CHAPTER - III METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem

Objectives

Concepts Defined
- Sex Worker
- Socio - psychological analysis
- Behaviour pattern
- Out Reach Workers
- Community Health Workers

Method of study

Study area

Interventional Agencies

Sampling design

Pilot Study

Interview Schedule

Focus Group Discussion

Case study

Data sources

Data Collection

Statistical Analysis

Limitations of the study
METHODOLOGY

The present study is designed to investigate the socio-psychological perspectives, behavior pattern and problems of the rural sex workers. The investigation is basically an explorative research applying the survey method to understand the socio-economic conditions and to suggest the welfare measures for the rural sex workers. The problem for the study, its objectives, and methodology are explained in this chapter. In addition to this, a brief account of the activities of the interventional agencies working for the welfare of the sex workers in the study area is provided.

Statement of the Problem

Tamil Nadu is known for its traditions and culture. Monogamy is the prominent way of social life in the rural areas and is mostly centered around the family system, deviance in any form is not tolerated and even severely dealt with. The researcher who is born and brought up in a rural background is basically a political science graduate. He joined Mother Saradadevi Social Service Society and worked in the HIV/AIDS prevention programs in the rural areas. This experience induced him to pursue a study on the rural sex workers, the major risk group for the spread of HIV/AIDS in Tamil Nadu. The study attempts to portray the psycho-social characteristics
and problems of the rural women practicing sex work in the national highway from Dindigul to Coimbatore. The nearby villages have been drastically affected by severe draught and are poverty stricken. This has made the rural women to migrate to the nearby towns such as Dindigul, Oddanchatram, Palani, Pollachi and Coimbatore and indulge in sex trade. Besides, the psycho-social characteristics, causative factors and the behaviour patterns have been examined in the present study. The study also investigates the problems of the rural sex workers particularly with reference to health care, life pattern, family relations and education of their children. Both, qualitative and quantitative analysis have been carried out. Welfare strategies for the rural sex workers have also been discussed based on the research findings. The study is entitled “Socio - psychological analysis of behavior pattern and problems of rural sex workers”.

Objectives

The main objectives of the present study are the following:

- to profile the socio economic conditions and problems of rural sex workers
- to identify the reasons and factors promoting sex work among the rural women
- to analyze the sexual behavior and practices of the rural sex workers
- to examine the role and efforts of governmental and non-governmental
- organizations to reduce the problems of sex workers and rehabilitate the
  victims and
- to suggest intervention strategies and policy to protect the rural women
  from sexual exploitation

Concepts Defined

Sex Worker

Sex work among the women has been in existence since time immemorial. Societies sanctified the deviance among women religiously, culturally and socially. A by-product of feudalistic system, the sociologists explained prostitution as an age-old profession created out of economic compulsion or sexual gratification. Women were used as entertainers and subjected to sexual violence and enslavement. Even in the name of God, the system prevailed in many parts of India leaving the women living in subjugation and suffering in silence. The prostitution is the worst form of human exploitation and inequality. Havelock Ellis (1937) defined prostitute as a person who makes it a profession to gratify the lust of various persons of the opposite sex or the same sex. International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (1968) defines prostitution as the granting of sexual access on a
relatively indiscriminate basis for payment either in money or in goods, depending on the complexity of the local economic system.

Socio-psychological analysis

The socio-psychological analysis refers to the study of the characteristic attributes of the rural sex workers. The causative factors facilitating the rural women into sex trade have also been examined. The rural sex workers are often faced with physical and mental problems which affect their normal life. They suffer from depression, sadness, fear, shyness etc. and these psychological problems are mostly interlinked with other social issues like lack of social support, ignorance about sexually transmitted diseases, inadequate health care, lack of awareness about welfare schemes.

Behaviour pattern

The behaviour pattern of the rural sex workers has been analysed under the family, social and professional behaviour.

Family behaviour

The rural sex workers interaction and behaviour pattern in their family have been studied. Spouse relationship, parental and supporting role of the rural sex workers have been specifically analysed for the purpose of the study.
Social behaviour

The social behaviour of the rural sex workers in relation to neighbourhood community, NGO and government officials are investigated thoroughly for the purpose of the study.

Professional behaviour

The professional behaviour of the rural sex workers affect the relationship with the clients, madams, pimps and the other persons who are involved in the sex trade.

Outreach workers

Outreach Workers are the field staff who create awareness among the sex workers and other high risk groups about the safe sex practices to prevent from the infections of Sexually Transmitted Disease, HIV and AIDS and making them to practice it by distributing condoms.

Community health workers

Community Health Workers are the technically skilled field staff who create awareness among the general community about the sexual and reproductive health problems and making them to practice safe sex and other measures to prevent diseases. The professionals offering counselling to the sex workers are referred to as counsellors.
Method of study

The present study is an exploratory research. It is basically a fact finding survey. The exploratory surveys are designed to acquire the informations related to the current status of a phenomenon. They are directed towards determining the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of the study. The aim is to explore what exists with respect to variables of conditions in a situation. The success of any research work largely depends upon the methods and techniques adopted for the investigation. The correct result can only be attained when the methodology and the procedures used in the study are well organized. The survey method has been adopted for the present investigation and the data have been collected with the help of a pre-designed, field tested interview schedule specially structured by the investigator for collecting comprehensive information for fulfilling the objectives of the study. The case study method has been used for qualitative analysis.

Study area

The present study has been carried out in Dindigul and Coimbatore districts of the Tamil Nadu State. Dindigul district comprises 3 revenue divisions, 7 taluks and 14 blocks. There are 358 villages and 304 village panchayats in this district. The village panchayats have 14 panchayat unions.
to govern them. Coimbatore district comprises three revenue divisions, 9 taluks and 19 blocks. There are 2157 villages and 389 village panchayats in this district. The village panchayats have 59 panchayat unions to govern them. The present study is confined to five blocks, namely Coimbatore and Pollachi of Coimbatore district where Imayam Social Welfare Association has been implementing intervention programmes and Dindigul, Oddanchatram and Palani of Dindigul district, where the Mother Saradadevi Social Service Society has been working with different high risk groups to prevent the STD/HIV/AIDS through a number of sexual health intervention programmes. The programmes are particularly focusing on Reproductive Track Infection, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and HIV/AIDS. Referral services, treatment, counselling and health camps are also conducted in collaboration with other organizations. Community Health Workers are appointed for creating awareness, extending care and support to those living with HIV/AIDS.

Among the 19 blocks in Coimbatore district, 2 blocks, namely, Coimbatore and Pollachi and 3 blocks, namely, Dindigul, Oddanchatram and Palani from 14 blocks of Dindigul district were selected for the study. Women from rural hamlets of these five blocks who were practicing sex
work in the selected study area were identified as respondents. The sample consists of 105 rural sex workers from these blocks.

Interventional Agencies

MSSSS

The Mother Saradadevi Social Service Society (MSSSS), a non-governmental development organisation was established in 1988. Located in Oddanchatram near Palani in Dindigul district, the society works for the welfare of the vulnerable communities. The society has helped to promote sustainable health for people in need, focusing mainly on medical and social interventions with a specific emphasis on sexual and reproductive health. Initial interventions were done by providing vocational training for rural youth. MSSSS assisted many poor rural families who were not reached by other development agencies through economic programs. It soon realized that the health status of these communities, particularly women and children were very poor. The awareness of reproductive and sexual health issues was very low which ended up in high mortality during pregnancy. No other agencies worked in this area with a specific focus on reproductive and sexual health. Its intervention towards enhancement of reproductive and sexual health has helped in the control and prevention of HIV/AIDS in rural
Tamil Nadu. People living with HIV/AIDS were identified and provided counseling and support.

The health initiatives focusing on nutrition, prevention and care for persons with AIDS began on a small scale in 1993 with external funding. These initiatives slowly made them to integrate care for Persons Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) into its programs (with its own funding through sustainable commercial activities). MSSSS was honoured and awarded as the Best NGO in AIDS prevention by the State Government. This further motivated MSSSS to take up more work in this area with other development organizations. The MSSSS currently has partnership with other agencies including DFID-UK, KZE - Germany European Commission and the State Government.

Although health is the main focus, there are other immediate community issues that must be addressed indirectly. These needs are usually economic and social. MSSSS therefore recognises the necessity of an integrated approach in the creation of a long-term sustainable health program. In addition to its STD/EIIV/AIDS prevention programs, the society has considered the following areas for its service and assistance.

- Reproductive and sexual health - working with adolescent youth and pregnant women;
MSSSS networks with various agencies in its project area, and strongly believes in ‘Convergence of Efforts’ rather than duplication. It is currently working with approximately twenty other non-governmental and governmental agencies.

MSSSS, through its situational analysis, has identified over 200 vulnerable children (challenged by HIV/ AIDS epidemic) and has started working with them. More than 250 PLWHA have been assisted in two districts of Tamil Nadu. MSSSS often reviews its strategies, plans, and mission regularly in the context of its work and experience. The Executive Committee of the society and its entire staff committed to the mission “Promoting Sustainable Health and Well-Being of People in Need.”

This profile provides a brief overview of their process, strategies, and achievements and describes how MSSSS is trying to make a difference in the quality of life of its targeted communities.

IMA YAM

Imayam Social Welfare Association (ISWA) is a non-profit, non-political, secular NGO committed to the development of the rural poor
through holistic approach. Since its inception, ISWA has been working on various programmes for the upliftment of the poor and weaker sections of the community for transformational development. ISWA was formed in 1992 by committed women professional social workers. The service area of ISWA is extended to 3 blocks in Coimbatore district covering over a lakh of people.

ISWA is implementing STD/HIV/AIDS intervention programmes in Coimbatore district. The objectives of the programmes are to reduce the immoral sexual practices and prevent transmission of STD/HIV/AIDS through promotion of condom use. The association has trained potential persons who are known as peer educators. These peer educators disseminate the information to the target people by adapting various techniques. Exhibition, street play and awareness campaigns are the methods used to extend the knowledge of sexual health among the rural people.

Partnering with Tamil Nadu State AIDS Control Society, ISWA took initiative to promote sexual health among the inmates of the central prison through education and counselling. Police officials were also educated on sexual health. Medical camps were conducted and medicines were distributed free of cost to the inmates of the prison. To create awareness on Sexual Health, various activities such as cultural shows, street plays, video
films were organized. Competitions were also held to motivate and involve
the inmates in the awareness programs.

With the assistance of DESH-Chennai, ISWA has taken up a project
on imparting knowledge about Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) to the
community. The project is carried out successfully with the help of
experienced counsellors, field assistants and community health workers.
Nearly 2000 families in 10 were benefited by this project. The project on
community based care (Palmyrah Workers Development Society [PWDS]
with International HIV/AIDS Alliance of UK) is going on. EIIV positive
tested people are given free care and support by this NGO.

To help the deserted and destituteed woman, a short stay home has set
up with the financial support from Central Social Welfare Board. Women
with personal, family, social problems are admitted in this home. Medical
care, occupational therapy and counselling service are provided. The inmates
are also given training in entrepreneurship in order to make them
economically independent.

Sampling design

The primary purpose of study is to find out the behavior patterns and
problems of the rural sex workers. But studying a whole population of the
sex workers to arrive at a generalization is not at all practicable. Here comes the importance of sampling in field research. The process of sampling makes it possible to draw valid inferences or generalize on the basis of careful observation of the variables in relation to a relatively small proportion of the population. Multistage random sampling was adopted to select the sample for the study. At the first stage, the sex workers in the five blocks were identified with the help of the NGO personnel. Sex workers were classified according to the type of sex work in which they are involving and from that the required sample is selected randomly. The respondents were contacted and the required information was collected from them. A sample of 105 female rural sex workers was selected. Details of the sample selected for the study are given in Table 3.1

Table 3.1
Details of the sample selected for the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>BLOCK</th>
<th>TYPE OF SEX WORKERS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LODGE BASED</td>
<td>BROTHEL BASED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pollachi</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dindigul</td>
<td>Dindigul</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oddanchatram</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Palani</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pilot Study

Pilot study is a primary work to gain clear-cut and specific ideas on research perspectives in the subject of investigation undertaken. For a research study, pilot study is essential and simplifies the task of designing the field work logistics. In the pilot study undertaken, sex workers were interviewed by the researcher in order to prepare profiles on aspects like personal particulars and working condition. Family particulars, details of clients, co-workers, friends, family conflicts, nature and place of sex work, security and problems faced by the rural sex workers were initially obtained through personal interviews.

Interview Schedule

The interview schedule elicited personal information pertaining to age, education, occupation, caste, socio-economic status, causative factors for becoming a sex worker, type of sex work, type of clients, income, expenditure, social problems faced by them, penal actions against them, health status and psychological constraints. The welfare programmes offered to the rural sex workers both by the Government and Non-Governmental Organizations were ascertained. Field experts, academicians and health specialists were also consulted for finalizing the interview schedule. A copy of the schedule has been attached as Appendix ‘A’. Apart from the interview
schedule the researcher also undertook field observation to comprehend the problems, status and the living conditions of the rural female sex workers.

Focus Group Discussion

Key informants consisting of rural sex workers, out reach workers, counsellors, community health workers and NGO personnels participated in the focus group discussion. Unless like other focus group discussion, this was held in a separate confidential place as majority of the sex workers were not willing to have it in a common place. The participants in the discussion deliberated on various aspects pertaining to the problems of the rural sex workers. The psycho-social characteristics, socio- economic conditions, availability of medical facilities, welfare measures and problems of the sex workers were the topics for discussion in the group interaction sessions. The format of the focus group discussion is attached as the Appendix ‘B’

Case study

The qualitative analysis of the life perspectives and problems of the sex workers were conducted through case studies. Information relating to their family, role and status in society and professional experience were obtained. The treatment of the sex workers both by family and community members was also observed during the course of field work. The respondents narrated their unique life experiences and profiled their
problems. It was a kind of life review which helped the researcher to know about the personal development and factors related to the rehabilitation of the sex workers. The case study helped to investigate the depth of the problems and the causative factors.

Data sources

For the present study, the data have been collected from both the primary and secondary sources. Reports, newspapers, magazines and websites constituted the secondary sources for the research data. The Benchmark survey reports on sex workers also formed valuable secondary sources of data for the study. The researcher made sure that the documents were genuine, reliable and pertinent before collecting the relevant data from the secondary sources.

Data Collection

The researcher personally trained female investigators who visited the areas selected for the study and collected the required data through personal interviews. The respondents were given a patient hearing so as to enable them to recall the past events and the information were recorded in the prescribed schedules. Rapport building with the respondents played a significant role in eliciting information from the sex workers. The women were spontaneous in stating their problems. The NGO members and the
members of the health department also rendered help by providing general information and in conducting the focus group discussion. The respondents were at ease, free and frank in giving the personal details for the study. The data collection process was carried out between December 2003 and April 2004.

Statistical Analysis

The responses were scrutinized, coded and entered in the computer system for analysis. The data were analyzed using the SPSS. Percentage, correlation, chi-square and regression were the measures used for the analysis of data. The data have been presented in tabular, graphical and pictorial forms for the purpose of interpretation and arriving at meaningful conclusions.

Limitations of the study

The researcher used interview schedule, observation and focus group discussions with sex workers for collecting the data. The study is not free from the recall bias as most of the sex workers did not want to reveal the exact details. It was difficult to follow the sex workers in their villages, as the rural community is sensitive to the presence of outsiders. In such a situation, the investigator conducted the personal interviews after inviting the sex workers to the NGO with the help of trained female field staffs. The
present study focuses on the phenomenon of the commercial sex work in rural areas and ascertain the rehabilitative measures for the sex workers. The subject has been carried out descriptively, but statistical treatment of data has been undertaken wherever necessary. Although the study has been entitled to project the socio-psychological behaviour pattern, problems and prospects of rural sex workers in Dindigul and Coimbatore districts, it was found in the course of the study that the social and economic life of sex workers are intertwined with few exceptions making their life, their work and their family environment which are inseparable. Under these circumstances, the study has attempted to profile the life and professional hazards of the sex workers. The study has not used any index or standardized scale to assess the socio-economic and psychological condition of the sex workers. In one of the settlements, the field investigators were advised to obtain permission from the Superintendent of Police to move around in the areas which were identified as the den of sex workers. After much persuasion and plea, the investigator was permitted to contact and conduct focus group discussion with the sex workers in this area also, a tacit approval was also obtained from the police to conduct the investigation in the sensitive areas.