

The Causes of the Sex Industry Within Japan's Economic Structure

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Abstract: Within the patriarchal societal background of Japan, the sex industry serves as a mainstay part of service. As more and more women have higher social access, the gender gap between women and men is still wide by social standards and expectations. What is the thing that keeps women stuck in the position of experiencing social gaze, and how is the sex industry part of the indication of women's status and current situation? This essay answers the questions by having a reason analysis and case study of interviews of female sex workers and explaining the causes of the flourishing sex industry by social and cultural aspects. Beyond the phenomenon, the essay ties up the factors of causes to analyze a deeper understanding of social problems in Japan: under female objectification, it would be difficult to promote total progress in society. Moreover, in the end, it further illustrates how government can be a channel to solve the problems by modifying the loan system and enhancing complete welfare for sex workers.

Keywords: sex industry, erotic industry, Japan's economic structure

1. Introduction

The sex industry originated in 1868. As the sex industry and brothel system used to be regulated to prepare the sufficient reproductive population for military purposes, it was based on the violence of female roles to serve the male's desire with the idea of a supreme patriarchal social structure. After WWII, Japan experienced large growth in recovering from the war, especially in the service industry. The abolition of public brothels in 1956 actually promoted the sex industry by developing cabarets, love hotel, clubs, and Turkish bath and massage parlors [1]. Through the concept of "free love", these places shrink the responsibility of the legal law, and the sex industry successfully escapes the legal law of anti-prostitution and accounted for 1 percent of the nation's GNP in 1991 and had an estimated income of 500 billion yens [1]. With the seemingly considerable income, the idea of exploiting women through trafficking and trapping them in large confusion about their identity is carried on throughout the development.

From World War II to 2020, Japan has undergone tremendous changes in its social structure in aspects of government, industry and population. By combining the Western structure of economics and government, Japan develops a system with frameworks of holding large control in certain enterprises that promotes them becoming effective in mechanical changes as a nation [2]. Based on the system, the role of the government in trying to distribute the resources in different fields seems to disturb the best interest of specific industries, which also brings the defect that small and different

territories of firms are impeded by the framework. This means that the relationship between the industrial structure and governmental structure is different and even contradictory in their maximized benefit.

Within the Japanese system, the gender distribution of industry is obvious by the ideology of maintaining the central power within a few people. Although a fair number of women and men have entered large firms after leaving school, only 7 per cent of women enter higher positions in their careers, while men have 22 per cent. The majority of women work as clerical workers and low-level assistants, clerical workers with different wages for higher positions [3]. This also gives some tendencies for career choices based on different sexes and foreshadows reasons for women to enter the sex industry within the patriarchal structure of Japan's society.

This essay will provide different aspects of causing the sex industry, particularly from cultural and societal factors. It would also contain case studies from interviews and articles. By exploring the real-life situation and examples of women in Japan nowadays, the essay would lead the readers to understand more about the imbalance between women and men in the sex industry and how can government and citizens improve the system that is trapping women in the recycle of objectification and degeneration.

2. Factors Causing the Sex Industry

The service industry, particularly the sex industry, plays a significant role in meeting the diverse social demands in Japan. The sex industry is deeply rooted in Japanese culture and is a mature industry that shapes society's gender standards. The industry caters to people's entertainment needs and has become a daily part of their lives, but it also presents social problems when it comes to workforce issues.

The sex industry in Japan has been heavily influenced by the country's culture, which has a long history of pornography dating back to ancient times. In contemporary society, this has led to the production of a large number of adult videos, including Hentai Anime, with more than thirty being produced every day [4]. The industry is also heavily linked with organized crime, with the yakuza operating message parlours, soaplands, bathhouses, and pink salons that offer sexual services without violating anti-prostitution laws [4]. Changing the sex industry's complete chain is difficult due to its deeply rooted cultural background, but the industry has already permeated into people's daily lives and is challenging to uproot.

In addition to its cultural influence, the sex industry in Japan also serves to meet the demands of a society facing economic and employment challenges. The country's slow economic growth following the collapse of the asset bubble in 1990 and changing employment system have greatly impacted male employees, leading to an increase in non-regular employment and a reduction in full-time jobs [5]. With all of the changes of social transformation and different political powers, middle-class and upper-class white-collar workers have faced huge changes to a busy labour market [5]. This has resulted in a significant portion of the male workforce having little time to cultivate normal sexual relationships, creating a demand for the services offered by the sex industry.

However, it is important to acknowledge the social problems and ethical concerns surrounding the sex industry. Many workers in the industry face exploitation, abuse, and a lack of legal protection. Additionally, the normalization and commodification of sex can perpetuate harmful gender norms and contribute to the objectification of women.

As such, the sex industry in Japan is a complex and controversial issue that requires discussion and potential solutions. While it may continue to play a role in the country's economy and culture, steps must be taken to ensure the safety and rights of workers and address the societal issues it perpetuates.

3. Directing Influence Toward Sex Industry for Women: The Case Study

Through this part, the book called Tokyo Hinkon Joshi, including interviews of several women who stepped into the sex industry in Japan, would be used as a resource for exploring the specific case study of women in the sex industry. The author Atsuhiko Nakamura is a reporter who interviews a number of women who has sex service experience in Japan. The general condition for the interviews would be divided into a standard situation: the tragedy of people with low incomes.

A lady named Hiroda Yuhua is a typical example of representing people of lower-class family backgrounds. Miss Hiroda is an undergraduate student with a major in medicine at Japan's National University. She studies well with good looking. The only problem after she gets into university is the money. In order to maintain the daily expense other than her tuition fee, she has to work in the supermarket with a workload of 8 to 12 hours per week to get a monthly income of 920 yen [6]. Miss Hiroda finds it difficult to keep up with her daily expenses as she has no other job opportunities and receives little empathy from those around her. To afford participation in the sports club, she turns to working at soaplands in Kabukicho or engaging in sexual activity with her "sugar daddy" (patron), earning an additional 50,000 yen per month. [6]. In addition, the author also mentions that sex workers are usually female students in university regardless of the level of the schools. This fact also shows the deteriorated education structure in Japan: with higher expenses the higher level of education, it is harder for lower-class women to get access to higher levels of education and higher position [7]. This cycle limits class crossing and improves women's status within the patriarchal structure. In this example, Miss Hiroda describes her behaviour to provide sex services as the desperation of out of choice to get money. Her intention for getting into the sex industry is simple and blunt: to survive and have a good school life. However, now she has to use sex services to get the money and face the moral shame she will feel for the rest of her life to "sell" her body.

The result of the example also indicates the obvious phenomenon that female sex workers usually facing the situation of financial distress. Based on their low-income family condition, these young and innocent female students who have great inspiration for their future fall into the trap of the sex industry to get fast money but regardless of the physical and physiological effects they would face for providing sex services. Other than that, it is quite a dismal situation for women in the middle class to earn money not through their agency and ability but through their bodies. It is a way of objectifying women as an object to please men, and emphasizing women's figure in society to discipline women to be the perfect wife for family [8].

4. Reason Analysis

4.1. Education

From the aspect of education, higher education does not improve females' condition of the high rate of unemployment and the possibility of getting a full-time job which links to women's choice to become a sex workers. Although there is an actual benefit to having higher education: statistics show the monthly wage for a full-time female worker is 1.38 for college graduates compared to high school graduates in 1998 [9]. Education still does not solve the problem of high unemployment for females. On one side, the difference in ability between female graduates is large, so that the high unemployment rate creates a large number of female college without full-time jobs [9]. This would also increase the competition between women to have full-time career choices. With the tighter economic condition of lower-class families and the lack of employment rate for women, it is likely that women find themselves having less incentive to study or achieve higher education. Within this condition, there is certainly a number of women looking for job opportunities who are also the targeted group involving the sex industry.

4.2. Economic: Student Loan

The student loan system also contributes to the growth of the sex industry in Japan. Since university education fees are often paid by parents, families with limited economic means must rely on student loans to fund their children's education. This means that female college graduates are often burdened with repaying their loans from their income. However, due to limited job opportunities and intense competition, only around 30% of women are able to fully repay their loans, while men have an average repayment rate of between 80% to 85% [10]. Other than that, there is a large percentage of subsidy for other women since they earn a lower income [10]. With the unbalanced student loan system, female obviously has large difficulties when encountering low economic condition. With this result, more and more women would have high pressure to have higher education and would have to lower their job choice to part-time jobs to earn quick money. This also gives a propensity for women to choose the sex industry especially having low-income situations.

5. Suggestion

The cycle of the sex industry can have a detrimental impact on those involved, particularly women who feel helpless in the system. To address this issue, the government can modify laws related to student loans and welfare for sex workers. By improving these laws, women can have more opportunities to break free from the cycle of the sex industry.

One potential solution to the problem of student loans is to base them on household income. Research by Dearden shows that such a system would enable households to repay 81 to 90 percent of the total loan value, with single graduate students receiving the largest subsidy. This method could be particularly effective for female graduates who often face more financial constraints than male graduates [10].

Regarding welfare for sex workers, it is challenging to provide full support to women working in the sex industry given the anti-prostitution laws in Japan. However, there are other ways in which the government can assist sex workers. For instance, regulations could be strengthened to monitor establishments involved in sex trade, and education programs could be introduced to help sex workers cope with psychological pressure and learn healthier ways to deal with stress. Social welfare programs for families with lower incomes could also be beneficial, as they provide more support to individuals who are struggling to make ends meet. Additionally, subsidies and opportunities for earning money could be offered to female graduates with low incomes, as this can help prevent them from turning to the sex industry for financial support.

It is also important to popularize knowledge of the sex industry and its impact on individuals, particularly young graduates who may be at risk of falling into the trap of the sex industry. By increasing awareness of the potential dangers and providing resources to help individuals in need, the government can play a role in preventing individuals from being trapped in the cycle of the sex industry.

Overall, improving laws related to student loans and welfare for sex workers, strengthening regulations, offering education and support programs, and increasing public awareness are all steps that can help address the issue of the sex industry in Japan. By working together, society can become more supportive of individuals, particularly women, who are struggling to make ends meet and need assistance to break free from the cycle of the sex industry.

6. Conclusions

By analyzing existing social and cultural factors and a case study of the current circumstance of the sex industry, the female who involves in the industry has been regularly forced to the "whole" earn fast money by selling their bodies regardless of their self-esteem. With the rooted culture of the sex

industry and current social demand, it is difficult to prevent further development of the sex industry. However, from economic and educational aspects, student loans and welfare for sex workers can be the workable method to help females who get stuck in the sex industry. Maintaining the negative recycle for women to become sex assets would only stagnate females' self-development and better social morals. By opening wider access for women to get higher education and greater opportunity for female workers, more and more women would be able to live with their own personal willingness to choose the lifestyle they want. With this ideology, society can have greater progress with equality and balance for the individual.

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