

Female Sex Workers and Clients

Contexts, Sexual Behaviour and Implications

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This article examines the linkages between contexts and sexual behaviour among two high-risk groups: female sex workers and their clients. Using data gathered from 501 female sex workers and 215 clients, the study reveals a high level of sexual demand from clients, and severe economic pressure on the female sex workers. Contrary to the general belief, clients are from both lower and better off socioeconomic categories; the proportion of married clients is considerable; and one-third of the clients are youth aged 15-24 years. About 50 per cent of clients and sex workers have ever experienced symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases. The article discusses the immediate and long-term implications of the observed contexts and sexual behaviour.

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INTRODUCTION

Though sexuality research in India was, and to a large extent still is, characterised by its focus on high-risk groups, clients of female sex workers (FSWs) remained largely an unresearched group due to the difficulties in data gathering, in effectively implementing interventions, and due to the assumption that the crucial sexual and reproductive health concerns can be addressed by directing interventions at them. There are quite a few studies on the sexual behaviour of the FSWs, conducted in various parts of India. Many of the research studies in the late 1980s and early 1990s were presented at the workshop on 'Sexual Aspects of AIDS/STD Prevention in India' held in 1993 at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), some of which were subsequently published in *The Indian Journal of Social Work* in 1994 (Volume 55, Issue 4). While Khanna, Gurbaxani and Sengupta (2002) provide a bibliography of studies conducted during 1990–2000 and Chandiramani (2002) a review of sexuality research, more recent studies include Bhattacharya (2004) and Jayasree and Parvathy (2004).

In the context of spreading HIV/AIDS, studies focusing on high-risk groups tend to examine the knowledge about HIV/AIDS and condom use, but by and large fail to analyse the relationship between behaviours and contexts and, thus, the long-term implications. The limited research on clients mostly covers relatively easy to access specific groups of clients like 'regular clients' or 'truck drivers' (recent exception is Bhattacharya, 2004). Even then, the focus is largely on the

extent of awareness about AIDS and condom use, without detailed attention to the causes of the existing situation (for example, why awareness is low, or why condom use is low despite having awareness about HIV/AIDS).

The present study views sexual behaviour and its modifications as dependent upon the contexts in which this behaviour occurs; the contexts being social, economic, and demographic and operating at the individual, familial, and community levels. While it is possible to arrive at some generalisations regarding why people visit FSWs, there can be variations across individuals and population groups in the reasons for doing so. Similarly, females might be compelled to enter the profession of sex work due to economic pressure and exploitation. The circumstances under which they enter the profession can have an influence on their sexual behaviour and involvement in other risk behaviours. And, as it is difficult to come out of this profession, modifications in their sexual behaviour would depend on the changes in their demographic and economic status. Another important factor that indirectly contributes to sexual behaviour modification in a pressurised situation is the general attitude (though this has changed a little in the recent years) of people, social scientists and interventionists to view FSWs as 'the' agent of transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

The present paper studies the contexts, sexual behaviour and their implications focusing on two high-risk groups — the FSWs and clients — in Mumbai. It is based on a study, initiated by the Working Group on Sexuality, TISS, to examine various aspects of sexuality among these two high-risk groups.

METHOD

Mumbai has 26 red-light areas (arguably, and the number is increasing) from where FSWs operate, mostly from brothels. Though there are call girls who stay in rented houses or work in dance bars (which were banned recently) some of which also function as pick-up points, their number is proportionately very low when compared to those working from brothels in the red-light areas. The present study was conducted in 2000 in two selected red-light areas in Mumbai: near Lamington Road and near Falkland Road.

Once the areas were selected, the buildings where *dhandra* ('business') is conducted were located, using an area map. A house listing exercise was subsequently undertaken — within each building all flats/rooms were contacted, and the number of sex workers operating from each was ascertained. There were 1,578 sex workers operating from the two areas, with variations across buildings. Out of these 1,578 FSWs, 300 from the Lamington Road area and 201 from Falkland area were selected in such a way that the sample size from each building was proportional to the number of sex workers operating.

It was rather difficult to identify and interview the clients as they are an extremely mobile group and not restricted to a single place. Even if the red-light areas are so designated and people know that sex work happens there, the clients visiting these areas for sex do not generally want others to know about their visit. Added to this, it is practically difficult to distinguish if a particular person seen in the area or seen coming out of a building is a client or not.

During the course of interviews with the FSWs, 30 clients were interviewed. Once the interviews with the FSWs were completed, the research team attempted to contact other clients. This required a change in the timing of the research team's presence to evenings. In some cases the sex workers told the team if a particular person was a client. In a similar manner, pimps also helped in identifying more frequent clients. Of the 215 clients interviewed, 74 per cent were contacted directly, 20 per cent were contacted through pimps, and others were contacted through FSWs. The study used interview schedules to gather information. Additionally, 20 in-depth interviews were conducted with a sub-sample of FSWs and 18 with a sub-sample of clients.

PROFILE OF FEMALE SEX WORKERS

The mean age of selected respondents is close to 30 years (Table 1). This tells us that many of them would soon go out of business; they either have to become brothel-keepers or have to find other avenues for survival. The place of origin of these sex workers suggests that a majority of them are from the southern region of India (54.5 per cent), with a significant proportion from Karnataka (32.7 per cent), followed by Andhra Pradesh (18.6 per cent). About 16 per cent of the selected sex workers are from the neighbouring country of Nepal.

As one would expect, the educational status of sex workers is quite low. What is striking is that only 16 per cent of them are literate, far lower than the literacy rate among females in the country as a whole (64 per cent) and further below the literacy levels of females in the city where they are located. Slightly more than one-fifth of the sex workers interviewed were married at the time of interview. The share of separated or divorced (24 per cent) was higher than that of the currently married.

Only 46 per cent have had births; on an average the number of children ever born is 1 (for all sex workers), thus showing that many of those who ever had birth had two or more births. Some institutions were functioning in these areas where arrangements are made to take care of the children during night. In many cases (about 40 per cent) the child was not staying with the respondent and was taken care of by immediate relatives, mostly in their native villages. In 7 per cent of cases, children were with the respondent and were looked after by her, by the institutions at times, and by other sex workers. In some cases, the children were staying on the streets.

TABLE 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of FSWs

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Number (Per cent)</i>
Current Age (years)	Mean Age = 29.7 years	
	15-17	1 (0.2)
	18-24	60 (12.0)
	25-29	189 (37.7)
	30-34	134 (26.7)
	35-39	72 (14.4)
	40 +	43 (8.6)
	DK*	2(0.4)
Native Place (Region/Country)	North	5 (1.0)
	Central	21 (4.2)
	East	84 (16.8)
	North-East	2 (0.4)
	West	33 (6.6)
	South	273 (54.5)
	Nepal	82 (16.4)
	NR*	1 (0.2)
Education	Literate	17 (3.4)
	Illiterate	418 (83.4)
	Primary	59(11.8)
	Secondary	7 (1.4)
Marital Status	Married	110 (22.0)
	Never married	222 (44.3)
	Divorced	13 (2.6)
	Separated	106 (21.2)
	Widowed	50 (10.0)
N		501 (100)

Note: * DK = Don't know; NR = No Response

The mean age at entering sex work is 21 years; comparing this with their current age shows that on an average, they have been in this profession for 8.8 years. The mean number of years stayed in Mumbai is 8.9 years; this compared with the 8.8 years in the profession tells that many of the sex workers came to the city and entered the profession soon after. While 4.4 per cent entered this job before they completed 14 years, the proportion of those entered as child sex workers (below 18 years) is 17 per cent. This indicates the possibility that some of the younger respondents in the present study could have over-stated their current age and that child prostitution could still be prevalent.

A direct question as to what is the most important reason for joining this profession produced a range of situations that coerce women to enter sex work. The original responses gave 36 wide-ranging reasons. In many instances (21 per cent) the husband or lover had a key role in compelling the woman to take up this profession. Though a majority of them stated inadequacy of family income, only 32.3 per cent reported this as the main

reason for entering to this profession. More than one-third said that they came on their own will — either they ran away or came with friends who were acquainted with the red light area and the profession.

As economic reasons have a significant bearing on forcing many women to enter into sex work, they were asked about previous occupational status. About one-fifth of them were not working, and a majority (45 per cent) was agricultural labourers. Other occupations reported are family-based business, domestic work, and semi-skilled work, making it clear that these women were earning only meagre income before entering sex work.

Since many of the sex workers are illiterate and have experience only as agricultural labourer or as unskilled worker, if they are ever to be rehabilitated, some skills would come handy. This is especially important for the older sex workers whose income would decrease in the future. However, in 93 per cent of the cases, the respondents did not have any special skills that might enable them to gain alternative employment. Only 6.8 per cent (34 respondents) reported as having some skill; most cited tailoring as the skill they possess (25 out of 34 respondents).

Currently, the average daily income of the sex workers is Rupees 137/-. However, this average masks the fact that 15 per cent of them get less than Rupees 50/- a day (Table 2). Also, about half of the sex workers earn less than Rupees 100/- a day, indicating that for most of them the expectation to earn more money after joining the profession has not been fulfilled. On an average, the FSWs work (or are at least available for work) for 25 days in a month. The number of working days when multiplied by the average daily income could provide an approximation of the average monthly income. The classification of income into broad categories was based on the per capita income in India used to define poverty line in 2000. The average monthly income works out to Rupees 3,099/-. Close to 15 per cent of the sex workers earn a monthly income, which is less than the all India average and 12 per cent of them earn lower than even half of the national average. Even then, the fact that 85 per cent of the FSWs earn a monthly income higher than the national average indicates the potential contribution of this factor in attracting poor women to this profession.

More than half of the sex workers pay a share of their daily earning to the brothel-keeper as rent and for food. Some of them pay a fixed monthly rent of Rupees 450/- (or Rupees 15 per day) or more and pay additional for food. However, our interaction with some of the brothel-keepers and observations at the brothels showed that, in many cases, there is a common kitchen and food is prepared with assistance from all the inmates without hampering their work and the total expense is shared. In others, the inmates independently occupy one portion of the brothel for which they pay monthly or daily rent and make individual arrangements for food.

TABLE 2: Current Economic Status of Selected FSWs

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Number (Per cent)</i>
Daily Income (in Rupees)	Mean income 137	
	<50	74 (14.8)
	51-100	181 (36.1)
	101-200	142 (28.3)
	201+	48 (9.6)
	NR	56 (11.2)
Average Monthly Income (In Rupees)	Mean 3,099	
	<513	58(11.6)
	514-1025	15 (3.0)
	1,026-2,050	92 (18.4)
	2,051-3,500	156(31.1)
	3,501-5,000	102(20.4)
	5,001+	73 (14.6)
	NR	5 (1.0)
Housing Status	On fixed rent	195 (38.9)
	Paying share of daily earning	276 (55.1)
	No rent	27 (5.4)
	NR	3 (0.6)
N		501 (100)

Note: NR = No response

WHO ARE THE CLIENTS?

The average age of clients is 28.5 years, one year less than that of FSWs (Table 3). While a majority of clients are above 18 years, about 6 per cent of them are in the age group of 15-19 years and 33 per cent (about one-third) are youth as per the international definition of youth (15–24 years). As compared to the proportion of youth in the population (which is about 20 per cent), this share is much higher.

The literacy status of the clients (82 per cent) is far better than FSWs, and also when compared to the national and state averages. That more than 45 per cent of the clients have completed at least secondary level of education belies the widely-held belief that those who visit red-light areas are people from low social status; more than 10 per cent of the clients have completed graduation or above. One-third of the selected clients are from Mumbai and another 60 per cent are usual residents of Mumbai for at least one year. This is also against the general belief that a considerable section of the clients are from visitors to the city. A more recent study in Pune (Bhattacharya, 2004) also observed that 83 out of the 100 clients interviewed were usual residents of the city itself.

TABLE 3: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Clients

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Number (Per cent)</i>
Age (years)	Mean Age = 28.5 years	
	15-19	12 (5.6)
	20-24	58 (27.0)
	25-29	63 (29.3)
	30-34	40 (18.6)
	35-39	6 (7.4)
	40-44	6(7.4)
	45+	10 (4.7)
Educational Status	Illiterate	39 (18.1)
	Below Primary	6 (2.8)
	Primary	38 (17.7)
	Middle	32 (14.9)
	Secondary	52 (24.2)
	Higher Secondary	25 (11.6)
	Graduate & above	23 (10.7)
Years Spent in Mumbai	Native	71 (33.0)
	Visitors	15 (7.0)
	1-2 years	43 (20.0)
	3-4 years	21 (9.8)
	5-9 years	29 (13.5)
	10 + years	36 (16.7)
Marital Status	Married	93 (43.3)
	Unmarried	113(52.6)
	Separated/Divorced	54 (1.9)
	Widower	5 (2.2)
Wife Currently Staying with the Respondent	NA.	113 (52.6)
	Yes	45 (20.9)
	No	57 (26.5)
Family Type	Nuclear	96 (44.7)
	Joint	107 (49.8)
	Extended Nuclear	12 (5.6)
Total Number of Family Members	Mean Number = 5.1	
	1	5 (2.3)
	2	14 (6.5)
	3	19 (8.8)
	4	34 (15.8)
	5	73 (34.0)
	6	40 (18.6)
	7+	30 (14.1)
N		215 (100)

Contrary to the widely-held view that visitors to brothels are generally unmarried males, the present study shows that a significant proportion of the clients are currently married. While 53 per cent of the clients are unmarried, the share of currently married is 43 per cent,

TABLE 4: Economic Status of Selected Clients

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Number (Per cent)</i>
Occupation	Business	18 (8.4)
	Petty Business	22 (10.2)
	Drivers (Rickshaw/Taxi/Bus/Truck)	28 (13.0)
	Unskilled Labourer	37 (17.2)
	Semi-Skilled Labourer	12 (5.6)
	Skilled Labourer	31 (14.4)
	Student	12 (5.6)
	Private/Govt. Service	52 (24.2)
	Unemployed	3 (1.4)
Monthly Individual Income (In Rupees)	Mean income = 3,655	
	No Income	15 (7.0)
	<513	1 (0.5)
	514-1,025	10 (4.7)
	1,026-2,050	40 (18.6)
	2,051-3,500	72 (33.5)
	3,501-5,000	39(18.1)
	5,001-8,000	24(11.2)
	8,001+	13 (16.0)
	NR	1 (0.5)
Number of Dependent Family Members	Mean number = 2	
	0	80 (37.2)
	1	16 (7.4)
	2	40 (18.6)
	3	14 (6.5)
	4	38 (17.7)
	5 +	27 (12.6)
Monthly Family Income (in Rupees)	Mean income = 7,474	
	<2,600	27 (12.6)
	2,601-5000	71 (33.0)
	5,001-8,000	45 (20.9)
	8,001-12,000	31 (14.4)
	2,001-18,000	12 (5.6)
	18,001+	14 (6.5)
NR	15 (7.0)	
N		215 (100)

Note: NR = No response.

with the remaining 4 per cent being widowed, divorced or separated. Those who are currently married were asked if their wives are staying with them. Among the married clients (93), in 57 cases (61 per cent), the wife is not staying with them. In other words, about 40 per cent of the married clients usually stay with their wife and also visit brothels. Clients have an average of five members in the family; and the distribution of clients, according to the number of family members, indicates that many clients are from joint or extended families.

Availability of money and the type of work one does also could influence the decision to visit sex workers. The clients are from a variety of occupational backgrounds (Table 4). While over one-fifth of them are unskilled or semi-skilled labourers, 13 per cent are drivers and another 6 per cent are other skilled labourers. Ten per cent are engaged in small business, 8 per cent are in medium or large business, and about a quarter of them are in government or private service. Students account for about 6 per cent of clients, whereas 1.5 per cent are unemployed young people.

The distribution of clients by education and occupation show that sex seeking in red-light areas is not an activity confined to the lower socioeconomic strata. This is further evident from the income pattern. Income is classified as it was done for the FSWs; the average monthly income (individual) is Rupees 3,655 — higher than the average income observed for the sex workers. However, the average monthly family income is more than double the individual income (Rupees 7,474), indicating that there are, in general, other sources of income in the family. Five percent of the clients live below the poverty line, while majority are in the lower middle income group. On an average, the clients have more than two family members depending economically upon them whereas more than 30 per cent of clients have four or more family members depending upon them.

SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

The average age at first sexual intercourse among the FSWs is 18.8 years with 11 per cent having had first sex before 14 years and another 21 per cent between 15-17 years. In their current profession as sex workers, vaginal intercourse is the most frequent sexual act, 23 per cent engage in oral sex at times, 1.4 per cent in anal sex and 2.2 per cent had experienced violent forms of sexual behaviour (Table 5).

Clients demand for various types of sexual activities, frequently resulting in FSWs losing clients if they refuse to engage in the sexual acts demanded. As evident, 94 per cent of the FSWs reported that at times clients requested for oral sex and 88 per cent reported demand for anal sex. This would mean that when faced with severe competition and economic pressure, FSWs might be compelled to engage in these sexual acts, in order to avoid starvation.

TABLE 5: Sexual Behaviour of FSWs and Demand from Clients*

<i>Type of Sexual Act</i>	<i>Number engaged in as reported by FSWs (Percent)</i>	<i>Number of clients demanding as reported by FSWs (Percent)</i>
Sexual Intercourse		
Always/Sometimes	485 (96.8)	481 (96.0)
Never	14 (2.8)	16 (3.2)
Oral Sex		
Sometimes	114 (22.8)	468(93.4)
Never	385 (76.8)	29 (5.80)
Anal Sex		
Sometimes	7 (1.4)	439 (87.6)
Never	492 (98.2)	58(11.6)

Note: * The total percentage does not add up to 100 since no responses are not shown.

Such competitions and modifications in sexual behaviour can have implications for condom use (Anil Kumar, 2004). Most of the FSWs said that their clients used condoms regularly (99 per cent); many of them (31 per cent) said that they would refuse a client if he were not willing to use condom. However, this information from the quantitative data is significantly different from that reported in the in-depth discussions. Some of the FSWs told that they cannot afford to lose a client as they have to wait for days to get one. This unavailability of clients has resulted in many of the FSWs become willing to engage in any sexual act the client may ask for, even if they are aware of the danger. This possibility may also be observed from the fact that 44 per cent of the FSWs we interviewed did not get any client on the day prior to our interview.

The likelihood of some clients becoming frequent visitors made the researchers focus on 'frequent clients' as a group. In our study, only 14 per cent of the FSWs said that they had regular clients; in 7.4 per cent cases the FSWs had more than one regular client. Our observation and interactions show that many of the persons residing and working in the nearby locations are clients of the FSWs. Our discussions with some of them did reveal inconsistent condom use. Using condom is seen as an obstacle to pleasure. Even though most of such clients we interacted were aware of AIDS and STDs in general, there was an almost universal hesitation to use condoms. Being frequent clients, the FSWs also do not insist on condom use. As one of them who claimed to be a frequent client to more than one FSW said, 'contracting STD would depend on *mansthithi* (by which he meant how pure one mentally is)' that is, 'the chance of contracting STD depends on *ManaSTD* (*Manasthithi*)'.

The number of clients available per day (average per day is 2.3 and average on the previous day was 1.8) and the number of FSWs having

regular clients indicates the possible extent of sexual network. When one understands that 43 per cent of the clients are currently married, the chance of transmitting diseases if engaged in unprotected sex is immediately evident. This is particularly important as many of the clients said that they do not use condoms with their wives. As it is, though condom as a contraceptive is very popular in India, its use in marital relations is very low at 3 per cent. There is no reason to expect that clients of FSWs are very different in the extent of awareness. Regarding unmarried clients, the possibility of unprotected sex with FSWs can have grave implications on sexual and reproductive health for themselves and future spouses.

The clients covered in the present study were largely, not new to visiting FSWs (Table 6). Only 15 per cent said that it is their first visit, while 72 per cent said that they visited FSWs often or quite often. Mean age at first brothel visit is 24 years; in 8 per cent, the age at first visit is less than 18 years; and in 36 per cent cases, the age at first visit is less than 21 years. Age at first visit is between 15 and 24 years in 58.6 per cent cases. This fact deserves serious attention and underlines the importance of focussing the sex education programmes on young people.

TABLE 6: Brothel Visit and Sexual Behaviour of Clients

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Number (Per cent)</i>
Age at First Visit (in years)	Mean age = 24.1	
	13-17	17 (7.9)
	18-21	61 (28.4)
	22-24	48 (22.3)
	25-29	57 (26.5)
	Above 30	32 (14.9)
Frequency of Visit	First visit	32 (14.9)
	Often	35 (16.3)
	Quite often	120 (55.8)
	Rarely	28 (13.0)
Main Reason for Visiting Brothel	For enjoyment	113(52.6)
	To relieve mental tension	10 (10.2)
	Has become a habit	20 (9.3)
	Sexual dissatisfaction with wife	5 (2.3)
	Emotional Attachment with a FSW	13 (6.0)
	Lack of Privacy at home	3(1.4)
	Wife not around	38 (17.7)
	No response	1 (0.5)
Type of Sex with Sex Workers	Vaginal	193 (89.8)
	Combination of various sex acts	22 (10.2)
N		215 (100)

As people from both poor and better off socioeconomic status are clients of FSWs, simply aiming all awareness providing efforts at the poor (on the presumption that the poor are more vulnerable) would not suffice to counter the implications of frequent brothel visits and the possible engagement in unprotected sex. While one may expect the level of awareness among the better educated and the economically forward youth to be greater, evidence indicates that possession of knowledge need not always automatically translate into non-involvement in risk behaviours, especially for the youth.

The most frequently cited reason for brothel visit is 'for enjoyment' followed by 'absence of wife' and to 'relieve mental tension'. Whereas 9 per cent said that visiting brothel frequently had become a habit, 6 per cent gave emotional attachment to an FSW as the main reason for visit. Though sexual dissatisfaction in marital relation is believed to be a major reason for married persons to seek extramarital sex, this study shows that it is not so; only 2.3 per cent of the clients (or 5.4 per cent of the married clients) stated this as the major reason for seeking sex from FSWs.

The sexual behaviour pattern of clients, reported by them, deviates from their demand pattern given by FSWs (compare Table 5 with Table 6). While the responses from FSWs indicated high demand for oral and anal sex by clients, the actual involvement, as reported by clients, is low. However, there can be under-reporting as clients could be unwilling to accept their engagement in 'pervert' sexual acts.

IMPLICATIONS

In the present study, 52 per cent of the selected FSWs and close to 50 per cent of the clients said that they have ever experienced at least one STD symptom. About 16 per cent of the FSWs reported as having had at least one abortion; of those who have had an abortion, 51 per cent had terminated the pregnancy after three months were completed. The proportion of delayed abortions is higher for subsequent pregnancies; and of the 20 FSWs, who had a second abortion, 15 (or 75 per cent) had aborted the pregnancy after the first trimester.

Some of the points made in the earlier sections need to be reiterated in order to highlight their implications and for identifying priority groups and areas. About half of the FSWs are above 30 years of age showing that they would find it increasingly difficult to get clients. This points to the urgent need to initiate rehabilitation efforts which should begin with imparting some skills to them that would enable them to obtain an alternative employment. During our field work we observed that some of the FSWs died. According to other FSWs, pimps and nearby shop owners, most of them had contracted HIV/AIDS. Clearly, this shows the need for compulsory HIV tests and additional efforts for care and rehabilitation of affected FSWs and their children.

This study also shows that the extent of international trafficking is high; 16 per cent of the sample FSWs are from Nepal. Internal trafficking is also high as seen from the reported reasons for entering into this profession. Unless the efforts of many international organisations, including the United Nations and the government are further strengthened, the forces of globalisation that induce migration and aggravates marginalisation may result in an increased extent of both internal and international trafficking. Though our question regarding current age showed only one FSW as below 18 years, the query on the age at entry into the profession revealed that 44 percent entered into sex work when they were below 18 years. This indirect observation indicates the possibility of over-reporting of current age in some cases of the younger sex workers and, thus, the chances of the existence of child prostitution.

Though the overall average number of children per FSW is 1, and if we consider only the married sex workers, data shows that they have, on an average, two children. The arrangement for child care is still inadequate and there is substantial chance for many of the girl children ending up in the same profession. Interventions are urgently needed not only for the immediate care (like night shelters for children, while their mothers are at work), but also for development of the children in a healthy atmosphere.

As other researches have also observed, economic reasons and desertion by lover or husband continues to be major factors compelling women to involuntarily enter into the sex trade. Another important reason cited by a majority of female sex workers is to 'enjoy life and make money; and this requires serious attention of interventionists. The information explosion during the last few years, including increasing access to the Internet and mobile phones particularly to the youngsters of both urban and rural areas of India, has had impact on their attitude towards life and lifestyles. 'Making money and enjoying life' is becoming more and more a prime concern of many young people. The desire to enjoy luxuries may lure more youngsters into sex work, through the *modus operandi* may be substantially different from what we see in red light areas.

Among the clients, 33 per cent are from the youth age group 15-24 years; this is far higher than their proportion in the total population (about 20 per cent). A large proportion of younger clients are outside the formal education system, while most of the interventions directed at youth address those who are still with the education system. The findings also show that the proportion of clients from the better off socioeconomic strata is considerable, contrary to the widely held notion.

Thus, it is imperative to extend the current interventions to address the issues related to the sexuality of those from middle and upper class backgrounds, with a special focus on young people. Similar is the finding that 43 per cent of the selected clients are currently married;

this also belies the belief that mostly those visit the FSWs are unmarried or divorced/widowed males. Among the married clients, 39 per cent are currently staying with their wife. This points to the possible sexual networks among the diverse groups of clients and has implications for contracting diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

Interventions since the 1990s have succeeded in significantly improving the extent of condom use by clients, but in many cases at the insistence of the FSW. Not many client-based innovative strategies are designed to address the issues in condom use because clients, as a group, remain largely inaccessible. Research studies, as well as interventions, still focus mainly on the FSWs putting them under severe pressure, forcing them to choose between survival of two kinds — 'survival without food' and 'survival without STD'.

While clients, as a group, was largely ignored in interventions, attempts were made to target specific groups like 'frequent clients'. In the present study though only 14 per cent of sex workers reported having frequent clients, the brothel visit pattern of clients shows that 56 per cent visited the brothel 'quite often' and another 16 per cent 'often' visited brothels. This shows that a majority of clients are frequent visitors to brothels, though not a frequent visitor to the same FSW. Thus, 'frequent clients', as a group, exist in Mumbai city and focused interventions targeting this group are required to address sexuality issues, including regular use of condom.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The research reported in this paper was funded by the Centre for Health Studies, at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, through a grant from the Ford Foundation.

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