does not know and because some of these people are “respected” Nigerians we choose more innocuous term such as “**expense account girls**” when referring to them, or “call girls,” or “concubines” kept by more than one man.

Allowance has been made for the existence of expense account girls who play the prostitute’s game without declaring themselves prostitutes. But the labeling of prostitution as a criminal act is an extreme degree of stigma imputation. As Edwin Schur (1965:5) calls it, it is the criminalization of deviance; while another sociologist, Harold Garfinkel (1956: 421 – 422) refers to it as status degradation ceremonies. Thus status degradation ceremonies are crucial for determining the relationship between the prostitutes and their clients.

The methodological question posed by study of prostitution was raised by Wayland Young. Wayland Young (1959:19) raised interesting questions about the general misconception of who a prostitute really is and the asked:

*who can know a prostitute? Not her client. His relation with her is hopelessly charged with his needs, his guilt, his money and his natural tendency to believe that she rather enjoys him. He goes to her for illusion and gets it; he cannot know her. The magistrate who convicts her sees her day after day in an endless parade of guilty, fined; guilty, fined; guilty, fined. She is no more than a raw material in the processing plant of justice. Neither the probation officer nor the reporter of a newspaper knows the prostitute. Not even the America Government's Committee which condemned people for prostitution without seeing a single prostitute, knows the prostitute.*

Here we have the first problem of what we define as social problem. If we have accepted a definition of a behavioural disposition as problematic and if we can categorise a minority of some people as practitioners of this deviant act, without seeing one of them, do we really have any moral justification to stigmatise the objective social condition or the unfortunate few who live within the objective social condition as problematic or should we really look at the causes of the objective social condition and see the problem from a societal point of view? In other words, if the prostitutes have been driven to live in the objective social condition because of the imposed economic constrictions, should we condemn the practitioners of this act or should we condemn the society that has accepted and imposed the capitalistic or the aberrant economic situation on the prostitutes? The first problem therefore in methodology is to seek a clearer operational definition of who a prostitute is and examine the objective social conditions in which the prostitute live, and see if the membership of this objective social condition can be attributed to the moral weakness of the prostitute. If so, then the prostitute becomes a subject of curiosity worthy of investigation.

Spector and Kitsuse (1977) in their reformulation of the natural history of social problems have given four stages of development of social problem. We are however concerned with the first two stages.

- (1) For a social problem to exist some groups attempt to accept the existence of some conditions. They define the conditions as offensive, harmful or otherwise undesirable, publicize these assertions, stimulate controversy and create a public or political issue over the matter.
- (2) The recognition of the legitimacy of these groups by some official organization, agency or institution. This may lead to an official investigation, proposal for reform and establishment of an agency to respond to those claims and demands.

If we look at the first stage, surely the social condition has been defined as offensive. The social condition has been defined as harmful, and the social condition has been defined as publicly undesirable, but in practice it has been established that it is secretly desirable for, as Bertrand Russell (1961:27) rightly pointed out,

So long as the virtue of respectable women is regarded as a matter of great importance, the institution of marriage has to be supplemented by another institution which may be regarded as a part of it. I mean the institution of prostitution.

Most people have a certain amount of knowledge about social problems but much of this knowledge is unorganised, frequently contradictory and often incorrect. There are many widespread fallacies about social problem which reveal how superficial and unreliable much of the popular knowledge is. Our knowledge of prostitutes, is so limited that an attempt to believe that prostitution is a problem about which something has to be done is, in my opinion, mere reductionism, and utilization of sociological theories of social problem to give legitimacy to societal imputations.

What is critical in prostitution is not the sexual act because, as matter of fact, the society uses the sexual act for different positive purposes. For instance, in international diplomacy and espionage, prostitutes and sex have played very significant roles in enticing men, respectable men for that matter, in eliciting information from otherwise reluctant diplomats and getting information from secret agents. Prostitutes who have been known to associate with the criminal argots have been very instrumental in tracking down some of these criminals. It would therefore be seen that it is wrong and morally reprehensible for the society to condemn the very act which it uses for its protection. Consequently, my axe falls very heavily on the sociologists who parade themselves as moral entrepreneurs and who have assumed the expertise knowledge to construct theories to explain what the society has decided to regard as reprehensible.

The Kingsey report pointed out that more than 70% of the white American males have been to prostitutes. Only 30% never had any contact with these women. How could the majority of the people who have been to prostitutes condemn that

which has served useful purposes to them at one time or the other? In research, when a proposition has been made, one goes into research to find its general applicability and a single case that contradicts the hypothesis declares this proposition untenable. If therefore 70% of American white males have used the services of the prostitutes at one time or the other, on what moral foundation do the Americans condemn prostitutes? As pointed out, the American Government's committee which condemned people for prostitution never interviewed a single prostitute. It is for this reason that one condemns the methodological approach to the study of prostitution and calls for the exchange process as advocated by scholars like D.S Obikeze and others (D.S. Obikeze: 1979). In order to understand the problem of prostitution one has to adopt the exchange process as the only reliable method of research. In other words, the prostitutes must be allowed to participate in the study. They must be made to participate in the definition of the research premise. They must be made to take part in the interpretation of the research findings, and ensure that the research findings are meaningful to the society not to a section of the society. Unfortunately, the problem of research is that the researcher offers a definition of prostitution from his value orientation without actually experiencing the objective social conditions of the prostitutes. This is based on the belief that the social condition is a threat. Note the word belief and not that the observed condition is actually a threat. The sociologist needs to verify the existence of the imputed condition or make an independent assessment of that condition.

But to reduce members perspectives in the definition of social problems to the status of reactions to threat or as Spector and Kitsuse pointed out, the mere reflex action to the condition itself, raises the very question which Howard Backer has raised when he asked, "Whose Side Are We on" and one would like to ask: what if the prostitutes should succeed in wielding some powers and to define who the deviant. Then the question of the value content must be resolved before one can meaningfully carry out research into prostitution. The problem with the definition of the condition is that we define only parts of the condition and not the condition in its totality. To define the condition of the prostitute as a condition which we agree to be undesirable, one must look at prostitution holistically. Is every aspect of prostitution undesirable?

The answer is very obvious. If therefore a part of prostitution is undesirable, how much of this prostitution is undesirable and what can be done to ameliorate that which is undesirable? This is the crucial question. Unfortunately, the problem of social problem exposition is the acceptance of the value orientation of the western world by which prostitution has been defined with a mirror to the western societies. But the African scholar has accepted this western orientation as well as the western value system, and has condemned the African practitioners of this trade without interviewing a single prostitute to know whether the social conditions of the prostitutes in Europe can be compared with the social conditions of the prostitutes in Africa. This is why Professor Zaidi (1979) in his paper has condemned the use of emic measures which are taken as etic for the third world. The emic measures applicable to the western world have been taken without criticism as etic for the third world. One looks at the changing pattern of social problems. For example, during the colonial days, the presence of gin was not the problem: the presence of gin was an objective social condition. But what was the problem was the public definition of gin as legal or illegal. Racial problem has been regarded as the creation of psychologist and sociologists and is based on western ethnocentrism. One sees the problems of prostitution as the problems of sociologist who have not agreed among themselves as to whether prostitution per se is undesirable or whether some aspects of prostitution are undesirable. Until we reconcile those questions, sociologists, the moral entrepreneurs, must contend with their inability to agree on why prostitution is a social problem. What is it that we are explaining? The objective social condition, the sexual act, the consequences of the free sexual act situation, or is it their association with known criminals, or the probability of venereal diseases? Do these not exist even without prostitutes?

### **THE PROSTITUTES' SOCIETY**

It has been observed that the society formed by prostitutes and their associates though not hereditary is continuous. This observation was made by the Wolfending Committee which investigated the question of prostitution in the U.S. The observation goes on to say that this society has a fairly permanent structure. It exists because it absorbs a - social and anti – social personalities; it is economically dependent on the

expression of anti – social tendency in members of ordinary society. Its cohesion is strengthened by the attitude of the general public towards the prostitute and feelings which prevent her from returning to ordinary life, and which cause her to exaggerate and anticipate critical attitudes towards her. It is pointed out however that there can be no prostitutes’ society without the men of the normal world. Why should governments condemn women who have served the nation in difficult assignments which the upper class ladies are too cowardly to consider?

The world of the prostitutes is a place where most of the questions that cross the social life of males are realized. This accounts to a great extent for the wide range of defined sexual activities that are requested. In this sense one would look at the contributions of prostitutes not entirely in the negative sense but in the positive sense as well, since the prostitute sells to channel off certain sorts of sexual behaviour which the society condemn in the normal world. In sociological parlance, we say that the prostitute is a performer, and actor in a culture although we would be right to call this culture a special culture of a “deviant” world, and the prostitute is the target for the deviant sexual behaviours of men who for most part are normal members of the larger society.

Members of this profession run the risk of exposing themselves to a number of men of the under – world and thus get involved by association with criminals whose way of life is completely antithetical to the norms of the society.

Apart from getting involved in the contra – culture of the deviant world, the prostitute is exposed to drugs, alcohol, venereal diseases which endanger the occupational setting and therefore cause concern to members of the larger society. This is perhaps why prostitution generates concern and calls for action. Beside these riders to prostitution, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with prostitution seen from a commercial point of view.

Edwin Schur (1965) has written about crimes without victims and talks about homo – sexuality as a crime without a victim. If prostitution were to be isolated from those aspects that endanger the occupational setting, such as association with members of the under – world, with drug addicts, with alcoholics and with the spreading of venereal diseases, perhaps the anta – gonism of the larger society would have been

minimized. Sociologists must be interested in examining how to handle prostitution in the society. It is suggested that one strategy for handling this is to redefine the deviant act to make it appear less deviant. For example, there is a prostitute's saying which goes like this:

*“All women are sitting on a fortune if only they realise it.”*

And there is an Owerri saying depicting the lamentation of womanhood which actually has been waxed in a record:

I did not know that my waist is wealth and  
I have been flickering mine away!

The point here is that there is a tendency for the prostitutes to create values which are mobilized as soon as the larger society stigmatizes their behaviour.

Thus the research on prostitution should be interested in the value system within the prostitute's sub – culture and the value system of the larger society. How do we reconcile the values? Justice is the will of the stronger man. It was noted in the earlier studies that before any prostitutes commence on this career, there is in almost all of them a sense of alienation, antagonism, loneliness and isolation from the constraints of the larger community. Thus, finding themselves alone, the approach to prostitution becomes easy and they easily rationalize their own acts. After all, all men are thieves at heart!! Since the clients of the prostitutes are not stigmatized members of the society, the prostitutes force on them in every sexual relationship the feeling that their clients also are violating the norms of the larger society. But why does the society not stigmatize the clients except those who are known criminals? This is a problem for the definers of social problem. One other problem is that nobody has actually assessed the contributions of the prostitutes to the criminal contra – culture. When we analyse the two cultures, we see that the prostitutes cannot be analysed simply by referring them to the normal cultures of the larger society. One has to see them in their own setting, with their own language and their own expressions. Unless we do this, one cannot understand the prostitute. Sociologist should therefore cease from labeling prostitutes and thinking that all prostitutes are alike either in their “modus operandi” or in their ultimate destination.

A new aspect of prostitution in Nigeria is the international dimension brought about by the influx of Ghana prostitutes. In Jos alone, in an accidental interview at the premises of two hotels in 1977, I encountered 15 Ghanaian ladies in 1 hour 10 minutes. The situation in Lagos is even more compounded by the fact that these ladies are organized and managed by Nigerian Pimps. Most of these girls, it is understood, are recruited for the sole purpose of aiding and abetting criminal argots.

I believe that the contra – culture which is becoming the internal norm of these professionals does not in any way look up to the larger society for recognition. Since they are not asking for our recognition, the problem of control becomes even more complex. As a matter of fact, their patronage by ‘respected’ officials is all the recognition they need. Any attempt to eradicate prostitution will certainly lead to a strengthening of their in – group affiliation, and in any case, the society cannot redeploy them on the same standard of remuneration. This has been attested to by the declarations of some members of the Nigeria Union of Prostitutes. From my previous research, it was discovered that this Union is very solidly backed by “respectable” men.

### **PROSTITUTION, SOCIAL PROBLEM AND THE PROBLEM OF THEORETIC SYNTHESIS**

Any given condition that could be referred to as manifesting indices of social problems, social disorganization or dysfunction does have organizational and functional potentiality. For some institutions it may be functional while for others it may be dysfunctional.

We often label prostitution as a social problem when in actual fact the objective social phenomenon we call prostitution has nothing problematic. By prostitution we mean simpliciter that those women for whom there is a correspondence between self-conception and public conception on the three criteria – barter, promiscuity and emotional frigidity offer sex for certain gratifications – a purely economic situation!

But what of the consequence? Exponents of social problem orientation confuse the consequences of prostitution with the objective behaviour pattern. The association between prostitutes and criminals is a consequence of one’s participation in the trade and an acceptance of certain value orientations.

Merton (1971:839) observes as follows:

*A social dysfunction refers to a designated set of consequences of a designated pattern of behaviour, belief or organization that interferes with a designated functional requirement of a designated social system. Otherwise, the term social dysfunction becomes little more than an epithet of disparagement or a largely vacuous expression of attitude.*

Spector and Kitsuse contend that all definitions are arbitrary and none of the elements or assertions contained in a definition are true by definition. The elements must be defended and supported, often by reference to authorities in order to gain acceptability.

### **VALUE – CONFLICT APPROACH**

If we accept the social problem view of prostitution as being based on some violation of institutionalized norms, we must be ready to establish when and how the norms are violated; and, in any case, what if the norms are not violated, and the society condemns the objective condition even when there is no evidence of any anti – social act? There is no law against sexual relationship of husbands and wives, adults and girlfriends who enjoy sexual acts sanctioned by the society. The prostitute is only a freer woman with a wider span of choices, while house wives and girls friends are supposed to be limited to particular individuals. Most respected women have each more than one boyfriend, and in so far as they enjoy sexual relationship with each of their friends, they tend towards prostitution in terms of promiscuity and barter since they expect some gratification in cash or kind.

Sociologist as moral entrepreneurs have tended to shift the focus of their analysis from the causes of the objective social conditions to the processes by which members of a society define these conditions as problems. It is a process of degradation ceremonies by which members moralize on the sub – culture of the prostitute which we have referred to as contra – culture.

Fuller and Myers (1941:30) contend that:

*the moral problem represents a condition on which there is no unanimity of opinion throughout the society that the condition is undesirable in every instance.*

They go on to argue that:

*we have a basic and primary confusion in social values which goes much deeper than the questions of solution which trouble us in the ameliorative problem.*

Moral problems arise because of conflict in value. In the analysis of prostitution certain moral questions are in part responsible for driving young ladies into the trade. There are real objective causes and members (of society) construct causes of prostitution. The conflicts in values have led members of the larger society to define prostitution as a problem, and by the same token, have obstructed solutions to the problem except where the solutions question the value positions of the definers of the problems.

For instance, Fuller and Myers (1941:26) argue that:

*Value – judgments which deny social acceptance to the mother of a child born out of wedlock, not only contribute causally to such conditions as abortions, infant mortality, and abandoned children, all of which are socially disapproved, but such value – judgments also obstruct efforts to solve the illegitimacy problem by impeding free discussion of it.*

In almost every situation, the very people who define conditions as social problems are themselves supporters of policies which ensure the perpetuation of those conditions. Social workers whose main concern is to relieve social problems contribute to them; in fact as has been observed (Ijomah 1970) welfare has been shown to be more of a political than moral category. Humanitarians who strive to improve the objective social conditions of the poor shy away from interfering with private property.

It is therefore my contention that the objective social conditions of the prostitute is not the social problem. What is the problem is the definition of the condition as a social problem. As Howard Becker (1966) rightly pointed out,

*If any set of objective conditions, even non – existent ones, can be defined as a social problem, it is clear that the conditions themselves do not either produce the problem, or constitute the necessary compound of it.*

Even if the conditions are non – existent, members of the society construct what they believe to be in existence, and organize reactions to them.

Blumer (1971) states more clearly the stand of this paper – that sociologists constructing social problems have not been sufficiently aided by current theoretical thinking.

Consequently, it is imperative that we acknowledge our inability to recognize social problems particularly since they derive more from the definitional process than from the social conditions. It is therefore a basic problem to identify the social “constructors” of social problems and study the processes by which they define certain behaviour patterns as problems.

The ambiguity, and in fact the limitations of the value – conflict school of thought lies in the fact that the exponents categorize the elements of the objective social conditions in their efforts to construct causal explanations. In this construction, some members believe that the society or the social system is the cause; but other like Mr. Nkpa and his school of victimologists believe that the victims of societal pressures are the cause, and therefore the prostitutes should be blamed for their misfortunes.

In rejecting the value – conflict orientation, a general note of warning has been sounded to sociologist – no scholar can pedal his own theoretical orientation as the only “explicans” of social phenomenon, or press for public recognition of his theory of some conditions without ceasing to analyse the problem and becoming a part of the problem.

Those who, because of their statuses in the society, have stigmatized, defined and labeled some women as prostitutes are themselves part of the problems of prostitution.

## **FUNCTIONALIST APPROACH**

Perhaps the more acceptable approach to the study of prostitution is the functionalist approach. Although functionalism has been criticized for its conservative stand on the question of order and change, yet, its cardinal proposition that social institutions exist for the purpose of fulfilling social need appears very germane to our

effort at resolving the theoretical strands on which the problem of prostitution must be viewed.

From a functionalist point of view, a good many sociologists have viewed certain behavioural traits as pathological because they are not in Durkheim's term classified among actions permitted by morality. Durkheim (1951:326), Howard Becker (1963:7) brilliantly present the functionalist conception of social organization which sees the contribution of certain phenomena as dysfunctional. A functionalist approach looks at a society or some part of a society, and asks whether there are processes going on in it that tend to reduce its stability, thus lessening its chances of survival. Such processes are labeled "deviant" or are identified as symptoms of social disorganization. Becker goes further to argue that the rules society decides to enforce on those who should be called the outsiders must be seen in political terms. The imputation of stigma on prostitutes must also be seen as political and often by some one time ardent clients who because of changed circumstances condemn prostitutes in order to remain acceptable. Some housewives who play the prostitutes' game are no less vocal in condemning prostitutes. The organization of any society requires that every element performs meaningful functions which contribute to societal stability. That is why we are interested in the performance of members of this category of our society whom we have labeled as prostitutes and we want to know what exactly they contribute to the society, and whether the negative of their actions outweigh the positives.

Following Durkheim's (1964:67) contention on crime, it is contended here that prostitution is normal because it is an integral part of the system, and no social system can exist without it. If it exists, then it must be performing certain functions that contribute to societal equilibrium. As Bertrand Russell argued earlier, without prostitution, we cannot protect the virtues of respectable women. Apart from absorbing male abnormal sexual demands, society has used prostitutes as spice in international politics.

Since any given condition has multiple consequences, prostitution must be expected to be functional to some sectors of the society and dysfunctional to others. But those who claim it is dysfunctional tend to outnumber those for whom it is

functional. Every given condition, even the priesthood or the presidency is functional to some and dysfunctional to others. But the problem with prostitution is that it is those moral entrepreneurs for whom prostitution has been functional who condemn prostitution as anti – social. By condemning prostitution, society condemns its guilt for harbouring and patronizing what it has declared as undesirable.

The ultimate question is, “is prostitution really undesirable?” The answer is obvious. What is undesirable are the consequences of prostitution such as association with criminals, not the sexual act.

**In conclusion**, the theoretical impasse created by Lemert and Howard Becker in their attempt to build typologies of deviance, has compelled the development of the typology of prostitution given in this paper. No woman, regardless of how promiscuous, how emotionally frigid, or the frequency of barter, should be labeled as a prostitute purely from the public perception or conception. What the public sees may not reflect the real life situation, since perception is liable to errors without cognition. Similarly what the public conceives as social problem on the basis of one – sided judgment, cannot reflect the subjective assessment by the prostitutes themselves.

In order to qualify as a prostitute, both the prostitute and the public must agree that the lady in questions:

- (a) is promiscuous
- (b) is emotionally frigid
- (c) accept sex as a major source of income or livelihood.

Labeling theory has failed to salvage the issue of subjectivism since labeling and stigmatization impose a compelling definition of a powerless category by a more socially and politically powerful category.

Sociologist must therefore study not only why people become prostitutes, but also how and why the society defined prostitution as a social problem.

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