

**The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal:**  
*Exploring its Causes*

Candidate no: 37  
Course Code: SA357S



UNIVERSITETET I  
NORDLAND

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
**The Degree of Master in Comparative Social Work,**  
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Nordland, Norway  
May 2014

*To my late Father **Shyam Br. Khadka**.  
His stimulating and encouraging words in pursuit of excellence,  
always remains with me.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

It is my pleasure to thank all the girls who believed me and shared their experiences and confidential matter during the interview. Their valuable information made it possible to complete this project.

I am so glad to express my deepest appreciation to all members of Chhahari project of WOREC Nepal, who helped me and shown their good attitude sharing their experience of their profession, without whom my research would never be possible. Furthermore, I would also like to acknowledge with much appreciation to my key informants Bindu Gautam (Vice-Chair person of WOREC), who gave the permission with required data and informants with her persistent help.

I am beholden to my supervisor Mr. Tom Erik, for his patience, continuous motivation, and immense knowledge. His valuable constructive feedback and suggestions empowered me to develop this thesis.

I would like to thanks to my girlfriend Manju Sharma who helped and motivate me every steps of hard time in abroad study. I am also thankful to my friends for their best wishes and concern.

Finally, I would like to offer special thanks my Mother and late Father who always inspire, love me in whole study of my life and support in every steps of life.

Krishna Hari Khadka  
Bodø, Norway  
May, 2014

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page no.</u>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> -----	<b>I</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> -----	<b>II</b>
<b>List of Abbreviation</b> -----	<b>VI</b>
<b>Abstract</b> -----	<b>VII</b>

### CHAPTER-ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Prostitution in Nepal: a short Overview	1
1.2.1 Present Scenario	2
1.2.2 Future Expectation	3
1.2.3 Prostitution as a Tradition	4
1.3 Social Structure	4
1.3.1 Occupation	5
1.3.2 Economic Status	6
1.4 Commercial Sex Work and Law of Nepal	7
1.5 Prostitution and Health Threats	7
1.6 Statement of the Problem	9
1.7 Objectives of the Study	9
1.8 Organization of the study	10

### CHAPTER-TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Defining prostitution or commercial sex work	12
2.2 Child Prostitution	13
2.3 Bases of Prostitution	14
2.3.1 The Economic Bases of Prostitution	14
2.3.2 Social Bases of Prostitution	15
2.4 The Size of Commercial Sex trade	16
2.5 Prostitution as Commoditization of Women	17

2.6 Health Issues	18
2.7 Working Environment of Sex Workers	19
2.8 Role of Pimps in Sex trade	20
2.9 Legislation on Sex work	21

### **CHAPTER-THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

3.1 Theories of Prostitution	23
3.1.1 Prostitution and Sociobiology	23
3.1.2 Functionalism and Prostitution	25
3.1.3 Historical Materialism, Socialism and Prostitution	26
3.1.4 Structuralism and Prostitution	27
3.1.5 Feminism and Prostitution	28
3.2 Prostitution and Social Stigma	29
3.3 Social Work Theories	30
3.3.1 Empowerment Theory	31
3.3.2 Problem Solving Approaches	32
3.3.3 Anti-oppressive Practices	32

### **CHAPTER-FOUR: METHODOLOGY 33**

4.1 Discussion on the Current Paradigms of Methodology in Social Science	34
4.2 Research Method	35
4.3 Research Area and Field	36
4.4 My Role as a Researcher	37
4.5 Data Collection	39
4.5.1 Interviews	39
4.5.2 Brief Presentation of the Key Persons and the Informants	41
4.5.2.1 The key Persons as ‘Door Openers’	41
4.5.2.2 The Informants	42-45
○ The Case of Gita (case one)	
○ The Case of Sunita (case two)	

○ Case of Pavitra (case three)	
○ Case of Anjali (case four)	
○ Case of Phulmaya (case five)	
○ Case of Nirmala (case six)	
○ Case of Salu (case seven)	
○ Case of Chhaya (case eight)	
○ Case of Sima (case nine)	
4.5.3 Secondary Data	45
4.6 Other Issues of Methodology	45
4.6.1 Reliability and Validity of the Research	46
4.6.2 Ethical Consideration of the Research	47
4.6.3 Limitation of the Study	48
4.6.4 Place of Values	48
4.7 Data Analysis	49

## **CHAPTER FIVE: UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSES FOR ENTERING INTO SEX TRADE**

5.1 Driving or ‘Push’ Factors	52
5.2 Attracting or ‘Pull’ Factors	56
5.3 Discussion and Conclusion	58

## **CHAPTER SIX: WORKING ENVIRONMENT OF SEX WORKERS IN KATHMANDU**

6.1 Working Experience of Sex Workers	62
6.2 Role of Pimps/Agents in Sex trade	64
6.3 Future Plans of Sex Workers	65
6.4 Discussion and Conclusion	67

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: KNOWLEDGE OF STDs AND HIV/AIDS AMONG CSWs**

7.1 Awareness about STDs and AIDS	69
-----------------------------------	----

7.2 Condition of STDs among Sex Workers	74
7.3 Conclusion and Discussion	75

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: USE OF CONTRACEPTIVES**

8.1 Awareness of Contraceptives among Sex workers	77
8.2 Taboos about Contraceptives	78
8.3 Availability of Contraceptives	82
8.4 Discussion and Conclusion	83

## **CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUDING REMARKS**

9.1 Prostitution as Compulsion	85
9.2 Sexual Taboos and Safety Measures	87
9.3 Risk of STDs and Growing Awareness of Contraceptives	88

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY** **A**

## **ANNEXES** **E**

Annex I - Interviews Guide	E
• Open-ended interview guide with commercial sex workers	
• Interview guide with key persons	G
Annex II: Informed Consent	I

## LIST OF ABBRIVETATION

STDs –	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
HIV-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
AIDS-	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CSW/s-	Commercial Sex Worker/s
ILO-	International Labor Organization
NGO-	Non-Government Organization
UN-	United Nations
FWLD -	Forum for Women, Law and Development
NCASC-	Nepal’s state-run National Centre for AIDS and STD Control
UNAIDS-	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
FSW-	Female Sex Workers
IDU-	Injection Drug Users
GDP-	Gross Domestic Production
CATW-	Coalition against trafficking in women
GNP-	Gross National Production
CREHPA-	Center for research on environment health and population activities
NCASC-	National Centre for AIDS and STD control
WOREC-	Women Rehabilitation Centre
UNO-	United Nations Organization
WHO-	World Health Organization
INGO-	International Non-government Organization
GO-	Government Organization

## Abstract

*This paper is the study of current circumstances on Commercial Sex Work in Kathmandu, capital of Nepal. It attempts to understand the sex trade in Nepal, it has been focused mainly three aspects: namely the factors driving the girls or women to the sex trade, their awareness about using contraceptives and STDs among them. Qualitative method has been used for the research and open-ended interviews with the informants have been used as primary data.*

*In finding the root causes behind the girls' or women's involvement in the sex trade, the study has identified 'economic pressures' as immediate reason accumulated by number of other factors like social, cultural and political condition of the society. Poverty has been identified as the most common factor for pushing the girls and women in sex business and lack of employment opportunities and easy recruitment has been found as complementary factors. Some of the sex workers are found to be interested in sex business due to easy money they could earn in very little time.*

*Sex trade in Nepal has been found to be chaotic because of the lack of monitoring by the law. It is also terrible because the majority of the sex workers are uneducated and unaware and a number of clients are carefree about the risks of STDs resulting with the negligence in using contraceptives. The condition of STDs and the risk of HIV/AIDS is equally serious problem in the field because the sex workers are found to be at high risk. Use of contraceptives has grown considerably but still not completely reliable. The problems with health measures have been identified as sexual taboo and expensive health services. For most of the sex workers, 'sexual taboo' and the fear of 'stigmatization' have been identified as major hindering factors in their health consultation and buying and keeping of contraceptives. Lack of education and awareness of the health problems have been playing great role in deteriorating the health of the sex workers which in turn results in high risk of spreading STDs and HIV/AIDS.*

**Key words:** commercial sex, prostitution, sex business, contraceptives, STDs

## **CHAPTER-ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

In very straight forward words the women who perform to satisfy sexual needs of men in exchange of money are called commercial sex workers (CSW). They are called prostitutes in other words.

Prostitution is practiced almost in every part of the world. It is legalized and monitored in many developed countries whereas it is illegal in many others. In some countries like Norway and Sweden, selling of sex is free but buying is illegal. According To Punekar and Rao (1967) "A prostitute is a female who habitually offer her body to any person other than the man to whom she is legally married for sexual intercourse or other substitute gratification for a consideration in cash or in kind." A prostitute is a woman who uses her body as a commodity and sells sex for money.

On one hand, there are issues of legalization and monitoring of sex market and on the other hand, even more significantly there are the issues of health hazards which can be very often caused by unsafe sexual activities. Apparently, in developed countries with more educated and better informed people, commercial sex can be less hazardous in regard of health. But in developing and underdeveloped countries it's the major problem because unsafe sexual intercourse acts as the medium for many fatal diseases to transform from one person to another. HIV, one of the major threats of the world is reported to be spreading mainly because of unsafe sexual intercourses.

### **1.2 Prostitution in Nepal: a short Overview**

Nepal is an under developed country where majority of people are uneducated. Though the constitution of Nepal has not legalized sex works, we cannot deny its existence. It exists in different places in different ways. There are parts in almost every town or city which are considered to be un-stated red areas. Sex work is not only illegal but also taken as sin in Nepalese societies. It is not easily seen but exists almost everywhere in Nepal. Most of the sex

workers are girls working in cabin restaurants and dance bars and are most usually from rural areas and are from poor family background, in search for better life and secure future.

Simple overview of the society suggests that poverty is one of the main causes of commercial sex in Nepal. In the third world countries, due to very poor socio-economic condition, women and children are compelled to end up with prostitution for survival. Most of the women or girls who are working as prostitutes are illiterate and are unable to earn to provide their children with shelter, food, education. As a result, even more seriously the children who are abandoned become “street children”. According to the United Nations, 145 million children were living on the street in 1992. It is estimated that of the more than 20 million prostitutes in the world today are children. The numbers grow more and more alarmingly. (Ghosh, 1996)

In another prospective, prostitution can be the result of different factors such as: sociological, psychological, economic, political, religious and cultural. Governments will not always be informed of the causes and extent of its practice in their countries.

In many underdeveloped countries, such time comes in the life of poor women without education that they cannot earn any enough money in a decent regular job. And in such countries even the governments give no priority to develop the condition of its people. And, extreme economic condition compels even their children to go and join prostitution business.

### **1.2.1 Present Scenario**

Cabin restaurants are being popular in many parts of the country as such restaurants contain different types of 'cabins' which are partially enclosed booths providing privacy to the customers. Sexual activities can be and are performed there without the intrusion of other people.

Most of these restaurants do not operate as per Labor Act of the nation and very few of them are registered as business firms. They hire women as waitresses so as to entertain their customers. The Kathmandu office of International Labor Organization (ILO) mentions that there are 2650 sex workers in valley, while British researcher estimated that up to 25000 women are involved in sex work. There is no accurate data regarding exact number of sex

workers in Nepal. The actual magnitude of trafficked girls from Nepal is unknown (O'Dea 1993; Human Rights Watch 1995; Rozario and Rita 1988).

Nepal Police and Health ministry sources say that, "there are some 30,000 sex workers in the valley and they are not only from the middle and low income groups, geographical regions of the country but also prostitutes from India and Tibet."

We cannot rely even on this data because it is not easy to estimate the exact number of data of the prostitutes where prostitution is not well defined and addressed by the law. Even police raids are performed only on small or medium sized restaurants and bars whereas expensive upper class prostitutes work in expensive restaurants and big bars. High class people, political leaders or those who are given special security often visit such places.

### **1.2.3 Future Expectation**

In Nepal, prostitution is blooming and spreading in almost every town. There are students, housewives and girls from villages following this profession due to various compulsions. It is now an open secret. It seems as if it is deliberately unnoticed. The primary service of the lodges and dance bars seem to be missing. On one hand, financial difficulties are playing critical role in pushing many women to prostitution and on the other the capacity of men is increasing due to foreign currency and many other things.

Unmonitored and non-supervised prostitution obviously is the matter of difficulty for commercial worker, employer (pimps), government as well as society as a whole. If this goes unnoticed for long then it will have negative impact on society.

Prostitution in Nepal has become a very complex phenomenon. While CSWs are available in most parts of the country, they are not found to be centralized in any particular place though some parts of the cities have termed as red-light areas. In some parts of the country, such as Sindhupalchowk and Nuwakot Districts, "trafficking prevention camps" in which girls "in danger of being trafficked" can be educated and given "income generation skills" have been established with the aim of preventing them from entering in to prostitution. But, strangling

poverty cannot be overcome easily and it seems as if the condition will be the same for a long time in Nepal because of political instability.

#### **1.2.4 Prostitution as a Tradition**

In the middle and Far-western region of Nepal lives a particular community who are considered as lower caste people, known as 'Badi' community. There is a tradition of commercial sex as a female profession. According to traditional society, these girls and women are known as an entertaining caste group when men play different classical traditional musical instruments whereas female performs dances.

Economic status and education of this community people is pitiable, besides agriculture production is minimal for their livelihood. When lack of education and skill and search of secondary earnings end, women choose to be commercial sex workers and men manual labor. Also, this community of Nepal openly comes on sex trade, it is believed as their traditional profession.

It is reported that "all Badi girl children grow up to be sex workers" (Gilada, 1993), that "Badi men have no traditional service" (Hannum 1997) and that "there are no traces of fathers in the family"

### **1.3 Social Structure**

Nepal is a democratic country. About 80 percent of the population follows Hinduism. It's a patriarchal country and it's relatively a very poor country. The per capita income of Nepalese is no more than \$600 per annum. Around 60% of the population is literate (National Statistical Bureau annual, Nepal, report 2011). Among those who are educated, the number of unemployed people is remarkably high. Women in poor and patriarchal countries can be seen as double poor. They are poor and even poorer than men.

Nepal is in a transition period. Monarchy has been outcast and new system of people's democracy has been on the way to be established. The country faced 10 years civil war with

Maoist fighting against the government. And other ten years have been passed without any constitution yet. The number of educated youth moving out of the country is increasing and so is the condition with other skill and energetic portion of manpower. Main income source is agriculture but it is based traditional farming system, and as a result productivity is limited.

In such condition, sex work has become an ultimate option for many to earn for living. It has also become a source of entertainment for many men. In such condition commercial sex work has become common practice, though in hidden form. Sex workers are found working in many forms at capital city Kathmandu like in massage parlors, cabin restaurant and as street based sex workers, call girls, dancers in restaurants etc. Main aim of them is to earn money, because majority of them are from poor family background. Government is unable to give the alternative source of employment.

Kathmandu is the capital city of Nepal. It is the attraction of domestic as well as international tourist. "Dance restaurants, cabin restaurants, bars and pubs, discos, hotels and motels hire a number of girls and women where they are made to work as waitresses, dancers and other aspects of 'hospitality' services but reality of work is mostly beyond this. They are paid very low and are subject to sexual exploitation. They are compelled in many cases to perform sexual work to save their job. And sometimes, their own economic pressure compels them to take up prostitution for an extra source of money.

### **1.3.1 Occupation**

Nepal Government has given green light for operation of cabin restaurants and dance bars. But, there is no proper mechanism to monitor them. In such negligence of law and regulations, the owners of those places take extra benefits from the employees by exploiting the workers physically, mentally or financially.

Aparna Shrestha, the project officer with Maiti Nepal (NGO) working for women empowerment says "cabin restaurants and dance bars are the places where in-experienced teen and minor girls go looking for jobs.' There are carpet factories, brick kilns, stone quarries and

small motels as well, where illiterate people usually seek for their jobs. But again the illiterate rural women and young girls who can merely speak against domination become cheap labors and are compelled to work for minimal wages.

According to International Labor Organization (ILO), "Many of them also suffer sexual abuse while at work". Such abuse is effectively institutionalized in cabin restaurants. An investigation conducted by Saathi, a local NGO working to reduce violence against women, revealed that girls ranging between 14 and 18 years old are particularly at risk. They endure sexual abuse at the hands of the clients. "They don't have anywhere else to go and cannot report abuse to the police as they are already viewed as sex workers by society." explained Pramoda Shah, (President of Saathi)

Sex work has become the profession for many girls and women willingly or mostly unwillingly. Although, sex work has not been identified as a profession in Nepal it has become a platform for many for self-employment.

### **1.3.2 Economic Status**

Quoting the line of UN (1995): 4th World Conference on Women, Beijing, Seromsen puts: 'Poverty has a women's face', and that 70 percent of the world's poor are female. The 'bottom line' measure of poverty in the above statement is lack on income, but it also consists of lack of access to services and opportunities for human development, lack of a voice in political life and decision-making and social subordination and exclusion.

Women in Nepal are in worse economic conditions, compared to many developing countries. They are dominated by males and male dominating systems of the societies have put them in lower status within the family. Male members of the family enjoy the primary rights over parental property. It automatically passes through the male lineage and once married, the daughter holds no rights on her father's property as long as her brothers or sons of brothers are alive. They are put in so vulnerable condition that very often they cannot claim her husband's property, too. They are considered to work at home. So they have no access to outdoor jobs and no link to family economy in many cases.

Lack of education and skill, expensive lifestyles in the cities, being away from family and relatives are some of the reasons for those people to enter in any employment which come across. In many cases, sex trade is found to be the only option for them to earn for living. But due to fashion and friends some end up involving in sex trade voluntarily too.

#### **1.4 Commercial Sex Work and Law of Nepal**

Supreme Court lawyer Rup Narayan Shrestha, who works with the Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD), an NGO providing legal support to Jagriti, says sex workers' invisibility partly stems from the fact that sex work is not recognized by law.

“While the law does not criminalize the sex worker, the act of running a brothel or forcing someone into commercial sex is a punishable offence,” he says. “It is not the law that says the women should be harassed, it's what police do.

Nepal's courts are considerate toward sex workers' rights. Till 2002, the law had a discriminatory legal provision for rape. If the victim was a sex worker, the perpetrator would face a fine of 500 Nepalese rupees – about seven dollars — or imprisonment for a maximum of one year, or both.

However, FWLD founder Sapana Pradhan Malla successfully filed a public interest litigation challenging the provision before the Supreme Court. Now, all convicted rapists face a maximum 10-year jail term.

In Nepal, commercial sex work is illegal and there is no red light area where CSWs are conglomerated.

#### **1.5 Prostitution and Health Threats**

Many girls and women who are employed in Kathmandu in different cabin restaurants and dance restaurants as waitresses or as dancers are sexually exploited pushing them into risk of getting into drugs and probably into HIV/AIDS. Voices are now raised from different levels that the government should give legal identity to sex workers for addressing the HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases in an effective way.

## *The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

“The present legal provision has been proved as a major hindrance in identifying the root cause of HIV/AIDS” said Dr Krishna K. Rai, Director of National Center for AIDS and STI Control under the Health Ministry. He added that police arrest sex workers as though they were major criminals. He said that sex workers should be legalized in the country.

“Only if the government legalizes it, the HIV/AIDS program will be able to reach the root level,” said Rai, adding that sex workers are one of the higher risk groups.

More than four per cent of the total population in the far and mid-west region is reported to have been infected with such disease, which has been spreading as a general epidemic said Rai. He informed that they are working with all higher risk groups in an integrated way. The groups include intravenous drug users, commercial sex workers and their clients, male homosexuals, migrant laborers and their spouses living in Nepal.

Besides rights activists, Nepal’s health experts are also urging the government to sensitize the police, especially in view of the rising incidence of HIV/AIDS.

According to Nepal’s state-run National Centre for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC), the estimated number of HIV positive people as of 2009 was a little over 63,500. Women formed 28.6 percent, out of which 605 – about one percent – were sex workers. Every year, an average of over 4,700 new infections are reported, with about the same number of deaths. The government has just conducted a new survey which puts the number of known commercial sex workers at 28,000.

"The first case of AIDS in Nepal was reported in 1988. Since then, the numbers have risen. By early 2005, more than 800 cases of AIDS and over 4,700 cases of HIV infection were officially reported, with three times as many men reported to be infected as women. However, given the limitations of Nepal’s public health surveillance system, the actual number of infections is expected to be much higher, UNAIDS estimates that 75,000 people were living with HIV at the end of 2005." (UNAIDS)

Nepal's HIV epidemic is largely concentrated in high-risk groups, especially female sex workers (FSW) and IDUs. Injection drug use appears to be extensive in Nepal and to significantly overlap with commercial sex. Another important factor is the high number of sex workers who migrate or are trafficked to Mumbai, India to work, thereby increasing HIV prevalence in the sex workers' network in Nepal more rapidly.

## **1.6 Statement of the Problem**

There are many issues regarding commercial sex work or prostitution in Nepal. The nature of sex trade may vary depending upon the geographical, cultural and socio-economical diversities throughout the country. Since this study is a limited work of research, some current problems have been dealt in the paper. To be precise, the following statements of problem have been sorted out so that the whole thesis is intended to answer them:

1. What are the factors that are driving young women to prostitution though it is neither legal nor prestigious category of work in Nepal?
2. In a hidden form sex market exists in various forms. But are the commercial sex workers or the prostitutes aware of STDs? What is the level of their knowledge about STDs and HIV/AIDS?
3. How do they save themselves from contracting those diseases? Do they use contraceptives? Or to what extent they use the safety measure to prevent themselves from such epidemics?
4. How is the working condition of CSWs in Nepal, especially in Kathmandu? How is the sex business taken by legal provision and social practices? Industry

## **1.7 Objectives of the Study**

The overall objective of this work is to provide a better understanding of the various kinds of CSWs such as those working in cabin restaurants, bars, massage parlors or the free individual sex workers such as street-prostitutes, call girls etc. Because of the fact that sex is taken as a

taboo, the real condition of sex industry is a kind of mystery for many. But it is not an ordinary phenomenon of our society. Regarding the seriousness of sex industry, this work is to deal with the following objectives:

This paper is intended to

1. Exploring the causes of prostitution.
2. Exploring the cognitive or knowledge component of HIV/ STDs among CSWs.
3. Exploring the social conditions
  - Lack of prevention due to brutal pimps/clients either forcing or offering financial incentives to the girls for unproductive sex (without contraceptives).
  - Use of contraceptives and existing cultural taboos.

## **1.8 Organization of the study**

The study has been organized into nine chapters. In this first chapter, the topic was introduced. Apart from presenting the many issues related to prostitution or the sex work in Nepal, it also introduced the research questions, the objectives of the study. The second chapter of this work is Literature Review which begins by defining the terms ‘prostitution’ and ‘child prostitution’. It reviews the related literature and citation of information concerning with many factors of prostitution. It provides an overview on the Economic and Social Bases of prostitution, talks about the size and scope of prostitution, health and legal issues of prostitution and the role of pimps/ agents in sex industry. Theoretical discussion on the topic of prostitution and theoretical framework of Social Work has been included in chapter three. It sheds light into the sociological theories of prostitution such as sociobiology, functionalism, feminism and the social work theories like ‘empowerment’, ‘problem-solving’ and ‘strength-perspective’. Chapter four deals with the methodology and talks in detail about the method used to produce this research work. Similarly chapter five, six, seven and eight are the analysis chapters. They analyze the empirical data such as interviews and information collected from the gate keepers and discusses them with the help of literature, documents and theories.

Chapter five analyses the factors driving the women and girls to sex industry. It identifies the pull- and push- factors that drive them to be victimized in the field because the field is considered to be socially and morally degrading, physically and mentally damaging and legally risky. Chapter six excavates the working conditions of the various kinds of sex workers in Kathmandu, their views and opinions about their involvements etc. It also tries to locate the role of pimps or many kinds of agents in sex industry. Chapter seven is about the condition of STDs among CSWs, their knowledge about those diseases, the hindrances in being prevented from them. Similarly chapter eight is about the use of contraceptives. It analyses about the use of contraceptives in commercial sex trade or prostitution. Finally, the eighth chapter is the chapter of conclusion. It provides the overall conclusion of the work i.e. the final points of the findings.

## **CHAPTER-TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter includes the reviews of the literature related to prostitution. The information and arguments from different articles and books have been used to clarify the issues of prostitution and sex works in this part of the study. Different books, magazines and articles have been reviewed beforehand of the research. This chapter begins with the definition of the words ‘prostitution’ and ‘commercial sex work’. Then, it continues with the discussion on reasons for involvement of people in prostitution, the legal limitation of prostitution, discussion of the use of contraceptives and the consequent advent of sexually transmitted diseases.

### **2.1 Defining ‘prostitution’ or ‘commercial sex work’**

Encyclopedia Britannica (1973-74) defines ‘prostitution’ as ‘the practice of habitual or intermittent sexual union, more or less promiscuous, for mercenary inducement. It is thus characterized by three major elements: payment, promiscuity and emotional indifference’. Based on this definition, Truong (1990) concludes that sexual intercourse is morally accepted between socially accepted unions. It also implies that sexual intercourse within socially accepted unions is unpaid and involves emotional attachment. But she argues that these considerations are not applicable in many cases (Truong (1990: 11). The word has been defined in many ways. For example: Polsky (1967) considers prostitution as ‘non-marital sex as a vocation’. Similarly, Gagnon (1968) sees prostitution as ‘granting of sexual access on a relatively indiscriminate basis for payment in money or goods, depending on the complexity of the local economic system. Payment is acknowledged for the specific sexual performance’. But, concept of economic involvement, sexual activities between people who are not socially married and emotional detachment is almost common in every definition.

Prostitution can be categorized in many bases: fees they charge, sexual services they provide, the organization they are involved in, operational criteria and many others. (Diana, 1985: 3)

## **2.2 Child Prostitution**

Now it is clear that prostitution involves sexual activities and is mainly motivated by economic benefits. Due to economic pressure, deception or any other reasons, women are driven to prostitution. In some cases, they are forced through trafficking, false marriage or with the lure of better jobs. But in some cases, women choose prostitution themselves seeking better earnings or easier life styles. It can be the means of self-employment for some women. In a way prostitution of adult can be the choice for somebody. But for children it is different. It is considered as the violation of child right even if it is done with their consent. Lim (1998: 170) quotes the definition of 'child prostitution' given by World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, 1996 as '*child prostitution constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children, and amounts to forced labor and a contemporary form of slavery*'.

Lim further puts the words of Vitit Muntarbhorn, the former United Nations Special Rapporteur to the Commission on Human Rights, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography as "*I do not pass judgment on the pros and cons of adult prostitution. However, child prostitution is inadmissible- it is tantamount to exploitation and victimization of the child both physically and emotionally, and is in breach of the child's rights*" (Muntarbhorn, 1996a, p. 10). (Cited by Lim 1998: 170)

Reports show that children are increasingly used in the Sex trade. They are used by other for earning money. Children prostitutes, who are homeless or from very poor family background are trafficked to sex industry and therefore are more helpless than adult ones. They cannot raise their voice against the exploitation whether it is sexually, emotionally or economically. It is considered that they do not involve in the sex trade themselves but are brought to the sex industry.

Child prostitution is defined by the current United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography as 'the act of engaging or offering the services of a child to perform sexual acts for money or other consideration with that person or any other person' (ibid). She further puts the refined definition of the Working Group on a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography as 'the act of obtaining, procuring or offering the

services of a child or inducing a child to perform sexual acts for any form of compensation or reward (or any acts that are linked to that offence) (even with the consent of the child)'

Children are generally sexually exploited in mainly two ways: involving them in prostitution and producing pornography with them. Obviously, children are sexually exploited to satisfy the adults. They are exploited in two ways at the same time. First, because of the vulnerability and lack of bargaining power they are exploited by their employer economically. Second, they are exploited by their clients sexually. Muntarhorn (1996b, cited by Lim, 1998: 171) says "The basis of the exploitation is the unequal power and economic relationships between the child and the adult. The child is exploited for his/her youth and sexuality. Frequently, though not always, this exploitation is organized by a third party for profit".

## **2.3 Bases of prostitution:**

### **2.3.1 The Economic Bases of Prostitution**

Lim (1998: 1) defines prostitution as the provision of sexual services for re-imburement or material gain. She agrees that it has a strong economic foundation and social bases involving unequal relations between men and women and between parents and children. She says the scale of prostitution has been enlarged to an extent where we can justifiably speak of commercial sex trade that has become an integral part of economic, social and political life of many countries. Clearly it has become a worldwide industry and has been a good source of employment and economic growth of many countries. Prostitutes are generally considered to be women but there are homosexual and even heterosexual men providing sexual services. In Kathmandu, we can see number of homosexual men moving around in Thamel area and sexually harassing or welcoming people. Police raids and documentaries made about their raids and searches also show that homosexuals are involved in large number in sex trade in Kathmandu. The most serious form of prostitution is child prostitution and involves 'young girls and increasing number of boys' (ibid.).

Though sex trade has not been recognized officially as economic sector in many countries, its contribution in national economy is not worthless in many countries. Lim (1998: 2) mentions

that the sex trade is not recognized as an economic sector in official statistics, development plans or government budgets. However, economic considerations and vested interests remain strong. She argues that on the one hand, societies still frown upon or condemn sexual relations outside marriage. But on the other, there is concern for those working in the sex industry especially children, who are seen as ‘unfortunate victims’, ‘highly vulnerable’ or deviant’ and who are therefore in need of assistance to ‘rehabilitate’ or ‘re-socialize’ them or to prevent them from being drawn into prostitution.

### **2.3.2 Social Bases of Prostitution**

On one hand prostitution is condemned as a social evil and people seem to avoid it. The women who are involved in prostitution are stigmatized and therefore taken as the curse in the societies. People seem to criticize the sex industry and even raise voices to criminalize the prostitutes. But on the other hand it is taken as necessary thing in the society. Many people who talk about criminalizing this field are found to be involved in the field. In whatever form or way, prostitution has social bases and acceptance in many ways.

First, (Lim, 1998: 12) it will exist so long as men are considered to be sexually active and aggressive, and as long as ‘respectable’ women must preserve their chastity and honor. Prostitution is accepted as a means to satisfy male sexuality so that it helps to decrease the number of rapes and harassment against women and girls. She further mentions that it is socially accepted as one of the important things though in the name of ‘social evil’ because it is seen as a means to satisfy an ‘uncontainable male sexuality’. Prostitution is therefore considered society’s safety valve against the rape of ‘innocent women’ and the disintegration of the institution of the family.” (D’ Cunha, 1992, p. 36) So prostitution, though regarded as evil, it is accepted as ‘necessary evil’ which is preserved in the society in some ways. It is therefore taken as sexual outlet for men.

Secondly, it is a means of earning money. For those women who are responsible to manage the family and are not able to earn enough from other jobs, it works as an important option. Lim(1998) mentions that in Southeast Asia, women have traditionally played a major role as family breadwinners (though not necessarily as decision-makers). According to her, the

number of families which are run by women is increasing and they are comparatively in poorer conditions. For them, prostitution is a option to earn for living. The condition of single mothers and divorcees are often miserable and therefore for them prostitution can be a help.

Thirdly, the economic role of the children in developing countries is significant. The children are taught culturally that they have to help their parents as much as they can. Children therefore try to find easy ways to earn money so that they can help parents back in their home. This obligation may push the young girls to prostitution since finding other job is not easy for the girls from the rural areas in the cities.

## **2.4 The Size of Commercial Sex trade**

It is not easy to make estimations about many aspects of sex trade because it has been running underground. Though the government and the people know that it exists almost everywhere in the world, it is often remained unnoticed either deliberately or automatically. Many aspects of sex trade remains mysterious for a number of people. But the studies, research and surveys have been organized in many places and the findings have been published.

The condition of sex trade Nepal seems to be different from many other countries where this sector has been controlled and organized to some extent. We can guess the size and the significance of sex trade in Nepal also by seeing the summary presented by Lim (1998: 7) in her book 'The Sex trade'.

She cites the estimates made by CATW and puts that between 0.25 percent and 1.5 percent of the total female population in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand are prostitutes and that the sex trade accounts for between 2 percent and 14 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). The summary of the data she puts there goes as follows:

Federal police in Australia estimate that prostitution grosses Aus\$30 million annually. The rate of girl and women trafficking in Bangladesh and Nepal is seriously shocking. The primary motif of women trafficking is to involve them forcefully in the sex trade. From Bangladesh it is estimated that 200,000 women have been trafficked to Pakistan over the past ten years, and the trafficking continues at the rate of 200 to 400 women monthly. In 1994, 2000 women were

trafficked for prostitution in six cities in India. Similarly, from Nepal, the estimation is that some 5,000 women are trafficked to India yearly, and about 100,000 Nepalese prostitutes work in India. After India, Hong Kong is supposed to be the biggest market for trafficked Nepalese women.

The size of prostitution sector is terribly big in India. The estimation shows that in India 2.3 million women are in prostitution, of which a quarter is minors. The country is reported to have more than 1000 red districts spread all over the country, some with caged prostitutes who are mostly minors from Nepal and Bangladesh. The sex industry in Japan accounts for about 1 percent of the gross national product (GNP). Over 150,000 non-Japanese women are in prostitution, more than half are Filipinas and another 40 percent are Thai women. One 'sex zone' in Tokyo, only 0.34 square kilometers, has 3,500 sex facilities. And it is also mentioned in the data that Japanese men constitute the largest number of sex tourists in Asia. The number of prostitutes in Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Myanmar also are considerably very high. Around 142,000 women are estimated to have been involved in prostitution in Malaysia, with between 8,000 and 14,000 in Kuala Lumpur. Philippines, in the same way, is estimated to have 300,000 women in prostitution and 75,000 prostituted children. The data also shows that 4.6 million Thai men use prostitutes and 500,000 foreign tourists come to Thailand to visit prostitutes annually.

The above summary is about only a few countries. It does not mean that the rate is similar in other countries as well but it helps us to understand how big the industry in the whole world. There is no actual data available to determine the size and role of the sex trade in Nepal. But the convergence of certain places in almost every city and town in Nepal into a kind of red-street such as Baglung bus park area in Pokhara, Thamel area of Kathmandu and popularity of the highway line small motels as 'sex-stops', shows that it is growing rapidly.

## **2.5 Prostitution as Commoditization of Women**

Eric Cohen (1988) states:

“Commoditization” is a process by which things (and activities) come to be evaluated primarily in terms of their exchange value, in a context of trade, thereby becoming goods (and

services); developed exchange systems in which the exchange value of things (and activities) is stated in terms of prices form a market.

It's the process of putting monetary value on anything which in general considered as un-sellable. Commoditization is a practice of turning things into a 'commodity'. Prostitution, as its definition suggests, is the act of presenting a woman commercially for sexual intercourse. It can be forceful or willingly. As a profession, the prostitutes have different prices depending on the age of their age, types of service etc. It also depends on the place where the service is provided.

Prostitutes are often considered to avail themselves as sexual objects in exchange for money (Lombroso and Ferrero, 1895, in Ellis, 1927 and Smart 1976 cited by Truong (1990: 17).

To use a bad word, prostitution is a kind of selling one's body for money. There are, therefore, many issues in relation to whether prostitution is justifiable or not.

## **2.6 Health Issues**

Gay men, Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) and Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs) are relatively classified in the recent past as higher "risk groups" for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Women, generally, and prostitutes, specifically, are "social categories that have been stigmatized as the source of sexually transmitted disease" (Kane, 1993). He further states that cross-cultural instances of this alignment of women, prostitution and disease are evident in both Thailand and Uganda where STDs are known as "women diseases".

Lim (1998: 19) puts that commercial sex work gained a high attention and was demanded to be controlled in many case due to health-related concerns. She argues that social and legal control of prostitutes has commonly been justified as a public health measure. According to her, in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand, early attempts to regulate the sex trade were to prevent the potential threat of the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). As HIV/AIDS is one of the major threat of contemporary world and sexual intercourse is one of the most common and easy way for it to transfer from one person to another, people are more concerned to control and regulate commercial sex activities.

Sex workers are increasingly seen to have played a major role in the spread of Aids. The sex workers are both at risk of becoming infected with Aids and spreading it to others. Injecting drug users sometimes turn to sex work to finance their addiction and this has also been an important route of HIV transmission (Hubley, 1990).

A study conducted by New Era, in 1995, among CSWs and their clients along the Mahendra highway indicated that 24 percent of the CSWs reported to have had one episodes of STD in the past (Bhatta, 1993)

Unsafe sexual intercourse with infected person is of course a problem and measures should be applied to avoid it. However, Lim (1998: 19) argues that current laws and programs in many countries usually cover only the prostitutes, assuming as if they are the only source of STDs or HIV/AIDS. She states that it is true that prostitutes often suffer from STDs but their condition can be improved if they are provided with adequate health services. Prostitution is therefore more stigmatized to be the source of these diseases than they really are. Even the clients who have unprotected sex are not paid any attention.

## **2.7 Working Environment of Sex Workers**

Lim (1998: 3) puts that the working conditions of prostitutes vary greatly and depend very often on how they enter the sex trade. According to her, for some, working conditions and remuneration could be better than what could be expected in other occupations open to them. For others, however, working conditions are clearly exploitative and the women and children are subject to various forms of abuse. It also depends on what kind of service sector they are involved. Some are self-employed and arrange the clients themselves. They can bargain with the customers and therefore are able to decide for themselves. Many others, however, are caught in the trap of pimps or other agents, who exploit them economically, sexually and emotionally as well.

Working condition of sex workers is very poor in many countries. It can be because of many reasons like the poor economic condition of sex worker, stigmatization of sex work, police interference, and exploitation by pimps or the like.

The sex industry in Nepal has not been researched well. However, increased donation funding of AIDS prevention has created an opening for research into STDs and CSWs in recent years in Nepal. The 1990s has seen the rise of Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice (see for example Bhatta 1993, Cox and Suvedi 1994, CREHPA 1997, New Era 1995, New Era 1996, New Era 1997; Parajuli and Schilling 1996). However, there has not been enough qualitative research.

Local populations of CSWs in Nepal tend to be in a constant state of flux, expanding or decreasing from one month to the next, depending on the extent harassment by police and local residents. Most of CSWs thus lead a transient life, constantly moving from one city to next. (Annual Report of NCASC, 1994)

Health hazards from prostitution are caused due to poor working condition of the sex workers, lack of education and practical knowledge of using contraceptive. In some cases the prostitutes are not allowed to use condoms etc. for safety. Lim (1998:16) states that anti-prostitution groups base their campaigns partly on the poor working conditions of prostitutes. Other groups argue that, rather than banning prostitution because of poor working conditions, efforts should focus on measures to improve their working conditions.

She further states that the sex workers' rights movement has insisted on improving the working conditions and social security benefits for those who have freely chosen this line of work. But it not always easy to distinguish whether the women are 'self-employed', 'employed', 'enslaved' or 'exported', and also whether their working conditions are evaluated on the basis of moral, social or economic standards.

## **2.8 Role of Pimps in Sex trade**

*The sex trade has its own hierarchical power structure (Jones and Sulistyarningsih, 1998:39).*

Generally, there are two types of sex business forms: organized and un-organized. The brothel, massage parlors, cabin restaurants are the example of organized sex service providers. The manager of these places play important role in such organized sex trades. They are directly responsible for handling and managing everything that is needed for the services. They decide

the salary and/or other benefits for the sex workers. They fix the prices of the service and the sex workers have to negotiate with the owner to keep working there.

There are some other types of sex activities which are facilitated by pimps or the agents. They are people, who work as the agents or the mediators between clients and prostitutes. They take certain percentage of amount from the prostitutes and in return provide them with services such as protection and contact with customers. Some pimps run some kind of sex business outside the brothel. They rent houses and hire the prostitutes in percentage basis. It depends on what kind of arrangements they make. Some of them provide good salary for the prostitutes and others just call them when necessary and pay them in percentage basis. Some pimps just work as the agents and manage to provide the clients with the prostitutes where they want. The sex workers are taken to the homes of the clients or to the hotel rooms. Or the clients are sometimes brought to the rooms of the prostitutes as well depending on some conditions. The sex workers, in such cases have to rely on the prices fixed by the pimps. There are some other parties also in the business such as taxi drivers. They also work as the mediator and therefore demand some share of the money paid by clients.

Jones and Sulistyaningsih, (1998: 40) puts that there are many others who earn significantly from the sex trade, including taxi drivers, room cleaners and launderers in massage parlors, hotel security personnel and procurers who hang around hotels and other places where potential clients are likely to be found. According to her taxi drivers play an important role in the marketing of sex service by providing information to clients concerning the location, rules of the game, types of services available and price of the prostitute's services. Sometimes they also can become mediators between the prostitute and the client. The taxi drivers therefore not only work as the transporters but also the informers for the clients. It is reported that in Pokhara, the second biggest city of Nepal, taxi drivers are the main marketers of the sex trade. They keep a number of telephone numbers of individual and organized sex workers and bring the clients accordingly. In some cases they also work as the pimps in sex trades.

## **2.9 Legislation on Sex work**

The problems and the issues have raised a serious question of whether commercial should be criminalized and totally banned, legalized and regulated, or decriminalized. Governments can use different methods and tools depending what it defines sex trade as. They make plans on the basis of their consideration of any sector. For example they can make law and implement accordingly. Or, they can educate their people or inform them about prostitution.

Lim (1998: 20) argues that governments use the instrument of the law as a means to deal with prostitutes and with the sex trade and it is the legal framework that determines the status of the sex trade and the rights and protection of workers within the sex industry. For example: if the government is 'prohibitionist' or 'abolitionist' they view prostitution as immoral, and aim at its eradication by banning sex business and criminalizing the activities of all those involved, i.e. the sex workers, the people procuring for or profiteering from prostitution, and the clients. In the same way, the 'regulation-ist government or legislated system provides for the registration and licensing of the sex trade so as to confine prostitutes to brothels in red light districts in order to ensure official control of public order and public health.

But there are other groups as well, who reject the legislation of adult prostitution on several grounds. They argue that compulsory registration and health checks or segregation in specially designated red light districts discriminates against and stigmatizes the prostitutes (Lim,1998: 21).

But, as we can see, even the strict law in many countries has not been able to eradicate prostitution completely. Some people argue that strict laws can push the field underground but not eradicate it. It can make the working condition tougher and poorer but cannot abolish it because prostitution cannot be viewed as a straight forward phenomenon.

## **CHAPTER-THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Studies on the field of ‘prostitution’ raise a number of theoretical discussions. Though, in hidden form in many places, it is believed to be an unavoidable part of the society. Prostitution has been in practice from the ancient times. Truong (1990: 13) puts ‘*the oldest form of prostitution is found in ancient countries such as India and ancient Babylon*. Prostitution, as a social phenomenon, can be analyzed by social scientists in many theoretical perspectives: namely sociobiology, functionalism, historical materialism, structuralism and feminism. There are some other issues as well. For example: social stigma and sensitivity theory. Furthermore this chapter sheds light in some Social Work theories because the study about the victimized women and their empowerment is an important phenomenon for the social workers. Precisely, the chapter includes the information on ‘empowerment’, ‘problem solving’ and ‘strength perspective’ theories.

### **3.1 Theories of Prostitution**

As these theories have a lot to do to analyze the concepts of prostitution, they have been discussed in brief in the following part of this chapter.

#### **3.1.1 Prostitution and Sociobiology**

*Sociobiology is a research strategy which attempts to explain the nature of human behavior by applying the evolutionary principles advanced by Darwin.* (Truong 1990: 16)

According to her, it was used to explain human individual and collective social evolution. This theory locates the unequal progress of men and women in differences in biological faculties. And thus, this theory can be seen as a justification of oppression on women in the societies. People who believe this theory have the view that nature has created men and women in different ways so as to fit them with different social or individual roles such as child bearing, child rearing and home-bound work for women and outdoor work for men. Truong (1990: 17)

further argues that studies on prostitution which are modeled under the theories and methods of sociobiology can be classified into two types, namely those within the *confines of criminology and those that consider prostitution as an aspect of human sexual behavior*. The former concept views prostitution as a moral crime and the latter concept views it as relationship between biology and sex.

Criminology, which emerged in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe, was heavily influenced by orthodox concept of sociobiology. It had the assumption that antisocial elements such as prostitution found in individuals are in fact a recurrence of traits found in ancestors who are more remote than the parents (ibid.)

The idea of rationality was highly influenced by patriarchal prejudices and patriarchy was formulated with the principle of sociobiology. Prostitution was thought to be irrational and immoral act in the societies. Moreover, as she puts, prostitution is still linked to lower class and is still considered to be the result of moral idiocy in the societies with varying degrees of explicitness.

What is more crucial in this theory is that it contends that ‘biological construct of the male determines the institution of polygamy, at least in part, while the biological construct of the female determines her tendency to grant sexual favors for survival and to use her assets to her own advantage (Lewontin, et al., 1984 cited by Truong (1990: 19)

This theory has the notion that woman is seducer and exploiter of men. It leads to the justification of polygamy but criminality of prostitutes. It views that males are by nature capable and allowed to have sexual intercourses with many women but women are not.

This view of people has been changing slowly in developing countries, as well. In democratic countries like Nepal, men and women are provided equal rights in the constitution. It has not been so much in practice, yet. The theory of sociobiology in relation with prostitution blames just the women for practicing it. However, the number of men involving in it directly or indirectly is not less than that of women. The organizer of the dance bar, cabin restaurant, massage centers or brothels in many countries are mostly men. Moreover, there are pimps, agents, taxi-drivers, security personnel and many other live on the income of the sex workers. But most important thing in this field is that prostitution exists only because of the men, the

clients. We can argue that if any man does not need them, there would not be prostitution in the world. It is all because of the need of men. Women are mere service providers. If the service providers are criminalized, there should be some rules for the service seekers also.

There are some countries such as Norway and Sweden where selling of sex is legal but buying of it is criminalized. Buying and selling takes place at the same time in agreement of both buyers and sellers but only the buyers are criminalized there.

### **3.1.2 Functionalism and Prostitution**

Functionalism emerged as a critique to socio-biological view of the men women relationship. It rejects mainly the ‘racist and sexist’ (Truong, 1990: 21) theories of behavior from socio-biological approach. Instead of biological facts, the focus was put on ‘culture’. In this framework ‘culture; has been conceptualized as a result of social processes that formulate human behavior.

According to Truong (1990: 22) the roots of functionalism can be traced to the work of Durkheim. From his work mainly two principles can be sorted out: (1) social forces exercise an external constraint over individuals and (2) individuals are themselves hierarchically organized by the action of these forces.

This theory assumes that society is an integrated entity of its complex institutions and interdependencies. And individual behavior is shaped by social structure but not by volition.

In functionalist tradition, human nature is defined in terms of human capacity of reasoning i.e. to think, to create and to control. ‘Collective conscience and social institutions are seen as the product of such reasons and they work as functional framework to the members of the society.

Truong (1990: 24) mentions that since all societies experience some forms of control over sexual conduct, sex, to Malinowski, one of the most prominent anthropologists, constitutes the most important biological need. He writes ‘sex is really dangerous’ a powerful and disruptive force which demands powerful means of regulating, suppressing and directing’ (Malinowski in Weeks 1985: 102)

Functionalists accept that sex is an irrational individual desire and the society should control it by different means. It is also one of the important human needs and therefore should be managed well. Marriage is a solution for it but it's not enough.

For functionalists, sex is an individual and biological instinct and therefore should be formulated by the social and cultural rules. He quotes Mead 'if any human society is to survive, it must have a pattern of social life that comes to terms with the difference between the sexes.'

This tradition (functionalism) assumes that men prefer not to be tied down in wedlock, something which is functional to society and therefore highly regarded but want to have their cake and eat it too, so that prostitution remains vital.

Davis (1976) says that since the economic means are distributed unequally between classes but female attractiveness is not, some women of the lower economic means can exploit their attractiveness for economic gains (cited by Truong 1990: 27).

Functionalists view that the act of selling one's sexual services as well as the act of buying such services strictly as irrational individual choice. But the idea of economic compulsion, inequality and social biasness has been ignored by this view.

Functionalism school of thought believes that prostitution exists because of the lack of equality between men and women. It is a social phenomenon. The rules are made in the society in such a way that men are given superior position to women. Economically women are in poorer condition. And because of this biased and prejudiced social system women are compelled to employ themselves sexually. This theory also assumes that prostitution exists because of the sexual nature of men. It is assumed that men have unlimited sexual desire which is like animalistic. Men want the sex but do not prefer the marital bondage as a result they seek for alternative sources. As a result, the commercial sex workers can have their market of sex. And for them, it is assumed that they involve in it mainly due to economic pressures.,

### **3.1.3 Historical Materialism, Socialism and Prostitution**

Socialism is a set of political principles derived from the writings of Karl Marx and Engels. Truong (1990: 30) mentions that these are the principles shared by socialist countries. The

writer says socialist countries share two features in regard to prostitution: (1) a similar moralistic position which stigmatizes and criminalizes prostitutes in spite of the acceptance of the argument that they are victims of pauperization, poverty and residual capitalist relations; and (2) the failure to eradicate prostitution.

For Marx 'prostitution is only a specific expression of the universal prostitution of the worker and since prostitution is a relationship which includes both the one who is prostituted and the one who prostitutes (and the latter is much more base), so the capitalist etc. comes within this category' (Marx in Jaggar, 1983: 221)

According to his view, prostitutes are forced to work as they work due to economic necessity. He compares prostitution with forced labor where there is no 'freedom and happiness'. Truong (1990: 31) mentions that because bourgeois men enjoy less restricted social rules of sexual conduct and because they control the means of production, they also benefit from the system of exchange of sex for money, which is prostitution.

Socialism compares the prostitutes with the laborers. The clients are compared with capitalists. Prostitution is like the relationship between bourgeois and proletariat. So, obviously, the laborers are controlled and exploited by the capitalists. The work of prostitution is therefore just a job of the prostitutes. Socialism leaves the role of biological factors in the activities of prostitution. It is mere a professional work. Like 'functionalism' it also assumes that prostitution exists because of the unequal distribution of economic benefits between men and women. It implies that poorer women are more likely to involve in prostitution. And better-off men are more likely to be the consumers in the sex market.

### **3.1.3 Structuralism and Prostitution**

Structuralism, as propounded by Levi-Strauss focuses on the psychological structure of social system, through which empirically observed phenomenon are manifested. According to him the things on the behavior we observe are guided by something which is deeper to it.

Truong (1990: 38) mentions that the patterns of marriage, kinship relations and sexual relations are to be understood not as they are observed, but as manifestations of deeper structure to be found in the innate capacity of the human mind to think, to differentiate and to create rules governing this differentiation.

As Truong (1990) puts, structuralism assumes that the way we behave in the society are just the manifestations of what lies as the deeper structure of the society. That structure is created by human mind and is guided by human psychology. For sexual behaviors of people, we have to see how it is structured by kinship relationship and the marriage patterns. According to Levi-Strauss, kinship relationship is the basis of human culture. And kinship relationship originates from the 'exchange of women' as a 'precious gift'. *'It is always the system of exchange that we find at the origin of rules of marriage...., it is always exchange that emerges as the fundamental and common basis of all modalities of the institution of marriage.'* (Levi-Strauss 1969 cited by Truong 1990: 39) So, marriage is the manifestation of structure of exchange. And he further argues that 'incest taboo' is a kind of mechanism which guaranties the system that women are available for other rather than for her kin group. 'Incest taboo' is the reason that makes the girls or women be transported away from her home and therefore the basis of marital bond is created.

Structuralism focuses on the very structure of the society. Prostitution therefore is not the basic thing. It is just the manifestation of gender rule which is created by the male dominated ideology. According to this theory, prostitutes are victims of male dominated societies. Their activities are the result of the gender relations as manifestation of patriarchal culture. It shows that they are programmed to be involved in prostitution. It cannot be their conscious choice but are conditioned to do so. Women are made to internalize their gender identity as inferior or more passive and more vulnerable than that of men. Male domination is facilitated by women themselves by virtue of their internalization of their own gender identity, or the cultural self which women are not born with but have become (de Beauvoir, 1974; Chodorow, 1978 cited by Truong 1990: 41)

### **3.1.4 Feminism and Prostitution**

Truong (1990: 43) argues that social movements, such as the labor and women's movements that emerged in defense of the oppressed strata, did take up the issue of prostitution as a form of social and sexual oppression. Focusing on the equality in male female treatments, feminist

scholars argue that prostitution is the result of patriarchal hegemony and biasness. Many governments at present have tried a middle way to control prostitution by criminalizing it on one hand and rehabilitating those promiscuous women into chaste women because they have been unable to abolish prostitution through legal measures. (ibid)

Women's movement is characterized by women's attempt seeking to overcome patriarchal biased thinking and practice. They view prostitution as a product of male domination and moreover male exploitation and a violation of women's dignity (Ibid).

As pointed out by Barry (1984:26): *'acceptance of prostitution as an inevitable social institution is lodged with the assumption that sex is male right, whether it is bought, sold seized in rape, or more subtly coerced as in sexual harassment'* (cited by Truong 1990: 43).

So, the feminist are demanding that prostitution be decriminalized, their human right and dignity be respected. They demand that the government should maintain a good working environment for them to work so that they cannot be victimized of being exploited.

Lim 1998: 22) argues that more recently there have been growing calls, particularly from some feminist, civil liberty and prostitutes' rights groups, for the decriminalization of prostitutes.

Chauvin, 1982 puts that before the advent of social purity movement, prostitution was regulated under various forms of licensing in many countries. This movement was based on the view that prostitution is a violation of human dignity, family life and public moral codes. It was also linked with girl trafficking and sexual harassment.

### **3.2 Prostitution and Social Stigma**

The term 'stigma' has been defined by Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary as 'a mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person'. It is very often associated to bodily sign of something unusual or bad. It works as the source of humiliation. If somebody has a kind of problem in his or body or if he or she has made a mistake, he or she is

often teased or humiliated by other. Commercial sex work or prostitution is, in many places, seen as a crime or an immoral activity. And as a result person who is known as sex worker or a prostitute is offended much in the society.

According to Truong (1990: 14), prostitutes in Europe in the Middle Ages had to be distinguished from other women. They had to be identifiable and were isolated from 'respectable women'. They had to wear clothes that easily showed that they were prostitutes, and therefore the sinners. Goffman (1963) argues that anybody with bad signs in the body such as cuts or burnt marks is not welcomed in the society. It works similarly with those who are ill-famed with so called 'sin' of prostitution.

Truong (1990: 18) argues that such stigmatization or male coercion may constitute the major barrier preventing the departure of prostitutes and their children from their back ground to a normal social life. Stigmatized person is not only unwanted but also avoided in social gatherings. Moreover stigmatized with prostitution or adultery is seen more serious immorality or crime.

The effect of stigmatization can be seen as a serious problem in relation to talking about STDs or in buying and selling of contraceptives as well. For a sex worker, contraceptives are very much necessary. But if she goes to the shops and buy the condoms, people who see her buying there, can think differently. They may think that she is a prostitute and that is a serious thing in her life. It can be terrible for her in many ways: first, people can harass her sexually if they suspect that she is a prostitute. Second, it is not easy to fight against such harassment because they are done indirectly most of the times. Such harassment can be changed into permanent stigmatization. And thirdly, if the matter is reached to police, they can be penalized or troubled very much.

In short, the sex workers cannot easily buy contraceptives or consult the doctor because of the issue of stigmatization linked with their activities.

### **3.3 Social Work Theories**

Due to the fact that, the formal government authority cannot help to identify the secrets of prostitution in Nepal, the only way to investigate its condition is through NGOs and INGOs. In

other words, to investigate about the conditions of sex workers and to rehabilitate them in different sector has been one of the most important responsibilities of such social work organizations. Providing awareness about STDs and use of contraceptives and by helping the women who want to leave sex business has been the major work of a number of social work institutions in Nepal. Some of them are WOREC, SAATHI, Aasha Nepal, Karuna Nepal etc. The research in the sex trade and about different issues related to it can be better investigated through the light of social work theories. Some of the important theories and perspectives have been presented as follow:

### **3.3.1 Empowerment Theory**

The word ‘empowerment’ denotes to the process of increasing the capability of an individual or a group to overcome their problems. It is a way of assisting the people who are in unfortunate situation to develop their own capacity or awareness that they have the strengths to come out of the harsh situation. It includes giving different kinds of awareness such as the awareness against health risks for those who are suffering or are more likely to suffer. It is also the process of encouraging marginalized or less fortunate individuals and developing their skills for becoming self-dependent. So, empowerment refers to increasing the all-round strengths such as economic, political, social, educational, gender, or spiritual.

This concept is quite applicable in the field of commercial sex or prostitution.

Prostitution or selling of sex as a profession is linked to a number of problems for those who are involved in it. The surveys show that exploitation of the women and girls is at the extreme extent in sex trade in most of the countries where it is not recognized and monitored by the government. In the context on Nepal, CSWs are found to be in a traumatic situation. They are unable to come out of the situation because of economic and many other pressures. Empowerment process is very necessary for them, because they are almost unable to save them from stigmatization, health risks and exploitation. They need support to overcome these problems.

As the process of ‘empowerment’ of an individual, Karen Healy, in his book ‘*Social Work Theories in Context*’ suggests five special social work theories for the social workers to follow

in order to assist those who need supports. They are problem solving approaches, system theories, the strengths perspective, anti-oppressive practice and post modern practices. All of these perspectives are highly used in social work sector. Among them, problem solving approaches and anti-oppressive practice have been discussed in little more detail in the following part of this chapter.

### **3.3.2 Problem Solving Approaches**

Problem-solving approaches focus on task-centered practices. As Healy (2005: 108) puts '*problem solving approaches are characterized by collaborative, highly structured, time-limited and problem-focused approaches to practice*'. It aims for small achievements in the life of service users that works as the point of departures to make grand changes in the future of their life. Similarly it focuses the problems which are present 'here and now' rather than big indulging into big and out of capacity problems. It also puts emphasis on collaborative practices of the social workers and the service users so that there is mutual contract between them and the social worker can actively perform the act of assessing by teaching or instructing.

The theory of 'empowerment' is a popular theory in the field of social work since the aim of the social worker is mainly to help victimized people understand their capacities and facilitate them to switch off from the previous situation to a better situation.

### **3.3.3 Anti-oppressive Practices**

According to Healy (2005:172) anti-oppressive practice is a part of critical social work tradition. Healy mentions the definition of 'anti-oppressive practice' citing from Dominelli (2002a) as "a form of social work practice which addresses social divisions and structural inequalities in the work that is done with 'clients' (users) or workers. Anti-oppressive practice aims to provide more appropriate and sensitive services by responding to people's needs regardless of their social status..." As the definition suggests this perspective assumes that the social work should focus on the structural base of the in-equalities prevalent in the societies

that have victimized the individuals or the particular group. They should identify the various forms of oppression and act accordingly to minimize those oppressions.

This perspective is quite applicable in understanding business of commercial sex. As discussed earlier, prostitution is the by-product of patriarchal system. The oppression of women by men can be identified in a number of steps in the life of prostitutes. Economic prejudices, socially biased rules against women play great role in driving them to prostitution. The exploitation from the employer and pimps/agents, stigmatization and exclusion from the family and society, and police harassment are some forms of oppression the prostitutes go through during and after their involvement in the sex trade. Because of the series of pressures and exploitations, their life is too harsh. They need to be supported and assisted so that they can be returned to a normal life. This generalization is very similar in the context of Nepal.

Anti-oppressive social work approach requires the social workers to understand the very reasons of such oppressions so that they can better address the problems. They are required to discover how personal, cultural and structural factors have played roles to put the service users in such problems. To understand their problems, their background should be studied thoroughly and the core reasons of the oppression should be identified. Understanding the nature of the oppression and the resulting situation is focused by this approach.

One of the most important principles the social worker should follow is that they have to empower the service users. It is because the theory of empowerment focuses that the victimized person should be assisted in order to make himself or herself to fight the situation. They should be empowered by the feeling that they are not alone in the process of change. They should be supported emotionally and their skills should be identified so that they can be confident in fighting with the problematic situation.

According to Dalrymple and Burke (cited by Healy, 2005) for anti-oppressive social workers the term 'working in partnership' means that 'service users should be included as far as possible as fellow citizens in the decision making processes which affect their lives.' Working in partnership with the service users is common in other theories of social work, as well. However, as Healy puts 'anti-oppressive theorists see partnership as a 'vexed issue' whereas other theorists see it as 'something that can be achieved relatively easily'.

## **CHAPTER-FOUR: METHODOLOGY**

*'Methodology focuses on the best means for acquiring knowledge about the world'*. Norman 183. As argued by Lazar, D. (1998:24), methodology is a set of the fundamental or regulative principles which underlie any discipline (for example, its conception of its subject matter and how that subject matter might be investigated). And he further argues there are no straightforward answers to these questions. For Bryman (2004), methodology is something that consists of a set of philosophical positions which impact upon the selection of the research design.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994:108) methodology tells us how the inquirer/researcher goes about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known. It depends on which paradigmatic frame the inquirer is working within. For example positivist methodology comprises experimental/manipulative techniques which focus on verification of hypothesis and uses basically quantitative methods. Post-positivism focuses on falsification of hypothesis. However, the more recent paradigm, constructivism works within hermeneutical and dialectical framework of methodology.

In the beginning of this chapter the recent paradigms of philosophical position of social science have been discussed in brief. Later, it is followed by research method, research area, and data collection process. Finally the chapter discusses about the reliability and validity and many other issues related to the use of methodology in this study.

### **4.1 Discussion on the Current Paradigms of Methodology in Social Science.**

According to Guba & Lincoln (1994:108), there are at least four paradigms of philosophy competing at present in the field of knowledge acquisition tradition. Research methodologies are therefore different in relation to those philosophical positions. Among them the two extreme contradictions are 'objective' and 'subjective' dimensions. Objective dimension is

closer to natural science field whereas subjective assumptions are more used in the field of social science. Yet, there are some social scientists who advocate the use of 'objective' methodology in social science, too. For instance: Durkheim, Parsons and Merton Lazar, D. (1998: 13)

Objectivity is closer to natural science and used by positivists and the naturalists. But on the other hand subjective dimension is more related to interpretive theories.

For positivists, there exists objective knowledge in the world which is acquirable perfectly. But for the subjectivists, namely constructivists, realities are local and specific. They believe in constructed truth, not in universal truth Guba and Lincoln (1994:109). For them there are truths, not a single truth. (Lazar, 1998: 16)

As this study is aimed to explore the causes of prostitution in Nepal and the issues related to it, such as the legal provision on prostitution and the knowledge level of prostitutes about use of contraceptive, STDs etc, the study is framed in the domain of subjective paradigm. Interpretive methods and the approaches of hermeneutics are implied here. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), constructivism adopts relativist ontology (relativism), a transactional epistemology, and a hermeneutic, dialectical methodology Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2008:184). So, based on this ground of analysis, this study describes what the causes of prostitution are mentioned by the sex workers. Interviews with those sex workers are analyzed to point out the causes that are sought after. Finally, the interviews of the informants have been supported and further analyzed by the review of documents, reports and data and previous studies on prostitution in Nepal.

## **4.2 Research Method**

There are debates on using methods in the research of social sciences. According to Lazar (1998:8) there are some who are called naturalists, (belonging to objectivist school of thought) and claim that only scientific methods produce knowledge. And there are others, namely interpreters (belonging to subjectivist) who claim that such methods are irrelevant to the subject matter of the social sciences. He further puts that naturalists argue the basic

methodological principles (for instance, modes of explanation) are shared between natural and social sciences, while interpreters emphasize the meaningfulness of social life and the alleged irrelevance of natural scientists' modes of analysis and explanation. The former group focus on quantitative methods but the latter prefer qualitative methods.

However, David Silverman (2006: 36) argues that the value of research method should be gauged solely in relation to what you are trying to find out because both qualitative and quantitative methods do contain uses and abuses. Since, the basic questions of this research are qualitative in nature, qualitative methods have been used in this study.

*Qualitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things.* (Berg and Lune 2012: 3)

According to Berg and Lune (2012: 3) '*qualitative researchers are most interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles and so forth*'.

Given this, the present study can also be referred to as qualitative research as it is meant to explore the reasons behind people's decision to take up prostitution despite the fact that many of them hate it and they know that it is a social taboo and an illegal act in Nepal. This study is also aimed at exploring the level of knowledge of those who are involved in commercial sex works about STDs and about the safety measures that could be and should be applied in such activities. In doing so, the study aims to contribute to construct an understanding of how and why prostitution is taking place even though it is illegal or a social taboo and to what extent it is reliable in the context of Nepal because it is like an open secret for the people that prostitution business is running there.

### **4.3 Research Area and Field**

Prostitution is reported to take place in very many parts of Nepal in different forms. Badi community in western Nepal is, by tradition, taken as sex workers. The women in this community are compelled to follow this trend most often though it seems as their tradition.

Local hotels and motels on the sides of different highways in Nepal are often found to be involved in sex business though they seem to be doing normal hotel business. There are some parts in almost every big city in Nepal where commercial sex trade takes place underground.

However, the field work for this study was mainly carried out in Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. Basically must happening places like thamel and its surrounding area, ring road side were focused in the study. Both the primary and secondary data were used as the major sources of information for this study. The qualitative and some quantitative data have been collected and used in this study.

#### **4.4 My Role as a Researcher**

Guba and Lincoln (1994:111) argue that the investigator with positivist assumption can determine 'how things really are' and 'how things really work' but one with constructivist assumption sees that knowledge is created in interaction among investigator and respondent.

As prostitution is not recognized by law in Nepal, it is not easy to talk about it even with those who are involved in this business. Moreover, people are not open to talk about sex. It is even difficult to talk about condom or other contraceptive in public. But, as this study is aimed to explore such issues, I was trying to find a 'gatekeeper' to lead me to those people who could be interviewed or investigated. To begin the collection of data (interviews) was somewhat problematic in this case because of the sensitivity of the subject matter. But, then I visited the office of WOREC, at Balkumari, Lalitpur (more detail of WOREC on page 42). They helped me to meet the women who were involved in prostitution and were under counselling of WOREC. When I explained them about my purpose, the CSWs were ready to be interviewed, but still hesitating to some extent. They were not easily ready probably because of two reasons. First, they were not confident about secrecy issues. It could be dangerous for them both socially and legally. They could not be certain in the beginning that I was not going to harm them in any ways. Second, they did not want to talk and share the experience of being involved in the commercial sex trade. Their interviews revealed this later.

Chhaya, Sima and Salu were interviewed outside of the WOREC with the help of WOREC. It was totally different experiences while beginning of interview. They projected themselves differently as I was there client. For a moment I was distracted with their gesture like flirting languages, coming closer and pinching. It took little time to make them understand my actual purpose of the visit. Attempts were always made to be non-judgmental, sensitive and respectful to the informants.

Despite the attempts, most of the informants were however dubious about the purpose of the interviews (at least in the beginning). The fact was that many of them were already interviewed several times by other researchers. Moreover, some of them were eager to know the benefit of participating in the interview. It was therefore sometimes difficult to elucidate the informants that the study is purely academic research attempting to give a broader understanding of the prostitution issues and the exploration of their own condition.

When they were confident about the secrecy matters, they were ready to share about their life. I tried not to be prejudiced with any of the interview because I was aware that my expression during the interview would affect a lot in their response. It raised a doubt regarding the reliability and ethical issues related to the study. The voice of positivist researcher is 'disinterested scientist' as informer of decision makers, policy makers, and change agents and of poststructuralist is 'passionate participant' as facilitator of multi-voice reconstruction (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 112).

However, subjective mode of research emphasizes on the interaction of the researcher and the one who is researched. Subjectivity would obviously affect but my relationship with the gatekeeper and the people linked with the gatekeeper helped me to raise meaningful questions in a friendly way so that the informants were less hesitating.

Given the sensitivity of the issue of prostitution it could also be difficult to begin the interview without the support of the key person. Since the key person has been in contact with the informants in many ways, they were comfortable and open towards them and me as well. The

key person has therefore been helpful in establishing trust with the informants. Inquiry aim of post-structuralism is understanding and reconstruction whereas the inquiry aim of positivism is explanation: prediction and control (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 112).

## **4.5 Data Collection**

*'The volume of data that qualitative researchers must manage is enormous'* (Morse and Richards 2002 cited by Berg and Lune 2012: 53)

This study uses both primary and secondary data to explore the experience and perception of commercial sex workers. The primary sources include questionnaire, interview, and key-informants' interviews conducted in those areas. This research work was completed with the help of these primary sources, which are emphasized in the study of commercial sex workers.

While in depth interview has been the main source for primary data, the document search, also has provided secondary data for this study. The following sub sections describe in-depth interviews, introduces briefly the presentation of informants and gatekeepers and shed lights on the secondary sources applied respectively.

### **4.5.1 Interviews**

According to Berg and Lune (2012:114), interview is a very effective method when the researcher is interested in understanding the perceptions of participants or learning how participants come to attach certain meanings to phenomena or events, interviewing is provides a useful means of accesses. For the convenience of studies, overall interviews have been classified into three categories. Silverman agrees with Lesley Noaks and Emma Wincup (2004) that interviews can be classified as structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Open-ended). In the similar way Bruce L categorizes it as standardized, semi-standardized and un-standardized.

Among these categories, open-ended interviews were used in this study as the study is more related to life experiences and the life histories of the informants. Silverman puts that *open-*

*ended interview is as Noaks and Wincup note, commonly used in life history interviews. Silverman (2006:110). In this category of interviews, the researcher can get rich data by actively listening to the interviewees allowing them to talk freely and deeply. According to Silverman (2006:110), the open-ended interviews have four important characteristics. First, it does not require special skill. Second, it is collaboratively produced. Third, the interviewers are also active participants in the interview process. Fourth, it's not based on free style.*

*Bridget Byrne (2004:182) puts "Open-ended and flexible questions are likely to get a more considered response than closed questions and therefore provide better access to interviewee's views, interpretation of events, understanding, experiences and opinions."*

It provides researchers the access to individuals' attitudes, values, interpretation of events and understanding which cannot be necessarily obtained using other methods for instance a formal questionnaire and structured interview (Silverman, 2006). One of the essence of the in- depth interview is to combine structure with flexibility. In addition to this, the in-depth interview is both interactive and generative in nature. As a result the researchers have the opportunity to achieve a depth of answer and to produce new knowledge or thoughts by exploring the participants, feelings, opinions and beliefs (Ritchie and Lewis, 2004).

Silverman (2006:109) argues that '*the "unstructured" or "open-ended" interview is most common in qualitative research*'. This study also relies on the unstructured interviews in order to gain an access to the inner world of the open secret prostitution in Nepal and to explore personal background and feelings in being in such environment.

Altogether nine girls and women who are involved in prostitution in different places in Kathmandu have been interviewed for the purpose of the study. Among these nine informants, three have been working in dance bars as night dancers, two girls working in massage centre, one is a high profile call girl and one owner of a massage center herself. Though the age group of the study has ranged from 17-35 years, the majority of the informants are however in their 20s.

Besides the interviews with the nine informants, two key persons: one running a public dance bar and one a massage center owner were also interviewed. However, the interviews with them

were primarily focused on getting general information about prostitutes and red light market. The area police inspector was assigned to inspect the Thamel area especially in regard to red-light marketing. Interview guides were prepared and followed for both the informants and the key persons.

The interviews were conducted in Nepalese language. The interviews with the informants lasted around one to two hours. At the outset, the informants were asked to tell their past stories and experiences so as to plunge in depth into their inner world. Some informants however took much longer time as they were emotionally disturbed and crying when talking about their past.

During the interview, the participants were also observed on how they talked, how they interacted and how they dressed up with a view to understanding their feelings and perceptions about themselves. Some informants during the interview expressed emotions such as anger and fear helping to understand their perception towards themselves and the society. *Gaining and maintaining trust is very important where one has to ask sensitive questions.* Silverman (2006:110) Furthermore, this observation also contributed to the operationalization of the different elements of social work theory in practice as well as to explore the missing elements in the practice. Tape recorder was used in all the interviews and the field notes were taken of significance. All interviews have been transcribed later in detail. In order to make the transcribing process more reliable, and in some cases the key persons were contacted again to confirm some uncertain points.

## **4.5.2 Brief Presentation of the Key Persons and the Informants:**

### **4.5.2.1 The key Person as ‘Door Opener’**

WOREC Nepal is conducting project call ‘Chhahari’ in purpose of rehabilitating those girls and women who want to move away from the sex business. And this organization is helping in health issue of CSWs. ‘Chhahari’ is also providing STDs diagnosis, recommendations, HIV/AIDs information and counseling for women involving in any type of commercial sexual activities.

WOREC played role as door opener for this study, an opportunity was provided to interact with women who came for counseling, in accordance with their consent. Many women agreed for the participation, some were interviewed in the Counseling Centre and some on the field. Some are not mentioned in this thesis and participation of many women made this work easier.

It was also easy because, I had worked under WOREC as a volunteer in 2005. I had some knowledge about WOREC's involvement in rehabilitating or assessing those victimized women. WOREC agree to help me in gathering information for the study.

#### **4.5.2.2 The Informants**

Nine informants were interviewed for the purpose of this study. To protect the informants' identity, the pennames are used here and each informant is stated as a case. Out of the eleven selected informants, four informants were working in dance bars/cabin restaurant around in Thamel Kathmandu, one works as independent sex worker but seeming to work as street vendor at Ratnapark area, one is working in massager, two of them were college student and one working purely as a 'call girl'. A brief description of informants goes as follows:

##### **The Case of Gita (case one)**

Gita is a 25 year's old divorcee woman from Dang district. Her family background is economically poor and also from so called 'lower cast (Dalit)'. She has been living at Kathmandu since 9 years. She got married when she was 15 years with lower ranked governmental official person. She was housewife and her husband was habitual drunkard and sometimes physically abused her. She entered in this profession through her friend when she started working in cabin restaurant. Despite many difficulties, she was enjoying her job and earned money too.

##### **The Case of Sunita (case two)**

Sunita is an 18 years young girl working in cabin restaurant at Gousala. She comes from Dhading. Her father left her family when she was 12 years. She was helping her mother in households work. She terminates her school for helping family in households work when she was in grade five. Being a member of poor family she wanted to she wanted to find a job.

Finally, she came to Kathmandu with her relatives. She started working in a restaurant as waiter. She sent parts of her income to her family in the village per month. She started sex trade as part time job with the help of working colleague.

**Case of Pavitra (case three)**

Pavitra was only fourteen years old when I met her on a small cabin restaurant; she was from Chitwan district of Nepal. In the beginning she behaved as if she was the receptionist of the restaurant. She said she was the sister of the owner of the restaurant and in a way the owner herself. But, finally she confessed that she was involved in a kind of prostitution in the cabin restaurant. Her job as a receptionist was just to show the good side of the cabin restaurant business. Actually, she had been working as a sex worker for a year i.e. she began it when she was only 13.

She only knows that condoms can protect her from being pregnant. She was suffering from some sexually transmitted diseases. She was not aware about the risk of STDs but contraceptive is not related with her cultural value. Currently she is being treated by Chhahari project of WOREC Nepal. She was scared with the diseases and revealed the desire to leave the profession if she gets any other opportunity.

**Case of Anjali (case four)**

Anjali is 29 years old and she has been working as prostitute for about 10 years. She worked as a street vendor selling fruits near Ratnapark area in center of Kathmandu. She is unmarried from Makwanpur district currently lives in rented room of Thamel. She is informed by the pimp regarding her clients but, alongside she seems to be working in Ratnapark area directly by herself looking for the men at the mean time when she does not have clients through pimp. The rates are fixed in the street and she takes the man to her room for sex. She is very careful about condom and therefore talks about it before dealings are done.

**Case of Phulmaya (case five)**

Phulmaya is a good dancer and she is expert at singing Nepali folk songs. She is only 20 years but a divorcee. She said she was married when she was only 15 years and got divorced after 3 years. Since then she has been working as dancer and singer in a dance Bars & Restaurant. She is from Chitwan but has no good relationship with her family members. As her payment is very low, she involves herself in sex works for some extra money.

**Case of Nirmala (case six)**

Nirmala is from Dhading and she is a married woman. She is 35 and lives in Kathmandu with her daughter. She cannot read and write. She works in a massage centre as a massager. But her work is more of sex worker than of a massager. The owner of the massage centre is also from her own village.

**Case of Salu (case seven)**

Salu is a call girl working in Kathmandu. She came from Dhankuta area, Eastern Nepal. Her father is a drunkard and her mother was unable to earn bread for her big family, and father's behavior made her home always on chaos. She came to Kathmandu with an elder woman from her village. That woman was pimp for high profiled people to arrange girls for sex. She had links with some political leaders, officers, and some very rich people. Salu looks beautiful and attractive lady. As she visits very affluent people, her earning is very high.

**Case of Chhaya (case eight)**

She is 22 years old. She was a student of business and came to Kathmandu from Baglung district, for her higher education. Her parents initially supported her with minimal requirement but could not continue, so she had to start on her own. Consequently, she was introduced with pimps and started to work secretly. She never contacts with client directly and shares that this profession is not what she will continue after completion of her degree. She only prefers to deal with so called high-class people. She never compromises using contraceptive. She is well aware of STDs. Accommodation and education is expensive and she cannot pay for it only with regular part time jobs where the wages is very. She does not mind involving in this kind

of activities because she thinks she can earn comparatively more money in less time. She is able to continue her education from the income.

#### **Case of Sima (case nine)**

Sima is a friend of Chhaya. She is 23 years old and lives with Chhaya (case 8) in Kathmandu. She has finished her bachelor's degree in marketing from Jhapa, her home town. After getting job in noodle Dealer Company she came to Kathmandu. She works full time and works very hard. However, the salary (as she mentions) salary is too low to maintain even her normal expenses. Her supervisor (boss) introduced her with Chhaya, then, she started living with her and shares the same profession as Chhaya. She is aware of STDs and always carries contraceptives herself but, she cannot deny with regular customer or when someone insists offering double rate.

#### **4.5.3 Secondary Data**

My trip for research and data collection to Nepal on December 2011 turned fruitful as I got good opportunity on accessing plenty of materials and reliable sources to observe prostitution and ongoing scenario closely. I was able to collect the literatures on relevant project, several published articles on magazines and newspapers, besides these it was great help through key informants and NGOs personals on analyzing causes of prostitution, working environments along with level of information regarding HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Documents and reports collected and reviewed, published by several local/nation NGOs and international NGOs like UNO (United Nation Organization) are used as reliable sources for the study. Published literature also assisted on knowledge of quantitative data, which was useful for the study.

#### **4.6 Other Issues of Methodology**

Issues of reliability and validity and ethical consideration are other very important aspects of qualitative methods in social science research. They are discussed as follows:

#### **4.6.1 Reliability and Validity of the Research**

Reliability of the data is associated with the extent to which evidence is independent from the researchers and validity with the extent to which the study provides a true picture of reality. Silverman (2006: 283) quotes Marshall and Rossman (1989) as:

*Positivist notions of reliability assume an underlying universe where inquiry could, quite logically, be replicated. This assumption of an unchanging social world is in direct contrast to the qualitative/interpretative assumption that the social world is always changing and the concept of replication is itself problematic.*

These aspects are central to social science research. Researchers of qualitative methods are always expected to maintain satisfactory validity and reliability in one way or another. *By validity, I mean... the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers.* (Hammersley, 1990: 57 cited by Silverman 2006: 289)

To ensure the reliability of this study emphasis has therefore been given to the research method and procedure. This is to say that documents and the articles used in the analysis part of this paper, which are published by national agencies (including government and non-government), have been thoroughly examined. The main method of research of this paper is based on qualitative mode. However some kinds of triangulation of data also have been used where they are necessary. Triangulation often helps to support the analysis as the back bone of data analysis. It is not always easy to generalize the findings of any research in social science but it can be argued that whether and to what extent the findings of this study can be generalized. Though, validity and reliability are not something solid, they are necessary in studies like this. Kirk and Miller (1986: 72) argue that *qualitative researchers can no longer afford to beg the issue of reliability.*

#### **4.6.2 Ethical Consideration of the Research**

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2008:189) argues that *the researcher must understand the basic ethical, ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions of each and be able to engage them in dialogue.*

Research on something illegal issue is unsecured work. If the information leaks, it can have negative impact on the informant's life and it can be a threat to the researcher as well. The issue of research ethics is of great importance as it deals with the issues of research participants' rights and welfare along with the researcher's obligation to the subjects. As Guba puts the inquiry framed in positivism and post-positivism ethics is an important consideration and very serious thing for inquirers, but in the meantime it is extrinsic to the inquiry process itself. Therefore ethical issues are modeled by *professional codes of conduct and human subjects committees*. But as they further put in constructivism ethics is intrinsic (115).

Preserving anonymity and maintaining confidentiality in regard to the subject matter of sexuality is very crucial at least in Nepal where commercial sex is banned, sex education is very limited and sex workers are almost illiterate. So, in this study, too, an informed consent was therefore presented to the informants, explained to them in detail and signed by each informant before the interview. The informants were provided with the opportunity to decide whether to participate in the investigation by disseminating them the information and explanation of the benefits, rights, risks and dangers involved with their participation beforehand. Some of the other girls were not convinced and therefore not interviewed, either.

Most of the informants were hesitating to share their experiences because it could not have any benefit to them directly. They were afraid of speaking in front of the tape recorders because they were still not confident about the security of their activities. It was difficult in the beginning but finally, consent was taken for the use of tape recorder at the beginning of the interview. The ethical issues were also of concern in the process of interviewing as some questions might have led to the feelings of helplessness, low self-esteem, stigma and painful memories by revisiting and discussing their problems. It is also worth mentioning that. The

informants were assured that the interviews about their life stories and their being in such business would not put them at risk of losing their business or putting them in to any kind of insecurity. They were clarified that all the information collected from them was for the purpose of study and it would never have any impact in their present activities of life.

### **4.6.3 Limitation of the Study**

The study is meant to study the environment of commercial sex work in Kathmandu district. Moreover, it covers a limited number of sex workers involved in some limited way of sex work in Kathmandu. The behavior and the back ground of the sex worker may not be the same in different localities.

The studies show that sex work is not such a simple and straight forward phenomena in Nepal. Therefore, it does not represent the situation of the entire country, not even of every kind of sex workers in Kathmandu. In this regard, the findings of this study might not represent the overall trend in the country. The informants interviewed for this purpose were very few of the kinds of women who were involved in commercial sex works. As it is a secret and sensitive business, both the service providers and the customers are not enough exposed. There can be a lot of different scenario about sex work in Kathmandu.

The underground nature of the sex trade in Nepal is one of the main reasons that the information collected about sex business may not reflect on true condition of sex industry. The main limitations of the study can be summarized in the following points.

1. The study is done in a particular area, so it cannot be universalized.
2. The data of commercial sex workers population may not be exact and accurate.
3. The finding is based on the available data and literature in interaction with the information drawn from the informants. However, because of the delicate subject matter, the information may not be entirely accurate.

### **4.6.4 Place of Values**

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994:114) in positivism and post positivism paradigms, values are specifically excluded. And these paradigms are called 'value free'. Values are not

allowed in the process of investigation in this framework. But on the other hand, in critical theory and constructivism, *values have pride of place; they are seen as ineluctable in shaping (in the case of constructivism, creating) inquiry outcomes.*

Many social scientists cannot deny the place of value in any process of investigations in the field of social sciences. Lazar, D. (1998:30) claims *social scientists, whatever their theoretical perspectives are, and individuals with personal characteristic, are situated in a certain class, ethnic group, gender, religious group and live in a particular historical period.* So the latter group of scholars argues that the researcher's personal background does have a lot of implication in the process of research. So, the time of fluid modernity and relativity, values are accepted to have significant role in the research.

#### **4.7 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is a major part of a research work. Though, *'analysis of interview data cannot be completely straightforward or cut and dry'* (Berg and Lune 2012: 154), it is very important to discuss the findings in any research work. Rejecting the notion of the empiricist tradition of social reality as consisting of 'brute data alone' (1994:181-211) Taylor counter poses a conception of 'social reality as characterized by inter-subjective and common meanings. (cited from Lazar, D. (1998: 29) And as this study is in the framework of qualitative paradigm, the main process and procedure applied here is intended to search for patterns and relationships in the data by comparing the informants' stories and experiences. The research findings are supported by analyzing and interpreting what people said in the interview and other normal conversation as well. Different data are also used as to confirm the main idea of the study.

Lazar, D. (1998:30) argues that broadly speaking, researchers belonging to interpret intend to favor qualitative rather than quantitative methods. As she further puts this is because researchers find out people's words providing greater access to their subjective meaning than do statistical trends. As mentioned earlier, thematic analysis and interpretation are employed in this study.

To analyze the data in this study, the guidelines suggested by Strauss (1987, p. 30) (cited by Berg and Lune 2012: 365) have been highly utilized. He has structured the whole process of data analysis broadly in two steps: open coding and axial coding. There are different steps in both of these stages. According to his module, in the first phase the interview data and the informants' information were modeled with the '*set of specific and consistent questions*' (Berg and Lune 2012:365). As he has cautioned to analyze data minutely in the second step of open coding process, all the available data i.e. interview transcriptions, informants' information and collected documents were studied in detail. As Berg and Lune (2012: 366) puts, his third step suggests to '*frequently interrupting the coding to write a theoretical note.*' This step was very useful in this study too. It emphasizes in taking some 'moments to jot down a note about the ideas which may prove useful later in the discussion.'

The 'open coding' is much focused into studying and re-studying of data. Bruce L. argues that 'coding frames' to be used in the second stage. 'The content analysis is accomplished through the use of coding frames'. On this phase, the whole data are investigated and categorized into different categories and sub categories. To be more precise, the processes emerging from the interview guide were categorized into four broad topics for analysis: (i) Understanding prostitution in Nepal, (ii) Exploring the factors leading to prostitution (iii) Legal environment and people's knowledge about it (iv) Knowledge of Sex workers about the use of contraceptives and about HIV/AIDS etc. This coding has helped to reduce the large amount of data contained in the transcripts, field notes and documents in groups and summarizing them under respective categories. What every key person had informed and every informant had said during the interview were read thoroughly, analyzed and compared where necessary to reach the decision about the findings. The first phase of these frames is as Bruce says, similar to what Strauss calls axial coding. It reduced the jumbled-ness of the data so that further consideration of it became easier.

Berg and Lune (2012: 355) reminds us that the data can be studied in to different levels. He mentions two levels of content analysis: manifest and latent content. *Manifest content is comparable to the surface structure present in the message, and latent content is the deep structural meaning conveyed by the message.* This concept is very useful in studying sensitive

phenomena in the society. It helps understand not only what the informant says but also to analyze why he/she says so. It gives the hint that the researcher should not only study the surface level of the physical data but also to analyze the underlying structure behind such responses. What someone says is important in interview but at the same time it is more important to analyze why he/she says so, what it can mean or connote to.

Furthermore, in the process of analyzing the data, Strauss's (1990) concept of 'in vivo codes' and 'sociological constructs' played a good role ( cited by Berg and Lune 2012: 357). As they put, 'in vivo' codes are literal terms used by individuals under investigation, in effect, the terms used by the various actors themselves. For example: when asked how one is, he or she simply says that he or she is fine, even when he or she in a serious trouble. And on the other hand, '*sociological constructs*' are formulated by the analyst (analytic construct)

In the final stage of data analysis, as Bruce presents, the patterns of various categories or sorted out material should be considered in light of relevant literature or theory. So, the material should be linked to theories or other research. And, the detailed explanation of the 'thematic' (categorical) pattern is given to support the finding.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSES FOR ENTERING INTO SEX TRADE**

To understand about the factors that drive the girls and women to commercial sex work, which carry importance in the study because commercial sex work is the grounds for unprotected sexual intercourse which is the root cause of transmission of HIV/AIDS and STDs. The documents were studied again thoroughly and interviews were analyzed in detail. During the interview, the informants revealed many reasons for ending up with sex work. Generally, as sex business is very serious and risky (in the context of Nepal, socially and legally very risky) various kinds of compulsions have been found as the major reasons behind it. Overall issues found about motivating factors can be divided into two categories: push and pull factors. The observation shows that there is always a clear and in most cases, a serious reason behind adopting sex work as a profession. The previous studies about the sex business focused on economic factors for driving the women and girls to this sector. However, the interview revealed that it's not the main reason every time. Economic factors are common in many cases but it is just the manifest level of the society. It is found to be the immediate reason but there are many factors behind it. They are the socio-economic, political and geographical factors etc. Economic factors are the outcomes of these factors. These factors can be divided into 'push' factors and 'pull' factors. Push factors help to or in a sense push the women to prostitution and the other are pull factors which attract them to the sex business. In some cases, there are many factors at the same time that make the process of adopting it almost compulsory. Such factors have been discussed in the following sub topics:

### **5.1 Driving or 'Push' Factors**

While studying the causing factors for involving into prostitution, economic background of the person is obvious. According to Ofreneo and Ofreneo (1998: 104), *the economic motivation is*

*obvious, not only for the sex workers but also for other actors in the sex trade.* They have mentioned a number of studies on prostitution (for example, Moselina, 1981; Wihtol, 1982; Gabriela Commission on Violence against Women, 1987; Mirano et al., 1990; De Dios, 1991; Buklod Centre, 1992; Ofreneo and Ofreneo, 1993; National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, 1995) that highlight a pattern of poverty, unemployment, underemployment and inadequate incomes as ‘push factors’ which drive women into the sex business. Here, all the issues such as poverty, unemployment, underemployment and inadequate income suggest the poor economic condition of those who are pushed to the sex business. It shows that the women from poor economic background are more likely to be driven to this field. When there is no money to feed the family, or no access to basic needs, people obviously think otherwise. Women from villages are relatively poorer and less fortunate to get job in the cities. City life with underemployment or inadequate income compels women to take up the profession of prostitution as an alternative to earn money.

During the interviews with the informants and the conversations with the key persons, most striking reason for adopting sex trade has been found to be “poor economic condition” of the informants. For most of the informants, poverty is the major driving factor that compelled them to accept it as a means of earning money. The interview with Sunita (case 2) revealed the same reason as ‘push factor’. She said –

*My father sometimes used to go Pokhara (big city of Nepal) to work and earn some money but he left us. I have three younger brothers and sister. I am uneducated but my brothers and sisters go to school. As I am the eldest among the children I have the responsibility of helping my parents. So I decided to come to Kathmandu.*

It shows that poor economy seems a reason for Sunita to adopt prostitution. She is determined to help her family putting herself at risk. Her conversation clearly shows that she has left home and come to Kathmandu for earning money. As she says that she tried to find other jobs in Kathmandu. And finally, when the other alternatives did not work, she had to accept it as her profession. She is not educated and therefore also it is difficult to find work in cities.

## *The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

We can see some biased culture in Nepalese societies. In the past, people did not bother about going to school and studying. Slowly the trend came that only the male children were sent to school. And gradually, nowadays most families in Nepal send both daughters and sons to school. But still we can see some prejudices in some places. Some families send sons to private boarding and daughters to public schools thinking that the daughters are later on sent to their husband's home. And it is the sons who take care of the parents in future.

Ofreneo and Ofreneo 1998: 104 mentions that *there has also been significant migration from rural to urban areas or to foreign countries, as women search for better economic opportunities or are deceived or coerced into the sex trade*. She mentioned in the context of Philippine women but it is the trend in Nepal, too. Number of girls and women migrate to the cities from the remote villages in Nepal. Recently, the number of women going to foreign countries is also increasing sharply. Some are deceived by the agents and trafficked to different countries including India. Some women are promised good jobs in golf countries but pushed to sex trades there.

Because of revolting against the family members like in the case of Gita (case 1), women migrate to the cities searching for better future. Gita comes to the cities because she thinks that there are better economic opportunities in the cities and so that she can do something for herself.

In the same question, Gita (case 1) mentions the similar reason for being driven to sex trade. She says: *I decided to do something myself because my husband was drunkard and beat me every day. After getting divorced I came to Kathmandu with the expectation of finding good job and found one in a Cabin Restaurant as a waiter. Now I earn some money from working in the restaurant and also I work as a sex worker when I find a good customer for extra money*.

Gita works as sex worker when she finds reliable customer for extra money. It seems that for her prostitution is not a compulsion. She has a job and it seems that she is not forced by the owner of the restaurant for sex work. She has been left by her husband. She mentioned that she came to find job in Kathmandu. In Nepal, generally the wives are confined to household works such as cooking for the family, raising children, cleaning houses and room etc. while the

husband goes out to do outdoor works and earn for the family. Some women revolt against such rules and go to find work for them. If they are uneducated and unskilled, they have to rely on the job like bar dancers, cabin restaurant waitress or in the massage centers where they are sexually harassed and ultimately driven to prostitution.

For Nirmala (case 6) working as prostitute is a compulsion. She involves herself in sexual activities because she wants to save her job. She works in a massage center. She says:

*I work as a masseur and therefore in most cases I cannot deny the customers when they want to have sex. And moreover I am not educated and have no other job. The owner of the massage Centre does not keep me in the job if I cannot satisfy the clients sexually. For this, she gives me some more money. I need more money because I want to send my daughter to school for good education so that she does not have to suffer like me in her future.*

In the case of Nirmala also, the economic factor is the clear reason. She works as massager because she could not find other jobs. She has to involve in sex work because she does not want to lose that job. She is given extra money for sex trade. But she regrets having that job. When she says that she is earning so that she could provide better education to her daughter, she seems helpless. Her conversation reveals that she is compelled with her circumstances to choose this profession as sex worker. In her case also economic condition worked as push factor and economic benefits work as pull factor. She has a hope that she can have better life when her daughter gets good education.

Anjali (case 4) is involved in this activity for a long time. She is vendor at Ratnapark. She worked through pimps but income is higher when she finds customers on her own. She says:

*No one can abide by the rules of the society or anything when one is starving. They try to get the ways out. And follow any direction. I had to live many days with just a piece of Nepalese traditional bread. I was kicked out of the room because I could not pay the rent in time. I met a girl and talked about my situation. She told me there was nothing wrong in doing so. So I began sex work. But now I think it's not bad.*

The story of Anjali is remarkable. Her conversation reveals that extreme is the main reason for compelling someone to sex trade. Though she says it's not bad, she admits that she considered it very bad sector. She accepted it when she was in extreme condition economically. Poverty and unemployment have played great role in driving women to prostitution in Nepal.

She adds, *besides I do not have proper education, have never gone to school. Then obviously uneducated woman like me is unable to get proper job in this competitive era.*

Phulmaya (case 5) from Chitwan was from a medium class family. Her father is a government official. She has a different explanation of her situation.

*I married a boy against the consent of my parents five years ago. But my husband turned out to be a cheat. He was Nepal Army personnel. After two years, I came to know that he was already married and had two children. I had already bad relationship with my parents and I could not continue living with my husband. I decided to do something on my own. I have to earn money and live on my own. I do not mind doing sex work since but I do not intend to do this kind of job for a long time.*

The economic condition is not the sole cause in this case though it is a major reason. The immediate reason is of course 'economic'. She is not supported by her parents and she has already broken the relation with her husband. She is homeless, and family-less. She is deceived with a 'false marriage'. She says she does not want to continue it for a long time.

## **5.2 Attracting or 'Pull' Factors**

Economic benefits in the sex trade can be considered as the 'pull' factors for sex trade. According to Ofreneo and Ofreneo (1998: 104) "*the push factors interact with other facilitating factors, such as active recruitment by agents and sometimes deception, abduction or 'conditioning rape' by agents serving the sex industry*". In the case above she did not mention how she get in to the sex business but as she says that she entered into it since other options did not work for her. Poverty of the family and unemployment are the immediate causes in the case of Sunita to find prostitution as an easy recruitment. Her sense of obligation to the family also a major reason in this case.

For Salu (case 7) economic benefits are the major pull factor for taking prostitution as a profession. She is satisfied with her work. The pull factor for her also seems like the economic condition of her family. She says, coming to Kathmandu in search of better life. She was promised by a relative woman that she would search a good job for her. But when she found that there was more money in prostitution, her interest shifted in this profession. According to her, she could earn as much as one month's salary of normal other jobs in a day in sex business. It was easy work for her and she does not regret for it. Though she also reported that she agreed to involve in this field because she had no other option she is happy now. She said:

*I had come to Kathmandu with the hope of better life. The woman had promised me to find a good job in some government office. I was introduced to a government official who was interested much about sex and was ready to pay one month's salary for one times sex. So I agreed. I found other similar people who could pay a lot. And slowly it became my profession.*

For Chhaya (case 8) the attraction of easy money in little time is the main pull factor to begin sex work. She is not full time professional sex worker. She utilizes just a little time and earns good money. She says: *Since I am short of money very often, I find sex work a good source of earning. I earn good money even if I spend very little time on it. It does not need any special skill, either.*

The case of Sima is quite similar with the case of Chhaya. She also has the similar opinion. She says: *The need of money is obvious. I have a job but it is not enough for me to run my daily life. I need to send money to my family also. They expect some money from me since I have a job. Sex work is a good and easily available source of earning. It does not need extra time.*

Pavitra (case 3) is only 14 years old teenager girl. And employing herself in sex business. But it is a part of her everyday life now. She works as the receptionist in a cabin restaurant. The cabin restaurant is not like a brothel. But for increasing the number of visitors in the restaurant who wanted to have sex with little girl, she started serving sex as well. She seems unaware about her involvement in sex trade. She does not know about the child prostitution. For Pavitra, working in a restaurant as a receptionist is a proud job. She is young and active earning money.

The restaurant owner pretended he was brother of Pavitra but she mention that he was not her relative.

*My boss does not force me to involve in sex work. But, he always expects me to treat his customers properly and 'in a way' sexually. The customers seem to have increased due to my activities. I am helping my boss in his business. He gives me extra money when I have made his guests happy.*

From the case of Pavitra, we can draw two remarkable points. The first is that she is happy to help her boss because he has helped her by employing her in the restaurant. It seems like voluntary involvement. Second, she is happy because she gets extra money when she performs sexual services to the restaurant guests. In her case, job is important for her as it is a source of money. Economic factors work as a major driver in this case, too. But equally important is the fact that ignorance has been the key component.

The mechanism of sex trade can be analyzed in the light of marketing concept as well. In the market of sex, women and girls are the supply side and men are in the demand side. There should be balance between demand and supply to run the market smoothly. In this sense, we can argue that demand generates the supply. If there is no demand of the 'goods' then the supply has no meaning. In the sex trade, men are the ultimate consumers of the business. They create demand and therefore the business companies of sex trades like brothels, prostitution house and many other semi-brothels manage to supply. In marketing terms, women are the supply goods for sex trade. Men are likely to hunt for women. Their woman seeking nature is the pull factor in sex industries. The more they demand, the more the market supplies. The earning of the prostitutes therefore depends mostly on the demands made for them.

### **5.3 Discussion and Conclusion**

Most of the interviewees informed that poverty is the main driver for them to begin commercial sex work. But directly or indirectly from their interviews and from other documents and articles as well, it is also revealed that poverty is not the only cause for it. The available data gave a good hint that there are many reasons behind it. Some are driven by push

factors and some are motivated by pull factors. There are some who have begun prostitution due to many factors. In other words these factors can be categorized into four broad categories: economic reason, social reason, biological reason and personal reason.

Among the Nepalese sex workers economic factors seem to be the most powerful drivers. There are many reasons for this. More than 40 percent of the population suffers extreme poverty. And nearly 80 percent people live in the village and many of them lack almost every facility such as electricity, drinking water, transportation, health care and education. When the parents are not able to feed their family well then there is pressure among the children to do something. And the option is to go to the cities. Secondly, there is unemployment problem in the cities. And even for those who do not have good education, special skill and good link with the people, finding a job in Nepalese cities is considerably difficult.

Economic condition is more severe with the girls and women. This is also linked with social reason. The girls lose right to her parental property when she gets married. Even before marriage, the right is just to show only. She cannot do anything with the property. She is given food, clothes and probably education. She cannot have the share of the property. And when she gets married, the legal provision is that the one half of the property of her husband belongs to her. But in practice, there is nothing. And when she gets divorce or abandoned by the husband or she herself decides to leave him, she is not provided with that property. The law says she can get, but that is very rare in practice.

Sex work can be biological also. Though commercial sex work is a different phenomenon, the interviews gave some hints that there can be some biological reasons behind it. The interview with a masseur revealed that it is not only the money that drives them to sexual intercourse. It is the work of massage that encourages a lot to involve in sex work. The informants did not say it directly and clearly but there were some hints in their interviews.

Thirdly the personal reason is more related their skill, education, ambition etc. Lack of education is a major problem in finding a job. It does not mean that you are sure to get job once you have degrees. There is a very big number of educated unemployed in Nepal.

## *The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

In the case of Salu, prostitution is a good job. She is earning a lot. Now she has link with affluent class of people. For her, to find a normal job may not be difficult. But she is satisfied with what she is doing. But these kinds of cases are rare in Nepal.

Young women who come to the cities for work or better future end up with the jobs mainly in small restaurants, dance bars, nightclub and in other fields like garment factories, tobacco factories, brick kilns etc. They suffer in two ways there. Those who work in the small restaurant, dance bars, night clubs and massage centers face regular sexual harassment. On one hand their payment is very low and on the other hand they are always forced to do some sexual services to the guests. Similarly, those who work in garment factories, brick kilns and tobacco factories cannot earn enough to live even the poorest life in big cities. They have to earn not only for their living but in many cases have to send money to the family also.

On one hand there are compulsion and pressure of poor economy and on the other, there are lure and attraction of city life and free life. Lim(1998: 207) mentions the case of *Malaysian women as 'lure of easy and plentiful money –coupled with new social norms, the relative anonymity and freedom from familial and village surveillance, growing materialism and the increasing cost of living a more conspicuous lifestyles- provides the motivation for some young female migrants to enter prostitution'*.

As Ofreneo and Ofreneo (1998:104) mentions, a growing sense of materialism, and drastic change in communication sector in Nepalese village people are also some important reasons for people running after money. She mentions that *some Filipino families, dazzled by the appliances and electronic gadgets brought home by overseas workers encourage their daughters to take their chances abroad even if they have to risk selling their bodies* (ibid.) The case is similar in Nepal also. The boys and girls who come back home from foreign countries or the cities use advanced electronic gadgets like advanced mobile phones and many others. The girls and boys who see them are attracted towards the cities and even abroad for experiencing new life style. This trend also has put many in the risk of starting prostitution in the cities.

## *The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

Lim (1998: 3) mentions that three kinds of sex workers can be distinguished in the developing countries: free movers, economically pressurized and deceived by the third parties. According to her some adults choose prostitution freely as their right to sexual liberation. Some adults choose it because they are pressurized by their economic conditions. And there are many who are compelled because they have been sold in brothel or have faced regular violence. In the third category there are women and children who are trafficked to sex trade and subject to exploitation.

There are some scholars who argue that absolute poverty is not the root cause of prostitution. If it were so, there would be no prostitutes in developed and rich countries. And the developing countries should be experiencing the decrease in the number of prostitutes. The case is therefore just opposite in Nepal. Nepal is experiencing economic growth in recent years and literacy rate is also increasing, however, this change is not minimizing prostitution but rather new red light zones are emerging and expanding dramatically. Lim argues that if *absolute poverty was the sole root cause or major context for prostitution, then the sex trade should have declined in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand* (1998: 206).

## **CHAPTER SIX: WORKING ENVIRONMENT OF SEX WORKERS IN KATHMANDU**

As stated before, it is not easy to distinguish the real sex worker from many other women who are involved in sex related sectors like masseur, bar dancer, cabin restaurant waitress. Many of the women who are involved in some other jobs or business are found to be involved in sex work mostly part time. As a result, it is not easy to define the working environment of the sex workers in Nepal. Most women and girls who were involved in commercial sex work were found to be working in other profession. This chapter has been divided into three sub topics: namely working experience of the sex workers, the role of pimps/agents in sex trade and the future plans of the sex workers. These sub topics explain about the related issues in detail.

### **6.1 Working Experience of Sex Workers**

Working experience of the sex workers are structured with the environment of sex trade. The sex workers who were chosen for this study were found in different situations. They do not have same experience. In sex trade of Nepal where there is not a fixed criterion to work, sex workers were not found to be mere sex workers. Almost all of them have different jobs. They do not have any certificate or any registration. They are not easily distinguished as sex workers. So they cannot be called sex worker in spite of the fact that they are involved in the activities part time or full time. For example: among the informants chosen for this study, only one woman, Anjali (case 4) is found to be working as sex worker for full time. However, she also seems to work as a street vendor. Chhaya (case 8) is a university student. Sima (case 9) is a junior accountant in a company. Pavitra (case 3) is a receptionist in a restaurant. Nirmala (case 6) is a masseur. Phulmaya (case 5) works as a dancer and singer in a bar. The interview with the informants here reflects the vague picture of the sex business in Kathmandu.

When the informants were asked how they feel working in sex trade, they replied in many different ways. Among nine informants, three women were found to be happy with what they were doing although two of them were not planning to continue them for a long time. The

young informant Pavitra was not sad, either about working in the sex business. However, four of the informants were not happy with the situation. For them it was their compulsion.

When the above mentioned question was asked to Gita (case 1), she mentioned many difficulties of the sex business. She said:

*There are many kinds of risks. The most serious risk is that if anybody in my home town knows about it, it is better to die than to go back. Secondly there is the risk of police, It is not predictable that when will be arrested. It is not clear whether they want to stop prostitution in the city or get more commission from the sex business by harassing us. Sometimes the policemen in civil dress come as the clients and want to have sex without paying or threaten to arrest us otherwise.*

The interview was helpful in learning different situation of the sex workers and varieties of experiences depending on their situation. Precisely the findings can be summarized as follows:

Sex trade in Nepal is full of risks for those who depend mainly on the sex business for earning. The risk can be social, legal and health related. As reported by Gita, socially the prostitutes are condemned in the context of Nepal. They are discarded in the social gatherings. Stigmatization is very common in the villages. Not only the prostitute but also her family members and relatives are humiliated in the society.

Secondly, there is the risk of police raids. As Gita said, police raids are very confusing in Kathmandu city. There are many who are working very safely. The sex workers are not sure whether police want to stop prostitution or want to increase their commission. Sex workers are more worried due to police harassment than due to the penalty. They seem to be prejudiced because they pretend not to have noticed some of the workers but at the same time arrest others.

Thirdly, there are health risks in the sex business. There are mainly two kinds of health risks as informed by the informants here: the problem of being pregnant and the risks of STDs and HIV/AIDS. Most sex workers are reported to use contraceptives nowadays. But as the documents and surveys show, many of them are not very strict about using them. Moreover,

many of them do not use them properly. As a result, they cannot stop the woman from being pregnant or from having STDs.

Sex trade in Nepal is full of exploitation. Because of the fact that sex trade has not been recognized by the government, no any measures have been applied to improve the sex business. As a result, most of the sex workers are reported to have been exploited. The information provided by the informants and the key persons revealed mainly three kinds of exploitation of the sex workers: namely economic, sexual and emotional.

## **6.2 Role of Pimps/Agents in Sex trade**

Pimps and agents can have two faces. On one side, they seem to be helping the prostitutes or the sex workers by bringing in the clients and providing them the security. In organized sex business, the brothel owners also work as pimps. Pimps are found in different forms. The women traffickers, brothel owners and even the taxi driver and security personnel can work as pimps. In the sex trade, pimps are considered as exploiters as well. They share the money earned by the sex workers. Sometimes they fix the prices on behalf of the sex workers.

To understand the role of pimps in the sex trade in Kathmandu, the informants were asked how they take the role of pimps in their activities. For Pavitra, she does not call her boss 'the pimp'. According to her, he does not intervene in her activities any way. She fixes her rate herself and is not sure whether her clients pay extra to her boss or not. In the case of Nirmala, the massage center owner fixes everything. She has to believe on the rates fixed by the owner. The clients pay to the owner and she gets extra money if her massage includes sex work. Otherwise she has a fixed salary for the service of massage.

The cases of Chhaya and Sima are different. They were helped by the pimps/agents of the sex trade. They were introduced to some of the clients in the beginning. They do not know how much money the agents took from the clients. Now they work as independent workers. They get calls from different people and they deal with them individually. Sometimes they get calls from people referred by those agents but they say that they do not have to pay any money to

their agents. It is probably because the agents ask some money directly from the customers for arranging girls for them.

The case of Salu is also similar to their cases. She was helped in the beginning by her distant relative from her own village. The woman who had promised her of finding jobs introduced to a government official. That was the introduction with sex trade with Salu. Now she also works independently.

However the case of Anjali is different. She relies on the support of the pimps very often. She has a link with many pimps/agents who help her finding the clients. For her, when the customer comes through the link of such pimps or the agents, she has to share certain percent of her earning to them. In other cases, she works independently.

The study here revealed that there is a little intervention of the pimps in the sex business in Kathmandu. Very few of the sex workers rely on them. It can be because there is not a fixed sex industry or the company in Kathmandu.

### **6.3 Future Plans of Sex Workers**

It is found that the future plan of the sex workers in Nepal is not a fixed one. Most of them are not willing to continue the sex business. For those who are not happy in the commercial sex are obviously willing to find some better sector where they can have prestigious life. But, it seems that they are not in the condition to change their sector very easily, because for most of them, finding job in other sector is almost impossible. And even if they find some job, they suspect that the jobs do not pay them enough.

Pavitra (case three) was found to have no idea of her future. She was happy that she had a good job. But, after learning about the risk (social, health related and legal risks) she is now willing to stop the activities of sex work. She wants to find some other jobs like the job of tailor or in the beauty parlor. She wants some help so that she can acquire some skill for finding some works. To learn about the views of the sex workers about their future plans they were asked how long they wanted to continue sex work as their profession.

## *The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

Two of the informants Chhaya and Sima said that they wanted to continue it for other few years.

Chhaya said:

*I am a student and therefore cannot have a full time job right now. Living in Kathmandu is very expensive. So I think I get involved in the commercial sex work for few years. Probably I stop it when I complete my degree and find a good job.*

The answer of Sima (case 9) is similar, too. She is expecting promotion in her job. She wants some increment in her salary. She says that if she is able to fulfill her minimum requirements, she is not willing to continue it.

*I think I will find a good job very soon. I have met many high profiled people through commercial sex. Many of them have promised me to find a good job for me. If I get increased salary from my job or a good job somewhere else that pays me well, I want to stop this.*

For many of the other informants, involvement in sex work is because of serious compulsion. Gita (case 1) and Sunita (case 2) seem to be unknown about their future. When they were asked the aforementioned question, they mentioned all negative sides of the commercial sex work.

Gita says:

*There are the risks of having STDs also. I have to bear high penalty to Police and they behave as if we are not human beings. But the paradox is that they are the most regular clients in the sex market. I do not want to continue this profession but do not know how long I will be in the sex business.*

Sunita (case 2) also seems to be worried due to the risk of pregnancy and disease. Phulmaya (case 5) says she wants to continue it for few years or until she gets other chances to earn money. But the case of Nirmala was wretched. She thinks there was no other option. This is the only option they can rely on. After all they need money. Nirmala is uneducated, therefore hopeless about finding other jobs to earn the bread. Though she was not satisfied with the situation, she was likely to continue it.

In the article about Philippine women, Lim (1998: 17) mentions that a *significant proportion of the sex workers claimed that they wanted to leave the occupation if they could. In the*

*experience of most of the women surveyed, prostitution is one of the most alienated forms of labor. Most of the prostitutes interviewed in the Philippines carried out their job 'with heavy heart', 'felt forced' or 'were conscience-stricken'.*

In the case of Salu above, her income is unbelievably high. She says she could earn the whole month's salary in a day. Though it is not the case always and with everyone, study shows that income in the prostitution sector is not less than working in garment factories, tobacco factories and most of them are illiterate. *"All the country studies confirm that earnings from prostitution are often more than from alternative employment opportunities open to women with no or low levels of education"*(Lim, 1998: 207).

For some women, prostitution provides extra money and it's like a part time job. They can be in other job at the same time. In many of the cases mentioned above, for example the cases of Nirmala (the masseur), Pavitra (the receptionist), Phulmaya (the dancer) and Gita (cabin restaurant waitress,) involvement in sex work is like complimentary to their main job. They are able to handle both of their works at the same time.

## **6.4 Discussion and Conclusion**

Sex trade in Nepal has not been clearly identified. The environment of sex trade therefore has been the environment with semi-organized and non-organized sex businesses. They consist of a range of girls and women from those who work as sex worker only sometimes to those who fully depend on it.

On the basis of the interview, the condition of some call girls is very good. Some of the call girls are educated and aware of health risks and other risks like stigma and legal rules. The girls like Chhaya, Sima and Salu seems happy with the business because they find the sex industry is safe and full of money. They are not worried about their health, about the stigma and about the police. They know how to prevent from being pregnant, or having contacted with STDs. They are earning good money. They have link with high profiled and rich people. They are even not worried about police because they are not found in common areas where prostitution takes place. They do not have link with common pimps or agents. Their clients

## *The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

work as the advertisers for them. And it's topmost secret. Secrecy is maintained because of the prestige of the clients, as well. They cannot be harassed or exploited by the pimps or any agents. They do not worry about the occasional help of the agents because they are well paid and therefore they can easily pay the agents. What is striking about them is their report that they do not want to continue working in the sex industry for a long time. It may be because they are afraid of probable stigmatization, legal risks and social risks. But, to say on the basis of their words, for few of this kind of part time and smart prostitutes, prostitution is a good business.

However, for others who are more vulnerable because of lack of education, family support and serious economic pressures. For them the sex industry is neither safe not easy to earn. As Gita explains the environment of sex trade is too problematic in Nepal. Exploitation is common there. Whether it is a massage center owner, a cabin restaurant owner or a bar manager, they exploit the women workers in many ways. The salary they pay for working in their company as waitress, masseur or dancers is too low. In fact the low salary paid to them is a reason for the women to begin prostitution. Their managers earn money from them in two ways: by paying less to the worker and by getting commission by arranging sex clients. They seem to have accepted to offer sexual service in order to save their job. For example: Pavitra involves herself in sexual activities with the clients because she desired herself as a receptionist in the cabin restaurant. Nirmala the masseur cannot reject to offer sexual service because her job is to provide massage service. Otherwise she is not hired by the owner of the company. She is uneducated and she assumes that she can't do any other work.

In many countries, prostitution is taken as important social factor. It is seen by many but left like un-noticed. It is accepted as an important social phenomenon. But at the same time, it is forgotten that prostitutes are normal women like other. Oen is quoted as: *"When mention is made of a prostitute, a negative 'hooker' image comes to mind," says Rikke Oen, designer of the campaign. The public forgets that prostitutes are also parents, shoppers, voters and tax payers.* (The Nordic Approach, 2011: 55)

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: KNOWLEDGE OF STDs AND HIV/AIDS AMONG CSWs**

As discussed earlier, sexual intercourse can cause to transfer many diseases from one person to other. Sexually transmitted diseases are those which are transmitted to a person if he/she has sex with a person who is already suffering with such diseases. There are many such diseases like gonorrhea, syphilis, different kinds of hepatitis and the most dangerous HIV/AIDS etc. As the name suggests, there is high chance that many of sex workers can have some forms of these diseases since they generally have sex with many people. It can be prevented to a great extent if they are careful with the problem and use the safety measures.

### **7.1 Awareness about STDs and AIDS**

To understand the knowledge factor of STDs, the informants were asked if they knew about STDs. Their answers revealed that many of them did not know about it though they have been using condoms.

Pavitra, the young receptionist of the restaurant says that she does not know anything about it. When she was asked if she has any health problem mentioning many common characteristics of STDs, she said:

*I don't know what they mean. I have never thought about it. But I have some problems like having white water in the vagina and itching there for a few months. I have never gone to check up for it. Maybe there are men doctors. Maybe it will heal itself after sometimes.*

Lim (1998: 19) mentions that a child who has sexual intercourse with a person who is suffering from HIV/AIDS is more likely to have infection than the adult one. She puts the warning of World Health Organization (WHO) about the risk of child prostitution as “*while there is no clear evidence, the growing involvement of children in commercial sex work could have increased the rate of transmission of HIV/AIDS-because of children's increased biological vulnerability to STDs and their lack of power in negotiating safe sexual behavior.*” This warning matches in the case of Pavitra, because she young girl and seems quite vulnerable. She

## *The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

is found in more serious situation that she does not care about those diseases. She does not seem to be careful about the contraceptives and seems unaware of her own health problems. If it is same with other CSWs, then the concerned persons or the authority should act immediately before it gets worse.

Most women and girls who are working as commercial sex workers in Nepal are uneducated and from poor family back ground. The conversation with Pavitra reveals three major problems in the sex trade in Nepal. First, anyone can enter the sex trade. There is no license or registration system and therefore there is no any responsible government authority to monitor regarding health issues, knowledge of contraceptives and regular observation of STDs among CSWs.

Second, talking about sex and sexual disease is a taboo in Nepal. It is not easy even to talk with the doctor openly about sex organs for even treatment. Pavitra, at last revealed that she has some problems, when she was told about the possible risks of having such problems. The girls can talk about it with their very close friends. It is not easy to talk about them in the families and nor with relatives, either.

Third, the clients do not seem to be very careful about it. If the clients were conscious about it, the sex workers would have been more careful. But if everything is Ok with the clients, the service providers do not have to worry unless they themselves feel that the problem is serious.

Anjali (case 4) seems a bit about aware STDs and use of contraceptives. She is much experienced in this field. She has been working as sex worker for nine years. She says:

*I do not know what STDs are but when I have severe problems, then I go to the doctors. Some times in before I tried not to tell about it to anybody. But once it was really serious. I could not even walk properly. Since then, I visit the doctor when I feel I cannot overcome it myself.*

Her conversation reveals that she goes to doctor when she has serious problem. It also shows that she has problems very often. She does not care when she has a little problem. A very serious fact has been revealed here: Sex workers like Anjali are very vulnerable for communicating STDs to the clients because those diseases can be transferred to other people

## *The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

even if they are in the beginning phase of the sickness. She mentioned that she has sexual intercourse with people when she has little health problems. Her conversation reveals that she has it when she is taking medicines sometimes.

While talking about the sex trade in Indonesia, Jones and Sulistyarningsih (1998: 62) put that *historically, many of the legal initiatives to control prostitution were based on concern over the spread of venereal disease. Rates of syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases were very high, and medical treatments were difficult and often unsuccessful.*

They mention that later on different measures were implemented to control the sex industry. The government began programs that examined the physical health of the registered sex workers. The sex workers who were found to be sick with STDs were identified and isolated from sex trade until they were fit again. Programs of routined health check-ups and injection systems were practiced in different times. But to compare this situation to Nepalese context, we find a lot of difficulties. The sex industry is not recognized by the law. So there is no system of licensing or producing health certificates. The sex workers are working underground. Most of the times they avoid even the non-government organization's programs related to their own benefits.

In the case of Anjali above, she can go to doctors if she likes. She can be working as usual if she is not very seriously ill. There is no such rule. She has to spend her own money for every check-up and therefore it is costly as well for her.

For Anjali, going to doctors does not seem to be problematic. She easily said that she could go to doctors. There can be two reasons for that. First, she has been in this sector for many years and she been habituated to explain her problems to the doctors. Second, she is familiar to the doctor or she knows the lady doctor whom she can visit when necessary.

The case of Phulmaya, the bar dancer is similar to the case of Pavitra. She is worried about consulting the doctor in case she has problems. She is new in the sex industry and says that she does not have any such problems. She says:

## *The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

*I want to be careful about it. Some of my friends warned me about the dangers of such diseases and also the risks of AIDS. But I have to do a lot for myself. I don't have any problem till now but I will go to doctor if I have problem. But it's not easy if the doctor is a man then it will be problem to explain for me.*

Problem of talking about sexual diseases or the diseases in sex organs seems equally serious in this case. Phulmaya wants to be careful about such diseases but is not confident about herself. As she mentions, private clinics are very expensive in Nepal. Moreover there are cases, when people cannot rely on public health institutes. But for poor people, there is no alternative. The other problem with those who want consultation about STDs is again the problem of social taboo. It will be more problematic if the women or girls have to show their sex organs to male doctors for examination.

While summarizing the survey of Malaysian sex trade Nagaraj and Yahya (1998: 86) mention that most of the women surveyed had received some information on the health risks related to their work. Some of them had inadequate knowledge. The main source of information for many was the others who were in the same field from earlier times. Here in the case of Phulmaya, she has learned something about the health hazards related to her field from her friends. In the case of Pavitra, she may not have close friends from sex profession because she is quite new in the sex industry and it is not her main job either.

However, for those who can afford private doctors, finding lady doctor is not a problem. They can easily consult with lady doctors. For Salu (case 7), it seems she has no tensions about it.

*I don't worry much about it. I can go to doctor if I have any problem. I have gone to doctors many times because becoming physically fit and ready is very important in this field. More over the clients want us to be in good health. Health problems can be solved easily.*

However, when she was asked about HIV/AIDS, she seemed careless about it, as well. She thinks that she goes to doctor and can cure any disease. And even more serious, she thinks that she is so healthy that she cannot have HIV/AIDS.

## *The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

Sunita (case 2) is completely uneducated but she has heard something about STDs. For Sunita, STDs mean the diseases related to genitals.

She says:

*I think the diseases of the genitals are those diseases which are caused by sexual intercourses. I often have many problems. But sometimes I take medicines and sometimes they disappear themselves.*

It shows that she does not have clear idea about the diseases and therefore she probably does not know how to prevent them. Her conversation reveals that she has a wrong concept about the diseases. She thinks that every sexual intercourse can cause such diseases.

Because of the clear policy of the government, sex workers are found to be suffering and at the mean time working as a medium for STDs to communicate to different people. It is not fair to blame only to the sex workers for this. There are some organized sex service centers in Kathmandu. We can feel the extent of exploitation in them as well, which in turn degrade the health conditions of the workers. Conversation with the bar owner at Thamel revealed that the lady employees in his bar, work also as sex workers. He does not know anything about the health measures of the employees. For him, they should be healthy to be able to work in the bar. There is no health incentive for the workers. Rather, the workers are fired if they are regularly sick or a long time sick.

He said *'they have to be careful about their health. How can I know about them? I give them salary and they have to maintain their health themselves. Or they will be fired from the job.'*

It shows that even in organized and semi organized sex trades, the condition of health is serious. It seems that it will continue unless sex trade is legalized or controlled by the government. Now, neither the girls or women nor the clients can complain anybody. Everybody does the way they like. It seems that many people are benefitted by sex trades. However, it is not safe for anybody due to health risks.

Some owners were concerned about the health condition of their workers. Maintaining good health of the workers is important not only for the workers but also very important for the business. The case of Gita was bit serious. She explained she was experiencing some unusual changes on her body. She had doubt that these symptoms might be of STDs. But she had not been able to go to doctors because of many reasons. She said:

*I am worried at present that I might have a lot of problems which I don't want to know, if the doctor says I have HIV/AIDS then what would I do? I have heard that there is no cure of that disease. I feel now that I have it.*

The same question was asked to Chhaya and Sima as well. Their answer revealed that they are quite aware of health problems. They mentioned that they are quite strict about using contraceptives. And they go to consult the doctor in regular intervals.

In general, the study revealed that most of the sex workers are not aware of STDs. Some of them seem worried about them but they shared that they do not know what to do. Only two of the informants Sima and Chhaya seem confident about the STDs and HIV/AIDS.

## **7.2 Condition of STDs among Sex Workers**

On the basis of the conversation with the informants, we can categorize them into three groups in regard to having STDs. In the first category, there are some of who have numerous such problems. They are in serious conditions. The examples are Gita, Sunita, Anjali and Nirmala. All of the informants of this group are uneducated and have been in the sex industry for many years.

Pavitra is in this category. She is new in the sex industry and does not serve a large number of clients. But she says she has never bought the condoms herself. For her, it depends on the condition of the clients. When she was mentioned the symptoms of many STDs, she revealed that she has some of those problems.

In the third category, there are the informants who have not had any problems so far. They are Chhaya, Sima, Salu and Phulmaya. Chhaya and Sima are educated girls. Phulmaya is high school graduate and Salu is only literate. All of the informants in this category are quite confident that they can be safe from being contacted with the diseases though they are involved in sex activities with many people. They are well aware of these things. For Salu, it's not the matter to worry because she thinks that she can cure them in case she has such problems. She is not worried even about HIV/AIDS.

A number of national and international research shows that women and girls who are involved in commercial sex work suffer many problems such as depression, anxiety, sexual diseases, damage of skeleton, sexual organs and anus, unwanted pregnancy and other physical and psychological damages. The author states that more than 60 per cent of the women in prostitution suffer from post-traumatic anxiety disorder, just like victims of torture and war; more than 80 percent experience serious and repeated violence from johns and pimps. (The Nordic Approach, 2011: 96)

### **7.3 Conclusion and Discussion**

Going deeply through this conversation, the health condition of the sex workers is found to be very serious. The conversation not only showed the condition of their health but also clearly mentioned the reasons behind them. It aroused three major issues regarding not only the STDs but also the overall health condition of the CSWs. First CSWs are vulnerable group for spreading STDs. Second they are in poor condition of their health. Third they cannot have the easy access of health checkups due to two reasons: sensitivity of the case and lack of money.

It is not easy for the government to bring them to the front because they work secretly. They often try to avoid being public.

In the context of Malaysia, Nagaraj and Yahya (1998: 95) state that the existence of the 'underground' sex trade means that there is no effective way to check the health of sex workers, and therefore no means of controlling the spread of disease. This is the case in existence in Nepal. Sex trade is underground and therefore sex workers cannot be monitored properly. In some cases direct monitoring is almost impossible through governmental sector as

*The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

all such activities are conducted underground and is illegal. But, many NGOs have conducted several research and observations within sex trade. Also, providing education regarding STDs, medical assistance, use of contraceptives and preventive measure for STDs are done by NGOs. The researches show that sex trade in Nepal is not safe regarding STDs and HIV/AIDS. It is often linked with criminal activities like smuggling, and drug addiction. Police raids are often meant to control such criminal activities and are related to health hazards. But, such raids seem to be unable to control sex trade in Nepal. They are not able to maintain the health measures in the sex trade.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: USE OF CONTRACEPTIVES**

The interview revealed that the sex workers in Nepal are better aware of using contraceptives now than they were in the past. Only one girl among the nine informants reported that she does not use any kind of contraceptives. Most of the informants reported that they use condoms while performing sexual intercourses. Some of them informed that they are not very strict about using it. Some of them said that the clients are very stubborn about not using condoms. But the problem arises in some cases when they are compelled to avoid it. Many of them know that it is very much necessary but cannot use them because of their clients themselves.

### **8.1 Awareness of Contraceptives among Sex workers**

Because of the increasing concern about the epidemic of AIDS in recent years, people in Nepal have been much aware of using contraceptives in sexual intercourses. The advertisements about the importance of contraceptives are broad casted in TVs and radios. Different NGOs and INGOs are involved in providing awareness to the people. Many people have been worried about HIV/AIDS in present time. Information about HIV/AIDS has been included in school level course book as well. Every time we get information about HIV/AIDS we are informed about contraceptives. Due to such awareness programs, people have been more aware about them nowadays.

During the interview only one of the nine informants said that she has never thought about it herself. Pavitra says:

*I do not keep contraceptives with me. I have never bought it myself. Sometimes, the customers themselves bring condom and use them. I have heard that they are found in hospital, medical but I don't think I can buy them. How can I go and ask for condom myself?*

She is so shy and hesitated to buy condoms. There was the fear of society, a taboo, unseen, untouchable valueless social value which is inside of her mind makes her unable to buy

condom. There are such sex workers also in Nepalese society who perform sexual intercourse with the stranger without using contraceptives. Some of her clients bring condoms themselves and use them. It means that there are some who do not use any while performing sexual intercourse. Being a sex worker, it may be their duty to be equipped with contraceptives. But, Pavitra does not know about it. She says she never bought it though she has been in the sex industry for a year. She is a child and uneducated. It seems that she has no any contact with other prostitutes and has not consulted anybody about. She seems so innocent that she does not know that she is at risk.

Earlier she said that she has some health problems. But she has not consulted any doctor even for health problems. Moreover she says that she cannot buy them. She has problem in asking contraceptives in the shop.

Pavitra (case 3) is a typical child sex worker involved in this study. Her case can be a representative case of other child sex workers in the sex trade. She is quite new in the sex industry and has no link with any other sex workers. In many cases, the co-workers are the source of knowledge about the work.

The conditions of other sex workers are different. Chhaya and Sima (cases 8 and 9 respectively) are well aware about using contraceptives. As they informed, they know the prices of different kinds of condoms and femidoms, where they are found and why they should be used. They are strict about using them and they reported that they have not met any client who would want to avoid using condoms while doing sexual intercourse. It can be because their clients are from high profiled groups.

Gita (case one) says that she keeps condoms with her and uses them when necessary. She knows that condoms are very much necessary. However her conversation revealed that she has to do sexual intercourse some times without using condoms when pimps/clients insist.

## **8.2 Taboos about Contraceptives**

## *The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

When the informants were asked about the use of contraceptives, three major issues were found regarding it. The first was that it is difficult to ask the shopkeeper about contraceptives. Generally in Nepalese societies, people cannot talk about condom or any other contraceptives in public. Anything which is related to sex is taken as a taboo. Even people nod down when they see the advertisements about them in TVs. Condoms are available free of cost in every health-post in Nepal. But, people look around to see if anybody is seeing him or her while picking the condoms.

If a boy goes to medical shop to buy contraceptives and finds the lady shopkeeper there, he usually comes without buying it. And it is similar when the girl finding a male shopkeeper. People cannot talk easily about the STDs. Rather than telling anybody about the problems, they prefer to suffer in most cases. The informants highlighted three things during the interviews. The first is that even though buying condom is not easily socially accepted, the CSWs can manage it. Secondly, CSWs are not allowed to use contraceptives in many cases.

Gita, the waitress in the cabin restaurant reported that she has many problems regarding the use of contraceptives. She says:

*I buy the cheap ones and sometimes get free when I go to local health post. It is not easy to buy because of society, if there is a man in the shop. They may treat differently. But the main problem is that some customers don't want it to be used. I cannot tell them about the diseases, because, then, they suspect about myself and go away. The customers arranged by the pimps are even harder to deal with. They rather try to convince us giving more money. If we do not agree they threaten us to call police or publicize the naked picture or sometimes they threaten us of not giving any money. So we have to do the way they want.*

Her conversation revealed that she keeps condoms with her. She manages to buy the cheap ones or gets some when she goes to local health posts. However she is also afraid of the taboo. It is not easy for the women to buy condoms if there is a man in the shop. It shows that it is still a social taboo. She is also afraid that people may think or treat differently. The problem is that people may guess that she is a prostitute. The other problem with contraceptive is that some of the customers do not want to use them. Instead of using contraceptives they rather try to convince the prostitutes and moreover try their best by promising extra money. She says she

## *The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

cannot tell them anything about the transferable diseases. She does not want to lose the money. She mentioned that the customers who are dealt and fixed by the agents or the pimps are more difficult to deal with. The CSWs have to obey the clients or the pimps.

Sunita's interview revealed some other issues regarding the use of contraceptives. She says:

*I can manage to buy condom. It's not very expensive and we can even get them free in the hospital. The problem is to keep them safely. Where to put them? I don't want my friends know about it. Sometimes police searches in and suspect if they find condoms with us. It is equally terrible when family members or relatives come to visit me. The customers do not bring it with them. We have to manage them ourselves. Some customers are quite stubborn. They try their best to avoid them. We cannot let them go, either. After all money is money.*

The stigma of keeping contraceptives can create problem of distrust. Having condom in some ones pocket should not be crime

Anjali seems to be smart in this case. She says she uses the condoms while performing sexual intercourses. Her conversation reveals that most clients in the sex market in Nepal have become conscious nowadays. It shows that only few of them are stubborn and want to avoid contraceptives. According to her many of them who initially want to avoid it are also convinced finally. She says:

*I use condoms or make my customers use it properly. Now they are quite clever and conscious. There are very few of them who don't want to use them. Most of the times, they are convinced. Mostly I let them go if they are very stubborn.*

One thing very important she states is that she lets the client go without the service if they are very stubborn about avoiding contraceptives.

In the conversation of Nirmala, one more problem has been found. For example: many of the clients do not use the contraceptives properly. They do not care it properly. The fact is that if it is not used properly, it may not perform its task well. Then, there would be no meaning of using it. She says:

## *The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

*I feel shy to ask for condoms in the shops although they are found almost everywhere. It is even harder for a woman. People think differently. Second it's cheap. There are cheap condoms also in the market but they are not of good quality. The clients do not like them. The third problem is that there are some men who still do not want to use them. And there are some who do not use them properly and as a result there is no difference between using them and not using them.*

The other problems she mentioned are almost similar to the problems faced by other informants.

Salu seems to have learnt the value of using condoms after entering into the sex trade. She mentions that except for the comparatively elderly people, using contraceptives is acceptable. She says that her clients are themselves very conscious about them. She does not have to worry much about it. For Salu:

*I have no problem in using contraceptives. Very few, comparatively more elderly people want to avoid using it. For them it's a kind of extra burden. They say they are not well satisfied if they use contraceptives. But for others, it's OK. People have taught me that using condoms is good in many ways. It stops diseases from spreading. Moreover, it prevents us from being pregnant. But I do not care about it so much because I am fit and well.*

Nagaraj and Yahya (1998: 86) note that some of the sex workers were not careful about the use of contraceptives. When they were asked about the reasons, they mentioned two: (1) the customers refused to use the condom. (2) They thought they were in no danger of infection. This was the case of Malaysia, but the trend can be sensed in the reply of Salu above. She says she does not care about it very much in spite of the fact that she knows about its importance.

Though the matters related to sex are all social taboo in Nepal, the concept of people is gradually changing. Among many problems, there are certain changes in regard to use of contraceptives in Nepalese societies. The media and books are spreading knowledge about them. Many NGOs and INGOs are working in the field of STDs and HIV/AIDS.

## *The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

In the recent years, a number of sex workers have become aware of using contraceptives. The knowledge level of the public is also improving. The other informant Phulmaya said:

*I keep condoms with me. I go to next part of the city to buy them because I cannot buy them around my place. I have no time to go to health post for free condom. Moreover, they are not good quality condoms. I am not very strict about using condoms. Sometimes I take some medicines protect from pregnancy. It's terrible if I become pregnant. Abortion pills cost a lot of money. I cannot buy them. I use some medicine to save from being pregnant but I also use condoms or ask the customer to use it. It's very important.*

Phulmaya opines that condoms are good because they help in two ways. First they prevent the users from having sexually communicative diseases. And second, they save the women or girls from being pregnant. Condoms are considered good contraceptives which are commonly used to save from being pregnant. Abortion pills are really very expensive in Nepal and therefore out of common men's access. They are also considered harmful for health.

### **8.3 Availability of Contraceptives**

The common contraceptives such as condoms or femidoms are found in all medical shops, health posts or hospitals and even in some groceries and teashop in Nepal nowadays. They are not very expensive in the context of Nepal. In health posts and public hospitals they are available free of cost. People can take as much as they like. During the interview, almost all the informants agreed that condoms and femidoms are found in almost every medical and provisional store. The informants in this study informed that there is no problem in finding them. They are found in almost every shop. But the girls' even boys feel uncomfortable to pick up condoms from public places. So they used to buy it.

However, as Gita informed in the interview, it is not easy to buy condoms in nearby shops. She said that she generally goes to next part of the city to buy it. She does not want to let the

familiar people know that she involves in prostitution. It is because people generally take notice when somebody buys condoms.

The informants also informed that some of the clients bring condoms themselves. They are well prepared. The other problem mentioned by the informants is that when the police searches and finds condoms with the girls, police harassment begins then. Having condoms in the bag or purse is taken as being involved in prostitution. Probably it is an excuse for many policemen to begin to harass the girls with vulgar and rude words. In fact, carrying condoms is not illegal in Nepal. Anybody can carry it with them. It is not used in normal sexual intercourse between married couple or between girlfriend and boyfriend.

If anybody in the family or in kinship finds unmarried person with condoms, they take it negatively. It is not easily accepted.

In a nutshell, finding condoms is not a problem in Nepal but the problems are sexual taboo, stigmatization and secrecy (problem of keeping them secretly).

#### **8.4 Discussion and Conclusion**

Regarding the issue of use of contraceptives in sex trade, many findings have been sorted out. The interview highlights many of these findings. Precisely, the major points of information can be discussed as follows:

First, talking about the contraceptives has still been taken as a taboo in most Nepalese societies. As a result, people face some problems when they need to buy or sell it. It is mainly because sex is taken as taboo. Even normal sex between married couple is not discussed well in Nepal. Teachers in many schools and campuses find it difficult to talk openly about sex, sexual diseases and the use of contraceptives. Talking in public about these things is often taken as sexual harassment. Or sometimes such talks are intended to harass somebody sexually.

Second, knowingly or unknowingly, use of contraceptive in sex trade has increased dramatically in recent years with some little exceptions. Different surveys have found that most of the sex workers nowadays use contraceptives like femidom or condom while contacting

## *The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

sexually. The sex workers are almost equipped with it in most of the cases. Most of them are aware of HIV/AIDS although many of them do not care about other STDs. The knowledge level of the sex clients is also changing. Except for few people, most others want to use condoms for safety purposes in sexual contacts.

Third, condoms are easily available in Nepalese market though it is taken as a taboo. In recent years, condoms are sold not only in medical shops but also in teashops and groceries as well. There are different varieties of condom in the market with varying rates and qualities. In public hospitals and health posts, condoms are available free. The notice on the board over the condom box rightly says ‘take how much you need...’

Fourth, the sex workers should be provided with intensive awareness programs about the right use of contraceptives. Sex workers are quite vulnerable about suffering from STDs and also about spreading them. They should be given intensive awareness packages so that they are more informed, prepared and skilled in their profession. Though sex trade is criminalized in the context of Nepal, we cannot deny its existence. Such programs are fruitful for not only the sex workers but for all who are linked with sex market.

## **CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This study is an attempt to identify some of the major issues of sex trade in Nepal, mainly, factors driving women to commercial sex trade, their experiences in profession, knowledge of STDs and HIV/AIDS among them and about the use of contraceptives. Based on the open-ended interviews taken with the informants, the study of information found in literature and theories, this study has come up with better understanding of profession. The major findings, along with some recommendations have been summarized in the following sub-topics:

### **9.1 Prostitution as Compulsion**

As discussed earlier in Chapter Five, prostitution in the context of Nepal seems that prostitution is a compulsion for many girls and women but it could be their preference as well. After analyzing the root causes of commercial sex work in Kathmandu, it has been found that most of the respondents are not happy in this profession. Most of the informants, who were involved in this research, are worried about the risks in profession. Some of them knew about risks before entering the sex business and some after being involved. For most of them, it is not their happy choice but as they reported they are there due to different problems and compulsions. The informants were asked to share their experience in sex business. As they shared, there exist a number of risks such as health risks, unwanted pregnancy, stigmatization and police arrests etc. When the informants were asked about their plans of their life, most of them said that they are not willing to be in the profession for a long time. Some of them even wanted to leave profession when they were told about the risk in the sex business. For example: Pavitra desired to move out from the sex business when she was told about the risks of being in the sex trade. Phulmaya said she is involved in the sex business only because she needs more money so that she can do something in her life. For Chhaya, prostitution is her choice for a few years.

The study has identified that ‘economic pressures’ on girls and women is the major reason to compel them to enter the sex business. Almost all of the informants responded that they have begun prostitution due to economic pressures. But as structuralism theory suggests, economic

pressures are just the manifested reasons. They are the surface factors. They suggest that in every activity there is latent structure that shapes our activities. In this light, 'economic pressures' are the outcomes of our social, political and cultural structures. Girls and women are economically biased in Nepalese societies. The system is shaped by patriarchal beliefs and therefore biased towards girls and women.

As commercial sex work in Nepal consists mainly of uneducated and poor girls and women (with few exceptions), the working condition is seriously pitiful. Moreover, lack of clear concepts of the government regarding commercial sex trade, the sex workers can neither expect any help from the government nor raise strong voice against the exploitation going on in the profession as it is illegal.

As mentioned by Ofreneo and Ofreneo economic motivation plays great role in pushing the women towards commercial sex. They agree with many studies (see page 52) which focus on the reasons of economic pressures such as poverty, unemployment, underemployment, inadequate incomes as the compelling factors for them to enter sex business.

Among the nine informants, the economic factor has been found to be common reason behind their entry in to the field in either ways. For example: Sunita is from poor family and not able to afford education, besides she was not able to find decent regular job. Therefore is compelled to enter in commercial sex work to support her family. Gita has also similar problem. Nirmala accepts prostitution because she has to save her job of a masseur. As she informed she has no any other alternative otherwise since, she is uneducated. Anjali said that she began prostitution when she was in extreme economic conditions. Similarly, Phulmaya says she was cheated and abandon by her husband and therefore helpless.

In a book, named *The Nordic Approach*, the author states that:

*“Prostitution is the most serious and systematic exploitation of human beings-primarily women and children-taking place all over the world. Prostitution affects the poor, the sexually abused, the outcasts, and it primarily affects the daughters and sons of the working class and the classless.”(The Nordic Approach 2011: 128)*

This quotation also confirms the contemptible condition of prostitutes in the commercial sex trade. The sex industry is the place where women and children from poorer families are brought to suffer with the dream of being rich. According to the author, it is the most serious and systematic exploitation of human beings.

Ofreneo and Ofreneo's states that the push factors mentioned above interact with pull factors such as easy and plentiful money, easy entrance etc. is quite similar in the context of Nepal. This shows that girls and women are not only compelled but also lured to enter in the sex business. The cases of Salu, Chhaya and Sima are the examples of this kind. Salu is attracted by the lure of easy and high amount of money. But the case of Pavitra seems to be different as she is the victim of unknown ignorance and lack of education beside that she is also from poor family.

It shows that, to prevent the girls and women from being compelled to enter the sex trade does not seem to be easy. There can be some girls who willingly and consciously choose this sector. For them it is alright if their human rights are guaranteed.

First and foremost, has to be recognized by the government and law. They should be clear about what they want to do with it. Recognition of the sex industry makes it easy to identify the scenario of sex business, also the people involved who are more vulnerable towards infection of HIV/AIDS and STD.

Use of contraceptives and awareness of STDs is important, at the same time more important will be demotivating to enter in the sex business can be more fruitful by identifying the causes of involvement in sex business, which bhj might assist to demotivate to enter in this business.

Second, GOs, NGOs and the concerned others should focus on providing awareness to the girls and women against the associated risk in the sex business such as health risk, stigmatization, exploitation and criminality related to sex business.

## **9.2 Sexual Taboos and Safety Measures**

So we cannot deny the fact that prostitution exists in Nepal, with a large number of prostitutes in major cities. The growing number of the commercial sex workers in Kathmandu shows that the number of men using prostitutes is growing as well. Having some kinds of prostitutes in

almost every town or city is an 'open truth' nowadays. In spite of the fact that people take sex as important and a normal activity, they still take it as a 'taboo'. Advertisements are broadcasted in radios and TVs; messages are published in newspapers and the matter is taught even in school level courses. However, the concept of sex as a taboo does not seem to have changed properly.

In the context of Nepal, sexual taboo is found to have played a great role in making the commercial sex work risky. Due to the consideration of sex as a serious taboo, buying of contraceptives is subject of hesitation. In the same way, consulting a doctor for STDs and other diseases related to the genitals is also the matter of hesitation until it gets more severe.

If a person goes to a shop to buy condoms regularly or if he or she buys it in bulk, people begin to suspect about them and stigmatization begins. The fear of probable 'stigmatization' leads commercial sex workers avoiding any kind of publicity whether that is for buying contraceptives or consulting the doctors.

Lack of openness towards sex and use of contraceptives are major issues in context of Nepal. Use of contraceptives is compulsory for CSWs but married couples can also enjoy the advantage of contraceptives like prevention of unplanned pregnancy. Not only CSWs but legal married couple also hesitated to consult doctors regarding STDs.

The concept of people does not change easily. It needs great effort and takes time. The concerned authorities should be much serious in making people aware of it. Media such as newspaper, magazines, radio and TVs can play great roles. To inform people about the right use of contraceptives and cautions of STDs is very important for controlling STDs and HIV/AIDS.

### **9.3 Risk of STDs and Growing Awareness of Contraceptives**

The study shows that awareness about the use of contraceptives is growing in Nepal. Most of the informants who were involved in this research reported to have used condoms in sexual intercourses. But they revealed that most of them are not very strict. They are ready or are compelled to avoid it sometimes. Despite, the fact that they are not very serious about using

contraceptive, their conversation revealed that they use it most of the time. The fact that only one girl among nine girls and women was unaware of condom, shows that sex workers are now more careful about using it.

But, conversation also gave some hints that it is a bit neglected in some cases. Since sexual contact can transmit HIV/AIDS and other fatal STDs, compromising with the clients on avoiding contraceptives is a kind of compromising to risk their own life. However, as some of the informants informed, they are sometimes compelled to avoid it. According to them, the reason behind it is the stubborn nature of the clients. The child prostitute, Pavitra said that she has not been using condoms though she has been working as commercial sex worker for a year and always afraid of being pregnant.

The other striking fact that was discovered is that condoms are not used properly in some cases. In fact, using condoms carelessly is like not using it at all.

It is the fact that sex workers are becoming more aware on using contraceptives; there are many things that make the sex trade much risky in terms of health. The study discovered that contraceptives are widely used in sex works nowadays. The condition has improved much more in comparison to that in recent past. However, lack of regular health checkups of the CSWs makes the profession very risky. It is not easy for the clients to distinguish who is infected with STDs or not. And it is same with the clients as well.

The cases of the informants also revealed the serious condition of the sex trade in Nepal in terms of health. The case of Pavitra is a remarkable example. As Lim (see page 13) puts, children are more likely to have infected. As in the definition of World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, 1996 she has mentioned, they are vulnerable physically, mentally and economically. They can neither raise voice nor have a stand against exploitation and abuse.

In fact, the issue of health is a serious issue for both providers and the receivers of sexual services. Both of the parties should be careful in this regard. As Lim (see page 18) puts, blaming only the sex workers for spreading STDs is not fair. The mistake from one of them harms both of them. Spread of HIV/AIDS and STDs in them is equally risky for other people

*The Spread of HIV/STD among Sex Workers in Nepal: Exploring its Causes*

in the society. So, the problem should be dealt by all in the society including GOs, NGOs and INGOs and social workers. Awareness programs can be useful but we should make sure that such awareness programs have reached to the target groups or not. It can be difficult because the prostitutes prefer to remain hidden and similarly, people who go for CSWs do not expose themselves.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Punekar, S.D. and Rao, K. P. (1967): *A Study of Prostitutes in Bombay*, Bombay: Lalvani Publishing House.
- Bhatta, P. (1993): *Commercial Sex Workers in Kathmandu Valley*, Aids and STDs prevention Network, Valley Research Group, Nepal; Kathmandu.
- Berg, B. L. and Lune, H. (2012): *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (8th edition). Boston, Pearson Education.
- Boonchalaksi, W. and Guest, P. (1998): Prostitution in Thailand. In: Lin Lean Lim (ed.) *The Sex trade: the economic and social bases of prostitution in Southeast Asia*. Geneva: International Labor Office. pp. 130-169.
- Byrne, B. (2004): 'Qualitative Interviewing'. In: C. Seale (ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, (2<sup>nd</sup>edn). London: Sage. Pp. 179-92.
- Clement, E. (2006): Prostitution. In: H. G. Cocks and Matt Houlbrook (Eds.) *Palgrave advances in the modern history of sexuality*. Basingstoke, England, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cohen, E. (1988): *Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism*. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 15, pp. 371-386.
- Cox, T. and Suvedi, B. (1994): *Sexual Networking in five Urban Areas in Nepal*, as assessment, Kathmandu; AIDS/STDs Prevention Network.
- Dangi, G. S. (1994): *"The Badis of West Nepal: A Socio-Economic Context"* *Everest Nepal* 2(2):40-44.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2008): Introduction to Part II 'Paradigms and Perspectives in Contention'. In: Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition, London: Sage Publication. pp 183-190.
- Diana, L. (1985): *The Prostitute and Her Clients: Your pleasure is Her Business*. Illinois, USA, Charles C. Thomas.
- Encyclopedia Britannica: *Macropaedia*, (1973-74), Chicago/London, William Benton Publishers.

Gagnon, J. H. (1968): 'Prostitution', *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, vol. 12, New York, Macmillan and Free Press.

Ghosh S.K. (1996): *The world of prostitute Vol.1*

Goffman, E. (1963): *Stigma: Notes on the management of Spoiled Identity*. Prentice Hall, UK: Englewood Cliffs NJ.

Guba, E. G. and Lincoln Y. S. (1994): Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research. In: Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.): *Handbook of qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications. pp. 105-117

Healy, K. (2005): *Social Work Theories in Context*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jones, W. G., Sulistyaningsih, E. and Hull, T. H. (1998): Prostitution in Indonesia. In: Lin Lean Lim (ed.) *The Sex trade: the economic and social bases of prostitution in Southeast Asia*. Geneva: International Labor Office. pp. 29-66.

Korsvik, T. R. and Sto, A. (Eds.) (2011): *The Nordic Approach*. Translated by Maria Kvilhaug, Hansina Djurhuus and Fazeela Jiwa. Oslo: The Feminist Group Ottar.

Lazar, D. (1998): Selected issues in the philosophy of social science. In: Seale, C. (Ed.) *Researching Society and Culture*, London: Sage, pp7-19.

Lim, L. L. (1998): Child Prostitution. In: Lin Lean Lim (ed.) *The Sex trade: the economic and social bases of prostitution in Southeast Asia*. Geneva: International Labor Office. pp. 170-205.

Lim, L. L. (1998): The Economic and Social Bases of Prostitution in Southeast Asia. In: Lin Lean Lim (ed.) *The Sex trade: the economic and social bases of prostitution in Southeast Asia*. Geneva: International Labor Office. pp. 01-28.

Maiti Nepal (2009): Annual report 2009. Kathmandu: Maiti Nepal.

Available at <http://www.maitinepal.org/resource.php>. (Accessed on 20.04.2014.)

Nagaraj, S. and Yahya, S. R. (1998): Prostitution in Malaysia. In: Lin Lean Lim (ed.) *The Sex trade: the economic and social bases of prostitution in Southeast Asia*. Geneva: International Labor Office. pp. 67-99.

New Era (1996): *Rapid Qualitative Assessment of AIDSCAP Effects on Behavior Change among Commercial Sex Workers and Their Clients*. Kathmandu: Report submitted to AIDS Control and Prevention Project (AIDSCAP)/Family Health International.

New Era (2001): *HIV Behavioral Surveillance of Female Sex Workers and Their Clients in Kathmandu Valley*, Kathmandu.

O'Dea, P. (1993): *Gender Exploitation and Violence: the market in women, girls and sex in Nepal-A Report for UNICEF*. Kathmandu: Printing Support Pvt. Ltd.

Ofreneo, R. E. and Ofreneo, R. P. (1998): Prostitution in Philippines. In: Lin Lean Lim (ed.) *The Sex trade: the economic and social bases of prostitution in Southeast Asia*. Geneva: International Labor Office. Pp. 100-129.

Parajuli, B. K. and Schilling, W. K. (1996): *Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) Study on HIV/AIDS and Sexual Behavior among Students in Pokhara/Nepal*. Kathmandu: International Nepal Fellowship Report.

Polsky, N. (1967): *Hustlers, Beats and Others*. Chicago, Adline.

O'Dea, P. (1993). *Gender Exploitation and Violence: the market in women, girls and sex in Nepal-A Report for UNICEF*. Kathmandu: Printing Support Pvt. Ltd.

Seromena A (2011): *Women Market Participation and Empowerment*. New Delhi, Akansha Publishing House.

Silverman, D. (2006): *Interpreting Qualitative Data: methods for Analyzing Talk, Text and Interaction*. London: Sage Publication.

Truong, T. (1990): *Sex, Money and Morality: Prostitution and Tourism in Southeast Asia*. London. Zed Books Ltd.

UNICEF Nepal, (1992): “*Children and women of Nepal*”, *Situation analysis*

United Nations Development Program, (1994): *Social, Economic and Educational Interventions for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control in Nepal. Kathmandu: Project of the Government of Nepal, Project Document No. NEP/92/026/C/01/31.*

United Nations Economic and Social Council, (1996): *Rights of the child: Question of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, as well as Basic Measures needed for their Eradication: Report on the Working Group on its Second Session. Doc. E/CN.4/1996/101 (New York, United Nations)*

# **Annexes**

## **Annex I Interview Guide**

### **Open-ended Interview guide with Commercial Sex workers**

#### **1. Establishing Rapport**

- ❖ Introducing myself and the objectives of the Interview
- ❖ Securing confidentiality of the interview

#### **2. Personal background of respondent**

- ❖ Name
- ❖ Age
- ❖ Marital status
- ❖ Educational and economic background
- ❖ Age during involvement in the profession

#### **3. Knowledge on Sexually transmitted disease (STDs)**

- ❖ Do they know what is HIV/Aids and STDs? And these are transferable disease.
- ❖ If they know about STDs, and if they do know, were aware of vulnerability of having STDs i.e. HIV/AIDS, Gonorrhoea, Syphilis etc. in the profession and mode of transmission.
- ❖ Were they familiar with prevention of the diseases?
- ❖ If they ever had consult and interacted with the clinical staffs regarding their health despite their profession known to the clinical staffs.

#### **4. Grounds on entering on the profession**

- ❖ What might be major cause to work as commercial sex worker?
- ❖ How were they involved? Were they dragged by others (pimps, friends or relatives) or with their own choice?

- ❖ Is it compulsion or the desire of their own?
- ❖ Is the fast growing income become their attraction or they stay for long in this business because of high income than any other normal profession?

#### **5. Societal profile**

- ❖ What they feel regarding the attitude of the society towards them? Most of them were young girls from 15-25, were they treated equally by the society like other girls with different other professions?
- ❖ How was their relationship with parents and other family members??

#### **6. Connection with pimps**

- ❖ Were they connected with costumers through pimps or they have direct connection with the costumers?
- ❖ Were there any difference on their income if they were with clients through pimps or with their direct contact?

#### **7. Use of contraceptives**

- ❖ Were they aware of contraceptives and advantages of using it?
- ❖ Does the use of contraceptives depends on the likes and dislikes of the clients?
- ❖ If they work through pimps, does pimps force them to have sex without contraceptives and if they don't do pimps provide contraceptives?
- ❖ When costumer offers more money to have sex without contraceptives, do they accept the offer?
- ❖ If they have any cultural value against the use of contraceptives?

## **II. Interview guide with Key persons (NGO's Representatives)**

### **1. Rapport Building**

- ❖ Presenting myself with the purposes of the interview

### **2. General Background of respondents**

- ❖ Name
- ❖ Age
- ❖ Organization

### **3. Over-all information on commercial sex works**

- ❖ What age group of girls are involve in this business?
- ❖ What were their profession before they started commercial sex work?
- ❖ What are the key causes for interring in sex business?
- ❖ How do they began sex work? Who used to be mediator to inter?
- ❖ How is the condition of CSWs in case of STDs and HIV/AIDs?
- ❖ What is the health situation of CSWs? What is the role of NGOs?
- ❖ How do they help in providing information of risk of unprotected sex?

### **4. Rehabilitation activities of the NGOs**

- ❖ How is the working condition of CSWS?
- ❖ How are they helping CSWs to protect from discrimination?
- ❖ What might be the reasons behind entering in sex business? if they have any research on this issue.
- ❖ What agendas do they have to rehabilitated sex workers?
- ❖ How are their organization assisting workers regarding health issues?

- ❖ Does the organization helps with contraceptives and counselling of its importance?
- ❖ What does the organization do against the existed taboos of contraceptives?
- ❖ If they can explain about social status of the workers?
- ❖ Do they think the law of Nepal is enough to protect them, if not why?
- ❖ Have they ever encountered with any types of problems during or for counselling, if there is any please state.
- ❖ Have they (CSWs) been accepted by the family and community regardless their profession? If not, what the NGO do to help.

Do you want to add any more about anything?

**Annex- II: Informed Consent to the interviewee**

**Conversant arrangement for a Master Thesis in Comparative Social Work**

**The spread of HIV/STD among sex workers in Nepal:**

*Exploring Its Causes*

I am a Master student in comparative social work at the Department of Social Science, University of Nordland, Norway. As part of my research I am undertaking a qualitative study on “the spread of HIV/STD among sex workers in Nepal: Exploring its causes”. As a part of the study, I would like to conduct interview with your consent. Furthermore I want to make clear to you that, this is purely academic allied, the material generated will become part of a written Master’s thesis project and will be shared with my supervisor and other academicians of University of Nordland. The project has been subject to review by The Ombudsman for Privacy in Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services. You can withdraw from this research work whenever you feel uncomfortable with the process, also it will remain your choice whether to respond or not to any inquiry without prejudice. On your demand you can be provided to review your interview in final written form and to delete the portion you feel does not reflect requirement of the study. Pseudonyms instead of your real name will be used in the thesis in order to protect your identity.

All the provided information will remain confidential.

With great appreciation, I would like to thank you for your consideration and cooperation.

If you choose for the participation for the interview process for the Master thesis research on described interview, please sign one copy of this form.

Krishna Hari Khadka

Name of Supervisor: Tom Erik, Department of Social Science, 8049, Bodø, Norway

University of Nordland, Department of Social Science

I understand the purpose of this study and wish to participate.

Name:

Signature:

Date and Place:

I would like to thank you for your deliberation of my request. If you choose to participate in the above described interviews, please sign one copy of this form and return it to me.