

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Research Problem

Sex is an essential psychological and biological need of human beings. But sex and sex related activities are not limited to psychology and biology only rather it has transcended to other socio-cultural aspects. Sex trade is one of the ancient and widespread phenomena all over the world that is related not only to society, law and culture but also to economy of people involved in it. However, generally it is perceived as indecent and hatred profession in the society. Socially, culturally and legally sex trade is undesirable job in the Nepalese society. However it is flourishing all across the country especially, in urban areas and along the east west highway. It is openly conducted in different sites of Kathmandu valley. State is seen to be in dilemma. Neither it has been totally able to control nor has specified any red light areas. The issue of sex trade is quite debatable in the society and is closely related with informal economy. Different voices have been raised for and against it in the society. Feminists have advocated that sex trade is the result of patriarchal value system and is exploitation of women. However, now there are voices to incorporate the issue of sex trade as a part of human rights. Some people are in favour of sex trade and argue that it should be legalized and state should specify the red light zone. Where as on the other hand, some people argue it is immoral work and should be controlled.

Despite having socially, culturally and legally undesirable job, a section of urban poor women have adopted sex trade as a main way of earning livelihood and are struggling low quality of survival. In fact it is not only socially and legally undesirable, it is also unsustainable in the sense that sex trade remains suitable for certain period in a life span as when they pass adulthood, sex trade does not remain obvious. At that stage, Female Sex Workers (FSWs) end with their livelihood means. On the top of these difficulties they have many health risks for e.g. of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. FSWs, since they adopt socially and culturally undesirable job,

have no self-esteem and respect even from the society. In this way from every perspective of livelihood, FSWs remains in vicious socio- economic circumstances. This study, thus, tries to focus on female sex workers from the perspective of livelihood strategy of urban poor women and in the context of social, cultural and legal perspective on sex trade and sexual activities, livelihood sustainability have been assessed. This study, in sum, aims at following research questions.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

The study attempts to seek answer to the following research questions:

- i) What socio-economic backgrounds do the FSWs represent?
- ii) What are the factors that have motivated them to adopt livelihood option?
- iii) How they perceive their own job and to what extent are they satisfied?
- iv) To what extent is their livelihood sustainable?

## **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The general objectives of the present study are to understand female's causes of marginalization that led them to adopt sex trade for livelihood earning and to analyze the sustainability context of their livelihood. To fulfill these aims, the specific objectives of the research are:

- i) To examine the socio-economic conditions of the FSWs.
- ii) To explore the causes of their marginalization and to identify their previous occupation and motivational factors.
- iii) To assess their perceptions and satisfaction with their livelihood strategy.

- iv) To examine sustainability and vulnerability of FSWs' livelihood

#### **1.4 Rationale of the study**

Sex trade is a global phenomenon and burning issue in all over the world. FSWs have no alternatives as well as skills and are obligated to adopt sex trade in urban areas mainly due to poverty and domestic violence. The livelihood strategy they adopted is socially and culturally undesirable and they have no legal right as well as space to conduct sex trade in the Nepalese society. Moreover, they have no sufficient assets to cope shocks and stresses of changing environment .They are remaining in vicious socio – economic circumstances and on the other hand the number of FSWs is increasingly rapidly in every year. Thus an attempt has been made to understand causes of their marginalization and motivations to adopt sex trade.

Much has been written on legal profession and dignity work .However; there are few studies on illegal and indecent professions that society perceives as social evils. Thus the study helps to understand the livelihood of socially ostracized group which will provide important guidelines to policy makers and decision makers. This study would also be a research base for further investigation along this line.

#### **1.4 Limitation of the Study**

Being an illegal activity, sex trade is a sensitive issue and to conduct research on it itself risky task for the researcher himself. Thus, this study has limitation in many aspects, especially in methodology. It was found by observation that many children under sixteen are also involved in sex trade. Moreover, there are some FSWs who have formed groups and taken flats in rent and conduct their activities. Because of limitation such as that of fund, these workers could not be incorporated in the study. Similarly, third sex who are also involved in sex trade have not included in the study. It was also found somewhere that beggars and other poor wage laboures also involve in sex trade (See Gautam, 2008). However, such FSWs are not incorporated in this study.

## **1.5 Organization of the Study**

The study has been organized into eight chapters. The first chapter introduces sex trade as a livelihood strategy of one section of urban poor women and presents assessment of FSWs' livelihood as the research problem. The second chapter review of literature. It has two sections- the first section reviews the theory of livelihood analysis and the second section presents the major findings of studies on livelihood in Nepal. The third chapter deals with research methodology and methods including the rationale for the selection of the study area, sources of data collection, sampling procedure, data presentation and analysis with ethical issues and field experiences.

Similarly, chapter IV, that is analysis, is in fact the core part of the work. The first objective of the study is covered in this chapter. It includes socio-economic background, place of origin, caste and ethnic background, educational status, accommodation and living arrangements etc. Chapter V fulfills the second and third objectives of the study. It identifies that motivational factors for sex trade are diverse and complex. It also presents the social perception towards sex trade and FSWs' own perception and satisfaction. Chapter six analyzes the livelihood assets of the FSWs and their sustainability and vulnerability context.

The work is synthesized in chapter seven which covers summary and conclusions of the work with certain workable recommendations for further research.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Review of literature is a very essential step to develop ideas as well as analytical framework for research. Literature review is a very important aspect of academic and professional research and essential element of research design. It provides knowledge and concepts required to address the issue systematically from right perspective. This chapter provides previous empirical works relevant to the present research problem. To conduct this research, a number of related literatures were reviewed which are as follows:

#### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

Geography is the study of the relation between society and environment. There are different theories/models that have been developed to understand the relationship between man and environment. The present study is an attempt to understand livelihood of those who have adopted sex trade. Sustainable livelihood approach has been adopted as its main theoretical base to understand female sex workers' livelihood. The sustainable livelihood approach is a newly emerged concept to address the people's livelihood in a sustainable way.

##### **2.2.1 Sustainable Livelihood Approach**

The livelihood is a recent concept and focal point of study and research. Robert Chambers, who is often called father of sustainable livelihood, has introduced and initiated a serious discourse on livelihood in the mid-1980s. Later, it was further developed by Chambers and Conway and others in the early 1990s (DFID, 1999).

The concept of sustainable livelihood goes beyond the conventional definitions and approaches to poverty reduction. The conventional concepts of poverty considered to be narrow as these concepts focused only on certain aspects of manifestation of

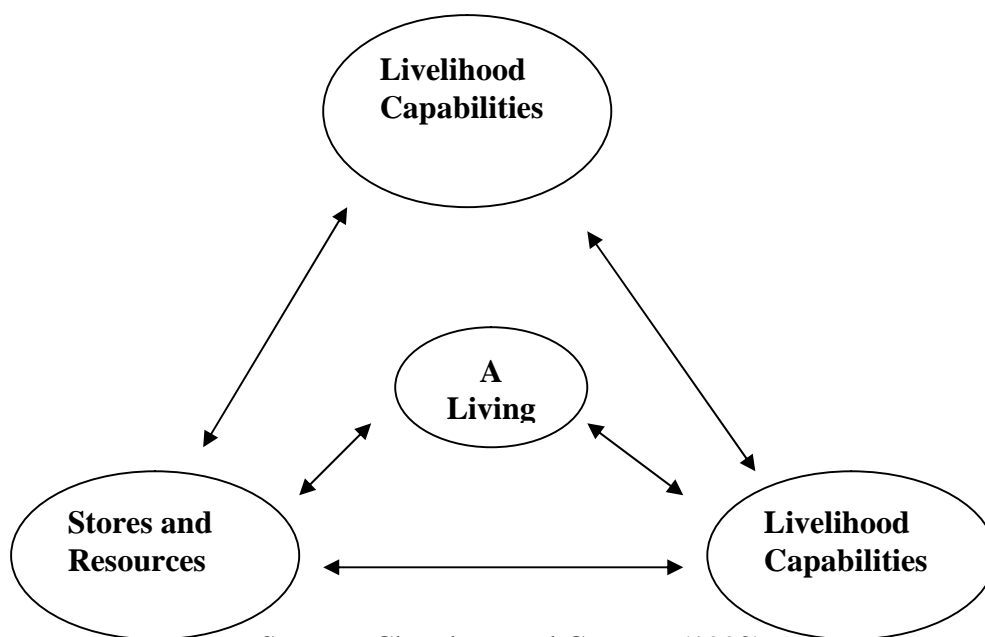
poverty such as low income or did not consider other vital aspects of poverty such as vulnerability, social inclusion etc. (Krantz, 2001). The sustainable livelihood approach as a development concept is legitimized through several international forums. The Brundtland commission in 1987 introduced sustainable livelihoods in terms of resource ownership and access, basic needs and livelihood security, especially in rural areas. Likewise, the 1992 Earth Summit legitimized and adopted the concept referring 'Sustainable Livelihoods for all' in its agenda 21. The Copenhagen social summit linked sustainable livelihoods explicitly to full employment and the Beijing platform reemphasized the importance of women's livelihood to successful development. In 1997, British Department for International Development (DFID) adopted sustainable livelihood approach to its development activities particularly in poverty elimination. Besides, international organizations like the European Commission; the World Bank, Food and Agricultural Organization of United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are further developing this approach (Wyss, 2004).

In a classic paper on sustainable livelihood in 1991, Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: Practical Concepts for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway defined modifying the earlier definition of World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) panel as:

*A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term (Chambers and Conway 1991:8).*

Chambers and Conway (1992) normatively analyzed the ideas of capabilities, equity and sustainability. Chamber and Conway have provided a framework to recognize an individual or intra-household level, in which the wellbeing and access of some household members, and especially women and children, may be inferior to that of others, especially men, and also the broader levels of the extended family, the social group, and the community. The core of a livelihood can be expressed as a living, and the main components and relationship presented as in figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Components and Flow in a Livelihood



Source: Chambers and Conway (1992).

Similarly, Carney (1998) has presented a slightly modified definition of livelihood. He defined it as

*A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base.*

Frank Ellis has examined livelihood diversification and sustainable rural livelihoods. He further emphasizes that in rural agrarian economy, farming on its own rarely provides a sufficient means of survival. For this reason most rural households are found to depend on a diverse portfolio of activities and income sources, among which crop and livestock production feature alongside many other contributions to family wellbeing.

With regard to sustainable livelihoods, DFID (1999) published a set of 'guidance sheets' with a view to attempting to summarize and share on the sustainable livelihood approach. The guidance sheets are the outcomes of the White paper on

International Development issued by Government of UK in 1997. Following the approach of Chambers and Conway, DFID defined livelihoods with some modifications but exactly the same as defined by Carney (1998). The guidance sheet presents origin, core concepts and framework of sustainable livelihoods.

## **2.2 Review of Previous Works**

When Robert Chambers popularized the livelihood approach in mid-1990s among academicians, researchers as well as development agencies, then academicians and researchers have been undertaking research on different aspects of livelihoods. An attempt has been made in the following sections to review relevant literatures on livelihood pattern, adaptive strategies and female sex workers.

### **2.2.1 Works Related to Livelihood Strategy**

The concept of livelihood is very new and emerging issue in the context of Nepal and as a result there are very few works on the issue. Most of the available studies are related to community and occupational caste groups. Bisop Berry could be credited as the first scholar to initiate the study of livelihood issue in areas of Karnali region, high mountain ecological belts of Nepal (Koirala, 2006).

**Bisop (1990)** carried out a study on livelihood strategies of the people of Karnali basin. The researcher identified homeostatic subsistence system of livelihoods in the Karnali Basin and explained how such system changed due to the external forces. Karnali basin having rugged topography, low productivity and inaccessibility in terms of road network bears very hard circumstances for the people to seek their livelihood. Livestock ranching is the most important activity characterized by seasonal movement to higher elevation areas in summer and to lower areas in winter. Agricultural activities require long growing season due to the lower temperature in long winter season. This study gives an idea about changes in livelihoods by external forces over time.

**Stevens (1993)** studied Sherpas' subsistence and environmental changes in the highest Himalayas. The study examined the contemporary economy of the Sherpa and



discussed historical change in the economy, environment and the culture. He identified five broad traditional subsistence agricultural strategies and several common sub-strategies in the central and western Himalayas. These were settled mixed farming, Sweden agriculture, middle altitude agro-pastoralism, high altitude agro-pastoralism and pastoral nomadism. This study is helpful in understanding the adaptive strategies of mountain people under the influence of environmental changes.

**Burtel (2000)** studied the livelihood strategies of the Kumal living in Lekhnath municipality of Pokhara valley. The findings of the study based on census, have shown the changes in the livelihood strategies of Kumal had been related to changes in natural, socio-cultural and economic environments. Agriculture, pottery and fishing were the major activities of the past. Later the mode of farming changed from food crop farming to horticulture and market gardening. Their way of living is more diversified than in the past as it is influenced by the force of globalization. Wage labor, business and services are other additional options adopted by the people along with their previous activities. This study provides an idea about changing livelihoods of the people.

**Dahal (2001)** observed a change in livelihood practices of Baramus community of Gorkha district. He found that the changes that occurred in the natural, economic and socio-cultural environment in the area brought immense changes in the livelihood strategies of the Baramus. The traditional practice of *Dole* (chariot bearer) system totally collapsed and *Bani* (porter/wage labors) system was declining rapidly and was in its final stage of collapse. The collapse of traditional occupations and the insufficient agricultural land compelled the Baramurs to find other income earning activities like wage labor, pottering and small business ,i.e. selling firewood and liquor etc. Modernization and the expansion of local market centers brought significant changes in the socio-cultural sphere of the Baramus. This study shows the impact of globalization on natural, socio-economic and cultural environment on diversification of livelihoods of the local people.

**Subedi and Pandey (2002)** have observed livelihood strategies of Rai community in two villages of different elevation levels in Arun valley, namely Sitalpati in lower elevation and Makalu in higher elevation. This comparative study shows that over

time in both villages, Rais have adopted various strategies to earn their livelihood. A specific sequence of changes in land utilization and conversion of land into more productive categories was evident. In the lower elevation, change in land utilization pattern reflected from *Bari* (non-irrigated land) towards *Khet* (irrigated land) and in higher elevation it was more towards *Bari* from *Khoriya* (slash and burn). Adoption of multiple cropping and crop diversification together with working as wage laborer, borrowing, pottering, crediting and livestock selling were sequences of livelihoods adopted under pressure. This study illustrates how people's responses to environmental and economic pressure can differ in two different environments.

**Timilsina (2003)** has studied the impact of road on the livelihood strategies of rural people in Dhading district. The study shows that agro-based economy of rural people has transferred into market oriented production due to the construction of Bhumidhunga-Lamidada road and establishing of market centers. Productions of cereal crops have been displaced and local people have started intensive vegetable farming for their livelihood. After construction of road, regular flow of strangers have resulted increase of conflict incidents of social evils and deforestation rate has increased due to the establishment of saw mill. This study examines the socio-economic and infrastructural changes as well as interaction of urban rural linkage in Jivanpur VDC

**Pathak (2004)** has examined the livelihood strategies and vulnerability of cobblers in Kathmandu metropolitan. Cobbling is the customary way of earning livelihood of *Dalits* (low caste) and now a day it is adopted by occupational as well as non occupational caste groups to mitigate the present context of global change. By the nature of work and space used by them, their occupation has been much vulnerable. Seasonality, space and institution, social values and norms, political situation and lack of livelihood assets are the most responsible factors to shape their occupational vulnerability. This study has demonstrated that poverty in urban areas embraces many socio-economic, institutional and physical circumstances.

**Baskota (2005)** has attempted to examine the working condition and vulnerability of porters in Kathmandu and impact of policies on them. This study observed that most of the porters are immigrants from other districts and the major cause of their

marginalization and migration are poor access to the productive assets such as inadequate and low quality of land, lack of infrastructure and social isolation. Porter's traditional occupations, tailoring, smithing, cobbling became marginalized due to the globalization and industrialization. Their livelihood has not improved in the city. They have lower income, are food insecure, have children beyond schooling and on the other hand new city policies like privatization of Bus Park have further marginalized them. This study has presented vulnerable condition as well as impact of policies upon porters.

**Koirala (2006)** in his doctoral dissertation has emphasized on the understanding of how the rural societies in mountain areas are responding to their changing environment. This study shows that mountain environments are changing perceptibly in their natural and economic settings. He has undertaken spatio-temporal analysis of resource utilization between 1984-2004 in three villages, namely Jitpur, Murtidhunga and Parewadin of Southern Arun Valley. The livelihood pattern of people are agro based such as cereal crop forming, horticulture, cash crop farming and mixed of all these. Now a days large number of household shifted to non-agricultural livelihood strategies like business, services, remittance and wage labor. Better connectivity changed traditional food crop production to horticulture and cash crop and has helped to improve household income. The role of remittance is becoming increasingly important in livelihood maintenance as well as overall status of the households in those areas. Koirala has found positive change in the livelihood security of majority of the households, increased awareness and understanding of the people. This study is helpful to explore the relationship between livelihood strategies and sustainability and understand the adoptive strategies of local people to cope with the changing environmental resource scenario.

**Rijal (2006)** in his doctoral dissertation has analyzed the livelihood strategies and income level of the people of Modi Khola watershed in western Nepal. Based on sampling of 360 households, he observed that the people have adopted diverse livelihood strategies such as farming, livestock raising, service in governmental and non-governmental agencies, business, tourism, industrial activities, wage labor, fishing, forest product collection etc. These strategies vary by household and localities resulting from variable effects of access to assets, capabilities of people and nature of

the environment. In the upper parts of watershed, people's livelihood is largely based on tourism activities and regular flow of money in terms of pension and remittances while in the lower parts it is based on the combination of different activities. This study has found that the household adopting diverse activities that have higher household income are more secure and less vulnerable as compared to the households adopting single or lesser number of activities.

**Chaudhary et. al. (2007)** have made broad assessment of interrelationship among the existing environmental and socio-economic factors with their implications and predictions on people's livelihood of Manag trans-Himalayan zone. This study finds that the environmental changes in Manag include traditionally managed agricultural production that is closely dependent on agricultural crop productivity and diversity, forest resources, animal husbandry, and glacier melt water for irrigation; whereas socio-economic changes are related to tourism, trade, traditional knowledge on conservation and intellectual property rights and social equity among the communities. Peoples' livelihood in Manag is mainly related to different socio-economic activities and dependent upon the existing physical, biological and socio-economic processes. In the upper parts of Manang, livelihood remains predominantly agrarian; however majority of the population have established important linkage with trade, tourism and urban economy. This study has concluded that Manangi's local knowledge, traditional conservation practice and entrepreneurial skills are crucial to sustain cultural landscapes, livelihood and production system.

**Subedi (2007)** has presented the changing livelihood pattern in upper Manang Valley. He observed that the livelihood pattern is complex and at times puzzling. Agriculture, out-migration and tourism comprise three pillars of livelihood but out-migration and tourism are more vibrant. Agriculture is the oldest and time-honoured, out migration is a later adoption but quite established historically and finally tourism is the latest adoption as a reflection of state policies and modernization. This study concluded that despite being mountainous, remote and limited growing season crop farming remains integral to livelihood. But out-migration and tourism have become so important that these two activities have ultimately changed the traditional agricultural based livelihood pattern to more of modern one. This study discussed the seasonality of these activities and their implications on labor supply.

**Subedi and Baral (2008)** have studied the livelihood strategies of female tempo drives in Kathmandu metropolitan city. They have linked female tempo driving to gendered division of labor. Different institutional arrangements and cultural practices have allocated different works for man and woman in Nepalese male dominant society. The customary conception of gendered activity space has determined the woman in reproductive and domestic sphere and men in productive and public sphere. In this way, the activity spaces of men and women are different and this discrimination has created inequalities. It is in this context the authors argue that female tempo drivers have broken the border of customary male activity space of driving vehicles for their livelihood. This study examines the socio-economic background, working condition, motivational factors, livelihood assets etc. of female tempo driver.

The study of **Gautam (2008)** has argued that the sustainable livelihood framework is inadequate to explain the case of beggars' livelihood in Katmandu. Based on 72 sample sizes, he concluded that almost all cast/ethnic groups from different parts of the country have been begging but they have no livelihood assets as defined in the framework.

### **2.2.2 Works Related to the Female Sex Workers**

**Pathak (1996)** has attempted to examine socio-economic profile, sexual behaviour and contextual factors that motivate to adopt sex trade, of female sex workers in Jhapa, Morang and Refugee areas. His finding based on 40 commercial sex workers suggest that various caste and ethnicity from different parts of Nepal and India are involved in sex trade where majority of them are Chhetri. He further argues the main causes to adopt sex trade are unemployment, poverty, democratic people's movement in Bhutan, Gorkha Land movement in India, migration and socio-cultural practices.

The study under the **ILO-IPEC (2002)**t in children project has analyzed the particular element of trafficking among a group of children and adults currently engaged in the commercial sex workers in Kathmandu. The focus was on girls below the age of 18 years but the sample size contained 302 adults and 138 children sex workers as well

as in order to understand the lives of commercial sex workers were interviewed from three site-streets, restaurants and massage parlors in Kathmandu and Lalitpur cities. The major findings of the study were the proportion of children below 18 among commercial sex workers in Kathmandu was 30 and 43 percent sex workers belonged to hill ethnic groups followed by Chhetri and Brahmin. An overwhelming majority of sex workers in Kathmandu were migrants and majority of them originated from Central region.

**Shrestha (2003)** has studied on commercial sex workers in Pokhara valley and has tried to explore sexual behavior, contextual factors and the size of female sex workers. Based on 41 sample size, he reveals that there were 500 to 800 girls involved in sex trade in which forty percent sex workers' age was under 19. Seventy five percent girls were entered in sex trade during the emergency period of Nepal. Women and girls who have involved in sex trade are sexually and economically exploited by police army. The main causes to adopt sex trade are lack of employment, poverty and separated marital status.

**Dangol (2003)** has conducted a research on professional realization among female sex workers in Kathmandu valley. This study focused that street based female sex workers are by products of social and economic function of the society and deeply rooted in the appealing poverty, illiteracy and lack of proper employment opportunities to the job seeking woman in the urban areas. Based on 30 sample size he further argued that street based female sex workers are very venerable and this study revolves around the background and contemporary socio economic situation of female sex workers. Lastly it was concluded that no respondent wants to involve their daughters and girls in the sex trade.

The study of **Karki (2004)** has found that almost all female sex workers in Kathmandu valley are compelled to join this profession because of the unequal socio-economic opportunities and modern-urban life. On the basis of 60 informants, she concluded that large proportion of sex workers are from economically deprived families. They often have low socio-economic status including educational attainment. Street based female sex workers did not have good income on an average

but the income varies to great extent. Lastly, she found that modernization, urbanization as well as socio-cultural rules and regulation are the causes of sex trade.

**Hausner (2005)** has conducted a study in three urban centers of Nepal including Kathmandu valley. The main findings of the study are that sex trade is a global phenomenon and the conflict in Nepal has increased the number of woman working as prostitutes in Kathmandu valley and border areas. All caste and ethnic groups of women are working as sex workers, waitresses and dancers. He concluded that for girls and women, domestic violence is the main cause to leave home and more to the capital in search of independence and work.

**WATCH (2005)** has conducted a research for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and STIs among the female sex workers in Kathmandu district. It was found that 1006 street based female sex workers involved in sex trade. They were members of many different societal occupations such as housewives, construction workers, wage labors, petty shopkeepers, tea or *Bhatti pasale*, students, and single/unemployed women. They were from different caste, ethnic and religious background and most of them were poor, homeless and uneducated. Domestic violence was the main case to adopt sex trade. Finally it was concluded that street based female sex workers are unstable, alcoholic and not health conscious. They solicit sex partners for livelihood and for their children's education as well as welfare.

**NEW ERA (2006)** has conducted the second round integrated bio-behavioral survey among 200 street based sex workers and 300 established sex workers in Kathmandu valley. The NEW ERA survey team has found that female sex workers were from different parts of the country including India and were from different caste and ethnicity. Thirteen percent of the respondents were less than 20 years of age and thirty two percent were illiterate. There were three types of sex partners: namely paying, regular and non-paying partners. Overall HIV prevalence rate was 1.4% in which street based sex workers were 2%. Lastly, it was concluded that new and young girls were entering in sex trade every year.

**Shakti Samuha (2008)** has carried out a study entitled condition of slavery among women working in restaurants and massage parlors of Kathmandu valley. Based on 300 sample size, the study reveals that the girls and women working in restaurants and massage parlors regularly face sexual harassment by owners, customers and male coworkers. They have to do additional duties such as going out with costumers for sex trade, sitting with them against their will, having sex with them and with owner, letting the customers grope and fondle with their body and masturbating and even having sex forcefully. They are forced by means of psychological and physical threats to give sexual favors and to adopt bad habits such as drinking, smoking, and sex trade. Thus the study concluded that workers are denied the right of self -determination, freedom of choice and rights to take decision over their body. They are forced to bear the cruelty of slavery.

### **2.3 Conceptual Framework and Common Concern**

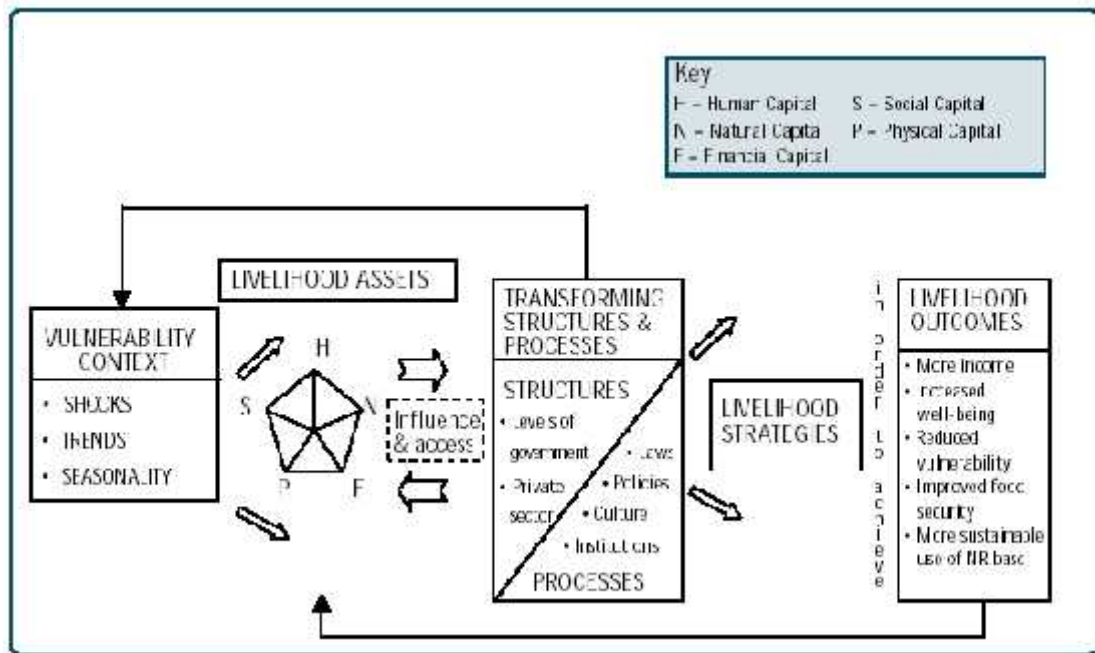
The livelihood study is primarily based on livelihood concept originally developed by Robert Chambers in the mid-1980s. Later, Conway and Chambers further expanded this concept in the early 1990s. Based on this, a number of agencies working in the field of development such as Oxfam, CARE International, UNDP and DFID introduced and applied different sustainable livelihood models. For the present study the sustainable livelihood framework developed by DFID has adopted to conceptual framework (fig. 2.2).

#### **Livelihood Model**

The sustainable livelihood framework is a tool to improve our understanding of livelihoods, particularly the livelihood of poor. The people-centered model presents different components that affect the people's livelihood and interrelationship and interaction between these factors. Furthermore, it provides a checklist of important issues and sketches the link among each other; draws attention to the processes; and emphasizes the multiple interactions between the factors that affect livelihood. There are five components in the model, namely vulnerability context, livelihood assets, transforming structures and processes, livelihood strategies and livelihood outcomes. The basic components as explained in the model are as follows;



Figure 2.2: DFID's Sustainable Livelihood Framework



Source: <http://www.livelihood.org/dfid/framework>

**(i) Livelihood Assets**

This model seeks to gain an accurate and realistic understanding of people's strengths (assets or capital endowments) and how they endeavor to convert these into positive livelihood outcomes. The model identifies five core assets upon which livelihoods are built. A brief description of the livelihood assets as defined by DFID is given below:

- **Human capital:** human capital represents the skills, knowledge, ability to labor and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood outcomes. It varies according to household size, skill level, health status etc. It is important for gaining access to making use of other assets.
- **Social capital:** social capital represents the social resources such as network, membership of groups, relationship of trust and access to wider institutions of society. These are interrelated and intimately connected to transforming structures and processes. It can make important contribution to people's sense of well-being. It has a close relationship with human capital.

- Physical capital: physical capital represents the basic infrastructures such as transportation, shelter, energy, water, communication and the production equipment and means. There is a strong relationship between physical capital and other types of capital. Sufficient and good quality of physical capital improves the livelihood directly or indirectly.
- Natural capital: natural capital represents the natural resource stocks from which resource flows and services useful for livelihood are derived. The natural capitals are land, water, wildlife, biodiversity and environmental resources. It is important for all however, it is very crucial to those who base their livelihoods on resource based activities. Natural capital has a very close relationship with vulnerability context.
- Financial capital: the financial capital constitutes the resources which are available to people and which provide them with different livelihood options. Available stocks and regular inflows of money are two main sources of financial capital.

## **(ii) Vulnerability Context**

Socio-economic, institutional and the physical circumstances are known as vulnerability which influence people's livelihood as well as wider availability of assets directly. The vulnerability context frames the external environment such as trends, shocks or seasonality. Shocks such as natural shocks, economic shocks, human health shocks etc, can destroy assets and force people to abandon them. Trends comprise the population density, resource stock, and technology, and governance, economic and political environment. Trends are more predictable however they influence on the rates of the chosen livelihood strategies, the shift in price, food availability, employment opportunities, health etc, which greatly influence the livelihoods of the poor people.

## **(iii) Transforming Structures and Processes**

Transforming structure and processes within the livelihood frameworks are the institutions, organizations, policies and legislation that shape the livelihood. Their importance cannot be over emphasized. They operate at all levels from household to

international arena and in all spheres from the most private to most public. They effectively determine access between different types of capital and returns to any livelihood strategy (DFID, 2002)

Structures make processes function and processes determine the way in which structure operate and interact. The structures and processes can be compared as hardware and software of the computer system and both as important for livelihood.

#### **(iv) Livelihood Strategies**

Livelihood Strategies are the range and combination of activities and choices that people may undertake in order to achieve their livelihood goals. It includes, how people combine their income generating activities, the way in which they use their assets, which assets they choose to invest in and how they manage to preserve existing assets and income. Livelihood Strategies vary geographically across sectors and within household and over time. It is a dynamic process in which people combine activities to meet their various needs at different times (DFID, 2002).

#### **(v) Livelihood Outcomes**

The fifth component of the model is livelihood outcomes. Livelihood outcomes are the achievements or outputs of livelihood strategies. Livelihood outcomes are important because they help us to understand the output of the current configuration of factors within livelihood framework, motives of people to behave as they do, what their priorities are, how they are likely to respond to new opportunities and which performance indicators should be used to assess support activities (DFID,2002). There are different categories of livelihood outcomes but the relevancy of component differs by situation. The major indicators measuring achievements are level of income, level and use of unnatural resource base.

In this way, sustainable livelihood framework is a holistic and integrated model that encompasses mutually reinforcing and influencing factors that determine reliable basis of sustainable livelihood.

Studies on livelihood in Nepal have commonalities in many respects. Most of the studies have focused on livelihood strategies of various caste/ ethnic groups.

Secondly, occupational groups especially in urban setting have been the subjects of studies. Some studies have also gone to the line of human ecological perspective where emphasis has been given to the natural resource endowments and utilization. Most of the livelihood studies have focused on livelihood pentagon, i.e. livelihood assets and less attention have been paid on vulnerability context. This current study holds its novelty in two major aspects. Firstly, it has explicitly followed the line of gender. Sex work is confined to female sex and females are the subjects of study. Secondly, unlike the previous studies which have focused on possession of legitimate assets and resources and their fee and fair utilization of earning money, this study covers such group whose assets are subtle and abstract and the way they utilize and make their living is socially, culturally and legally undesirable.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology is a coherent set of rules and procedures which can be used to investigate a phenomenon or situation within the framework of disciplinary research philosophy. The methodology we adopt in research comes from our world perception, world view, expression and consequences of our understanding of the world. This section details the methods and whole procedures that were employed to acquire relevant information on different aspects of FSWs' livelihood and the rationale behind the choice of methodology.

#### **3.1 Humanistic Philosophy as Methodological Approach**

The paradigm of Geography has been changing since its origin. The changing paradigms in geography led to shift the content, focus and methodology in discipline (See Johnston, 1996). Most of the researches undertaken by human geographers at present seem to follow three main approaches-Positivism, Humanism and Structuralism. Although approaches like postmodernism, post-structuralism and feminism are also being adopted by some geographers, these are yet to gain wide acceptance because of absence of well-defined epistemologies. However, there are debates as well as conflicts among human geographers in adopting the most relevant philosophy in their research (Koirala, 2006).

Philosophy is an abstract way of thinking and any practitioner of an academic discipline undertakes research within a framework provided by a philosophy of that discipline (Johnston, 1986). Understanding philosophical approaches is important for two reasons. First, they help us understand what other researchers have done and why; and secondly, help us find an approach on which to base our own research and provide the theoretical context in which to justify our findings (Kitchin and Tate, 2002).

Every disciplinary philosophy contains a framework of both an epistemology and ontology together with methodology indicating rules and procedures of how

information can be collected and organized. No research takes place in a philosophical vacuum. Harvey (1969) emphasized that geography must take both methodology and philosophy into account and concluded that methodology without philosophy is meaningless. Thus, in the present study, humanistic philosophy is mainly adopted as methodological approach to understand on FSWs' subjective experiences, values and opinions. Its epistemology is that knowledge is obtained subjectively in a world mainly created by individuals and its ontology is that what exists is that which people perceive to exist. Its methodology involves the investigation of these individual worlds and it emphasizes individuality and subjectivity rather than the replacability and truth (Johnston, 1986). Humanists focus on people as thinking beings, as proud bearers of their culture and heritage, and believe in the subjectivity of both observer and the observed. Methodologically, the emphasis on subjectivity leads humanism to be more qualitative and intuitive than either positivism or structuralism (Subedi, 1993). Humanistic approach is helpful to fulfill the objectives of the present study so it is adopted in the study. Idealism, behaviouralism and phenomenology are some of the common approach in the line of humanistic thinking.

### **3.2 Identification of Female Sex Workers**

The status of women is backward in Nepal due to continuous dominance of patriarchal value system, they remain discriminated and are treated as second class citizens. Among them who are directly involved in sex trade to sustain their livelihood, are selected for the study and taken into consideration as Female Sex Workers (FSWs). There are three groups of female sex workers involved in sex trade, namely lower class, middle class and high class. Among them lower class sex workers are involved in sex trade mainly for their daily livelihood. These are vulnerable and search their clients in open space and popularly known as 'street sex workers'. Middle class sex workers do not want to present direct in the society. They are often in a group and contact their clients through mobile phone. Those female who work in hotels, restaurants, massage parlors, dance bars etc. are mainly taken as middle class sex workers for their livelihood. Such are known as 'call girl' or established sex workers. High class sex workers are from elite family. They mainly involve in sex trade for their self – satisfaction, not for livelihood. Economically, they are capable

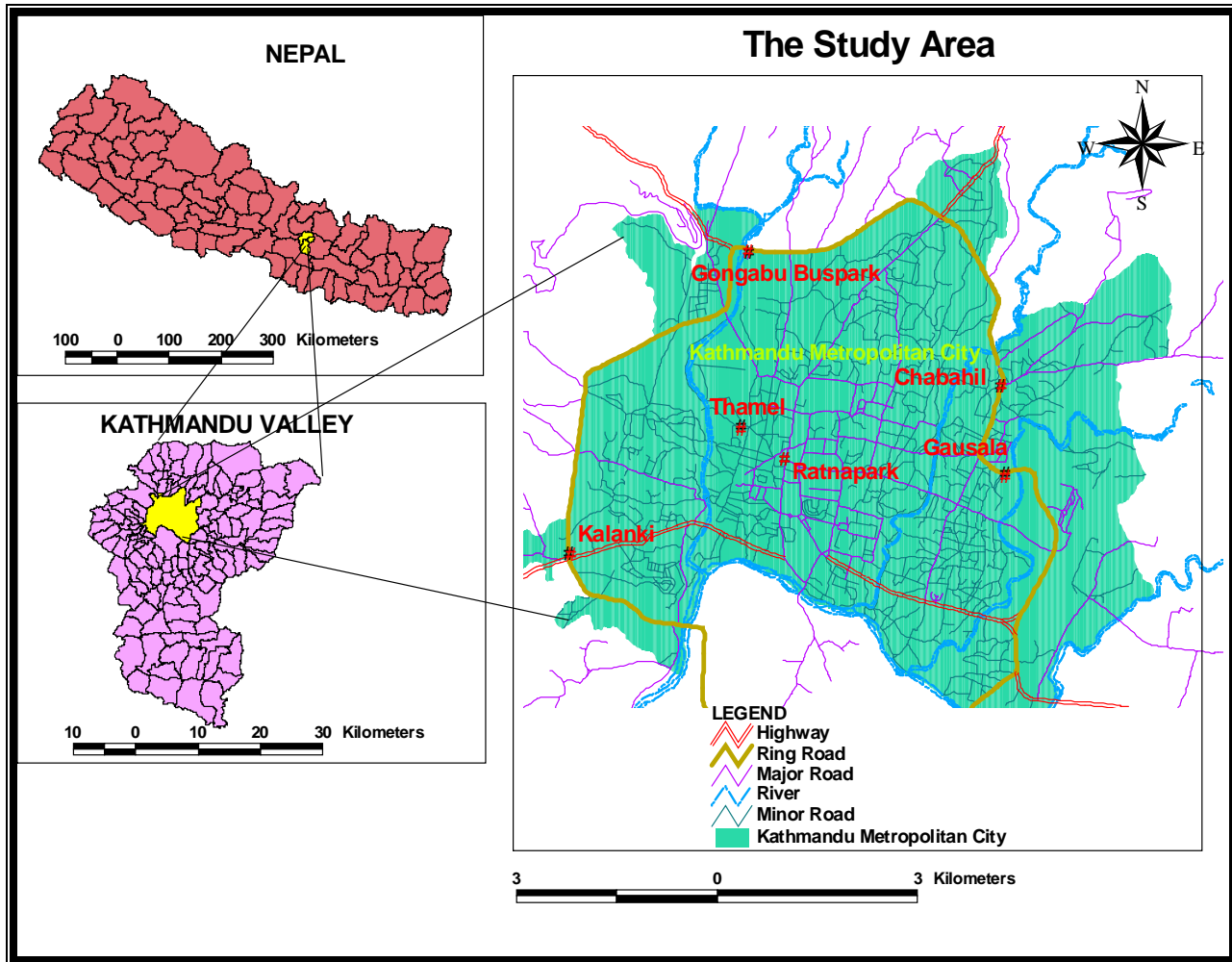
but psychologically dissatisfied so, they involve in sex trade to fulfill their sexual desire. Here, in the present study, lower and middle class female sex workers, who do not have permanent job and work as prostitute for earning their livelihood through sex trade, are primarily selected and regarded female sex workers. The study slightly emphasizes the street female workers.

### **3.3 The Study Area and Basis of the Selection**

This study is confined to Kathmandu Metropolitan city. Geographically, Kathmandu valley is located between 28° 32' N to 28° 49' 0'' N latitude and 85° 11' E to 85° 31' 38'' E longitude. The Kathmandu valley floor extends from 25 km from east to west and 19 km from north to south within area of 640 sq. km. Kathmandu metropolitan city covers an area of 49.5 km<sup>2</sup> of Kathmandu valley and had a total population of 671,846 with a density of 13586.4 person per km<sup>2</sup> in 2001. The district boundary adjoins with Kavrepalanchowk in the east, Dhading and Makawanpur in the west, Nuwakot and Sindhupalchok in the north and Makwanpur in the south.

On the basis of following major characteristics, Kathmandu Metropolitan has been selected as the study site. First; it is the only metropolitan city of the country. Second; being a capital city as well as political, economic, cultural and historic core of Nepal, it offers more opportunities for livelihood earning and has shown that large number of female sex workers from different caste and parts of the country are involved in sex trade and no other city in Nepal has such a number of FSWs. The urbanization rate of Kathmandu is very high and sex trade is increasing everyday due to the poverty as well different socio-economic factors.

**Map 1 Study sites jn Kathmandu**



### **3.4 Nature and Sources of Data**

This study is mainly based on primary data and information collected at informants' working place though semi-structured and unstructured interview schedules. However, related and useful information are obtained from secondary sources such as publications of concerned governmental and non-governmental organizations. Both qualitative and quantitative data are collected and utilized through different tools and techniques. However, much emphasis has been given on qualitative information.

### **3.5 Methods and Procedure of Data Generation**

Data were generated from field survey which was held for 45 days in January / February 2009. There are different research methods for chosen issue, people, and places. The choice of research methods usually depends upon the nature of the study and objectives. Being a student of a human geography and considering the selected



case study of a social group, i.e. FSWs, quantitative methods were adopted to verify their socio-economic and demographic characteristics. However, the present study slightly tilted towards qualitative path. Field observation, in-depth interview and key informant interviews are key methods. The following tools and techniques were utilized:

### **3.5.1 Reconnaissance**

Before entering the field, a reconnaissance was conducted to get information about the areas as well as FSWs and to test the effectiveness of research strategy and viability of the study. Potential field difficulties encountered by the researcher were identified. Similarly, to get an idea of rapport building with respondents and to find out the repeated and missing items developed interview schedules were tested.

### **3.5.2 Observation**

Observation, a fundamental technique of data collection in social research, is activity of accurate watching and noting of phenomenon. It entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviors and artifacts in a social setting (Marshall and Rossman, 1995 quoted by Kitchen and Tate, 2000). Moreover direct field observation is a major weapon of geographer for the collection of real information. Without observation collected information may not be real and authentic so observation is necessary for collecting actual information. The researcher employed observation mainly for three purposes. First was identifying and counting the enumerative functions of FSWs. The second purpose was gathering complimentary evidences. By observing the FSWs, the researcher found useful as well as important additional descriptive informations like the way of searching their clients, bargaining power, age wise presence, their busy and peak hour etc. The third purpose was contextual understanding. For this, their lifestyle, basic assets, vulnerability and urban environmental situations, biggest site etc, were observed.

### **3.5.3 Sampling Procedure**

Since the sex trade is an illegal activity in Nepal, most of the FSW were not ready to accept them as sex worker. Exact figures are not available however, there are large

number of female sex workers involved in sex trade. Some publications of non-government organizations as well as newspaper estimate that. This study is risky and difficult. So adequate sample size is not available easily. Another thing is that the researcher was resource limited both in terms of time and funding. In qualitative research analysis of understanding and perception of people is more important than sample size (See Hay, 2000). However, adequate sample size is important for better understanding of different aspects of the FSW's lives.

The purposeful and snowball sampling method was used to collect primary information. Sample sizes were determined by the situation of selected sites and observed frequency of FSWs. The sample was collected in the day time and late evening by head count method. During the observation it was found that Ratnapark and its surrounding areas namely Jamal, Bhotahity, Bagbazar, Old Bus park, Sundahara were dominant and famous in terms of magnitude and social interaction. So, biggest sample size was selected in this site. 25 informants were approached there. Being a bus park, Gongabu is also famous for sex trade so ten informants were selected. Thamel and its surrounding area is regarded biggest sex market in Katmandu mainly for two reasons: firstly, there are a lot of luxurious lodges, hotels, dance and *Dohari* restaurants as well as massage parlors etc. where large number of female are working as hotel girl. Second, being luxurious hotels, tourists are staying there and the area is affected by modernization, globalization as well as western culture and civilization. So, previous studies have claimed that sex work is extensively extended in this area. The researcher approached only five informants due to the funding and nature of the site. Similarly ten respondents answered the researcher at the Gausala-Chabahil and Kalanki area. In this way, the study is based on the primary information collected from 50 FSWs.

#### **3.5.4 Rapport Building**

Generally people do not like to share their personal life experiences, feelings and actual information with unknown and strangers. To understand their life style and social relation, one must make the informants feel comfortable to share their information. It is very important task to create comfortable environment. For this, the researcher must understand the respondents' behaviors, language, culture as well as

*Chalchalan*. In the present study key informants and observation have played vital role to rapport building. Real FSWs, their behaviors, code language and way of bargaining were found by in-depth-observation.

At first when the researcher reached alone at their working place and started to talk with earlier identified FSWs, they denied to accept themselves as sex workers. No one was ready to talk till 3-4 days which created difficult situation for the study. Then the researcher changed his strategy and disguised himself as a new client and asked their common code language *Jane ho* with a lady. She smiled and asked for NRs. 500. After a short conversation, the researcher introduced himself and made her understood the purpose of the study. She angrily and verbally misbehaved and escaped from there. One day the research saw 2 middlemen talking and teasing the FSWs. Then the researcher met them and introduced himself as well as made them understood the aim of the study very politely and in a respected manner. After showing his identity card and document, the researcher was successful to convince them. Next day the middlemen introduced to the researcher with some FSWs saying *U pani hamrai Saathi ho* (he is also our friend). Later, the researcher gave real identity as well as informed his study purpose very kindly. They were afraid and noticing suspiciously. They asked *Tapai patrakar ho* (Are you a journalist)? *Tapai hamro photo khichera lanu huncha* (Will you take our photo). Such types of question were repeatedly raised at every place. They thought the researcher who carried a bag, as a media person and were afraid of publicity. But at last the researcher was hardly able to convince them by saying he is not an interviewer from any TV channel and newspaper. He will not publish any information from any TV channel or newspaper. He is a student like their brothers and relatives. It is his test and if they will provide real information about their life, he will pass. Their personal information will be kept very secret and no one get this information except the researcher. After visiting them regularly they believed and helped the researcher by providing the actual information about their life. However, still there were some informants who did not like to say anything. In this way, the researcher was able to build good rapport and took in depth interview. During rapport building and convincing the FSWs for response, the researcher too attempted to persuade them that they should respond the researcher even to prevent the same circumstance of their befall on their daughters

### **3.5.5 Interview**

Interview, the most commonly used qualitative technique, is an excellent method of gaining access to information about experiences, feelings or opinions (See Kitchen and Tate, 2000). Research interviews are used for four main reasons (See Hay, 2000).

- ) To fill a gap in knowledge which other methods, such as observation or the use of data, are unable to bridge efficaciously.
- ) To investigate complex behaviors and motivations.
- ) To collect a diversity of opinions and experiences.
- ) To shows respect for and empower those people who provided the data.

In the present study the researcher had conducted following types of interview.

#### **(I) Interview Schedules**

For collecting the qualitative as well as quantitative informations, it is one of the important techniques in the field. Interview schedules were used in structured and semi-structured form of interviewing. Socio-demographic informations such as age, place of origin, education, caste/ethnicity, health statues, and living arrangements were collected in structured form. Basic assets, previous occupation, motivational factors, economic condition and social perceptions were collected in semi-structured form. Interview utilized primary (or original) questions as well as secondary questions including descriptive questions, story telling prompts and structured questions. Funnel (general to specific) approach was employed in ordering questions and topics.

#### **(II) In-depth Interview**

Based on semi-structured schedules, in-depth interview was conducted at respondent's offered time and place with informal chat. Detail informations such as their personal feelings, opinions, experiences, perceptions, livelihood assets, coping stress, motivating factors, economic condition etc. were collected from in-depth interview. Out of 30 FSWs, 10 from Ratnapark and its surrounding areas and 20 from Gongabu, Thamel, Kalanki and Gausala-Chabahil, were selected for in-depth

interviews. During interview most of the FSWs seemed painful and their eyes were full of tears. However, facial expression was attractive in front of their clients.

### **(III) Key Informant Interview**

To understand the FSWs' vulnerability and sustainability, institutional relation, motivational factors, their problems, socio-economic status, social perceptions etc. key informant interviews were conducted with the help of checklist. Eight key informant interviews were taken from different sites with middlemen, clients, police authority, previous researchers, hotel and lodge owners as well as peer educator who were involved in HIV/AIDS awareness program.

### **(IV) Life History Interview**

It is a qualitative method to gather information on the subjective essence of a person's entire life. How their life has unfolded is understood by life history interview. In this study, five life history interviews were conducted with deep experienced respondents on the basis of FSWs' age, caste and years of involvement in sex trade.

#### **3.5.6 Group Discussion**

It was already planned to conduct at least 3 group discussions at different study sites with FSWs. But being a sensitive issue, it was very challenging to conduct theoretically authentic group discussion. FSWs did not feel comfort to share their opinions with other people. No one was ready to gather and discuss. One *Chhakajam* day six FSWs including one middleman gathered and shared their life experience with each other inside Ratnapark. Taking advantage of this leisure time, the researcher was able to conduct group discussion. Different aspects of their livelihood, vulnerability and sustainability context, motivating factors and social perception were discussed within the criteria of checklist. The outcome of the discussion was fruitful.

#### **3.5.7 Field Note**

It is one of the most resourceful instrument and invaluable source of information. Observed information as well as important events, incidents, discussion and field difficulties were noted in the diary. Some information was noted down immediately in the field and some of them were written in the room everyday after returning from

field. Field note has played vital role in analysis and interpretation of information in the present study.

### **3.6 Data Presentation and Analysis**

After collecting required information, both qualitative and quantitative data are processed as well as presented and analyzed. Quantitative data are processed at the desk using editing, coding, classification and tabulation processes. Simple statistical calculation like average, percentage etc are calculated and presented on tabular form using computer program like Excel. On the other hand qualitative data are processed with reading, rereading texts and field note. This study is mainly based on qualitative analysis and qualitative data are analyzed using descriptive and analytical research design. Conclusions are drawn mainly by descriptive method on the basis of gathered information. Qualitative information such as respondent's personal feelings, experiences and related theme are presented in the box using pseudo name and in descriptive form. All mapping works has been done using GIS program.

### **3.7 Ethical Issues and Field Experience**

Ethical issues are important in social research. The researcher has followed research ethics in the present study taking into account 'informed consent' and adapting 'do no harm principles', especially during the data collection process. In the starting phase, the researcher had performed outsider role and later he passed long time in the field and involved as an insider. Information has been taken from informants without any harm to them. Before interviewing good rapport was established and the respondents effectively understood propose of the study. Informants gave their consent to the researcher to take interview. No one was obligated to response and they were free from psycho-social harm. Interviews were conducted at their desired place and time. Collected information as well as real identity of the informants have been placed secret. Instead of real name pseudo name has been used in the study to understand personal feelings and experiences. All type of informants have interviewed and treated homogeneous behavior. No any discrimination took place according to their physicality, age, caste/ethnicity etc. Quite reciprocal relationship between the researcher and the informants was established and no one demonstrated his/her power.

Considering the concept of critical reflexivity, research diary has been kept for evaluating the researcher's own role as well as social context, thoughts and ideas about the research process.

The researcher has bitter as well as interesting experiences during field survey. Since the sex trade is socially and culturally undesirable job, data collection process was very hard. Despite being risky task research was successfully conducted on FSWs. In the earlier phase of the field study, the researcher was frustrated and was ready to change research topic. It was because no informant was ready to say anything about their life till 11<sup>th</sup> day of field visit. Informants had demanded at least NRs. 500 for each interview. After long continuous attempt and good help of middleman first interview was conducted on 12<sup>th</sup> day. Longer time as well as more cost and energy have been spent at field study to get internal aspects of the FSWs' livelihood. Most of the FSWs were busy to search their clients and hardly did they provide time. Sometimes only one informant was found till 4-5 days.

The researcher had begun field work from Ratnapark area. It was because access to the middlemen and FSWs was comparatively easier from here than other places. After good rapport established with the middlemen and FSWs, they recognized other sites and set the way through their own channel. While conducting field study, a number of problems and constraints were encountered, especially during interviewing process. Rapport building with them was not easy task. After frequent visiting as well as hard work and continuous attempt researcher was able to convince them and good rapport was established. When the research propose was explained to informants, they looked very suspiciously And asked many questions as: *Tapailai vanera ke hunchha hamro awastha?*(What happens to our situation to tell you); *tapaile hamra bal bachha lai heri dinuhunchha?* (Do you care our children); *tapaile hamilai paisa dine ho?* (Do you provide us money); *tapai jasta lai dherai kura vanyau tara kehi vayana* (we said much things to persons like you but nothing has been done).Most of the FSWs were afraid of their family members. They asked '*Hamro gharko manchele thaha payo vane ke garnu hunchha?*'(If our family members know our profession what do you do).

Some clients treated as middleman and said “*Malai pani milaidinohos*” and other public guessed as a journalist. During interviewing most of the FSWs wept and remembered their past life and hearing their life story the researcher also felt unhappy and became sentimental. Many difficulties were also faced due to not having drinking and smoking habit. Bad smells of alcohol and smoke of cigarette caused serious dizziness. A group of urban scandals had given many threatens at different sites for taking interview with FSWs. Some of them also had made unsuccessful plan to physically harass the researcher. One late evening, the researcher was alone observing the phenomena. Meanwhile, a group of boys came near and misbehaved as well as verbally abused. As a result one police case occurred at Darbarmarg. Some difficulties were also faced to go informant’s desired place and time to take interviews. Being a male researcher some uneasiness was felt with the FSWs and some of them also felt uneasy to share their personal experiences with the researcher.

Despite these problems, researcher learned many things and enjoyed over all field work. Though at the beginning, it was tedious and frustrating, but later good relation was established and was familiarized with people, places and methods. Later, informants gave real information and some also frankly shared even their very personal matters too. This study helped to understand the real situations and the place specific characteristics of the Kathmandu city. To some extent this study also has led the researcher towards ground reality of the city. It was found that there is a quite different setting between day life and night life of the Kathmandu.



## CHAPTER IV

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMALE SEX WORKERS

This chapter provides socio-economic characteristics of Female Sex Workers. Particularly, it focuses on caste/ethnicity, place of origin, literacy status, age, income, living arrangement and health status.

#### 4.1 Place of Origin

Kathmandu valley is a political, economic, and historic as well as tourist core of Nepal where a large number of FSWs have been earning their livelihood through sex trade. However, most of the FSWs are migrants. Among surveyed ones 84 percent were from outside Kathmandu valley and only 16 percent were from within the valley. The numbers of migrants are different within geographical regions and zones. There are some places from where more FSWs have come and from some places, not a single FSW has come. In the case of Mountain Region, only five FSWs have come from Dolakha, Sindhupalchok and Taplejung that account for ten percent of total number. Similarly, 30 percent FSWs have come from different fourteen districts of Eastern, Central and Western Hill Region which accounts 60 percent and have occupied first position in terms of FSWs' place of origin. However, the largest proportion has come from Bagmati Zone particular surrounding districts of Kathmandu valley which are famous for girls trafficking. Map 4.1 presents the distribution of FSWs by their place of origin. Nobody has come to Kathmandu as FSW from Mid-western and Far-western Development region.

**Table 4.1** Place of Origin by caste/ethnicity

Place of Origin	Caste/Ethnicity				Total	Percent
	High Caste	Low caste	Janajati(Hill)	Janajati(Tarai)		
Eastern Mountain	1	-	-	-	1	2
Eastern Hill	2	1	2	1	6	12
Eastern Tarai	2	1	2	1	6	12
Central Mountain	4	-	-	-	4	8
Central hill	8	1	7	1	17	34
Central Tarai	4	-	1	2	7	14
Western Hill	3	1	3	-	7	14
Western Tarai	1	-	1	-	2	4
<b>Total</b>	25	4	16	5	50	100

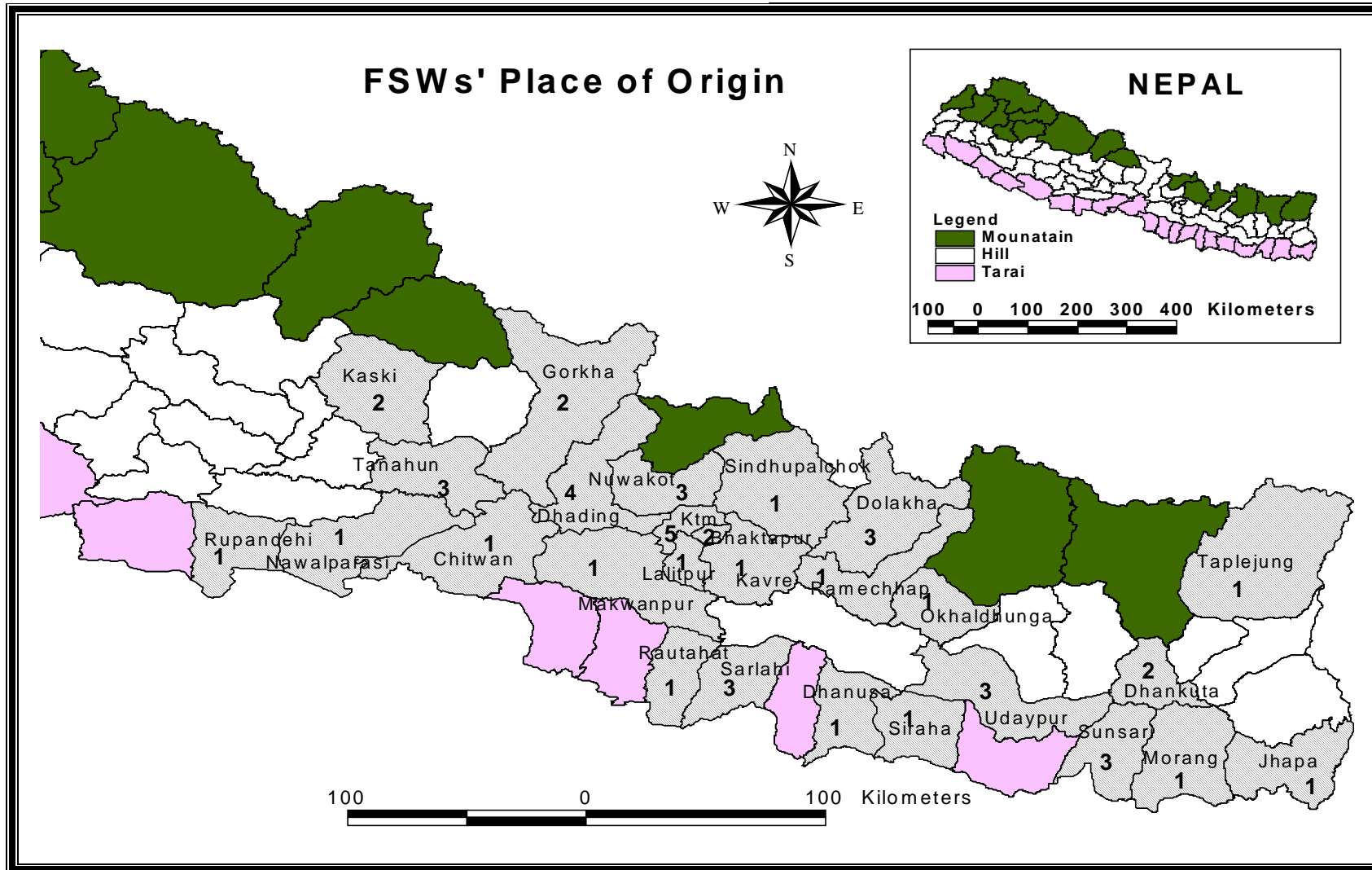
Source: Field survey, Jan/Feb 2009.

The internal migration pattern of Nepal is rural to urban and Hill to Tarai. However 30 percent FSWs are migrated to Kathmandu from different ten districts of Eastern, Central and Western Tarai Region. Out of 15 FSWs of Tarai, 7 FSWs have come from Central Tarai followed by Eastern Tarai. Only 2 FSWs have come from Western Tarai.

Among different caste/ethnicity, so-called high caste have come from different ecological regions. The highest numbers of FSWs of high caste have come from Central Hill followed by Central Mountain and Tarai region. So called lower caste FSWs have come from Hill region. Likewise, larger numbers of FSWs of Hill Janajati have migrated from Central Hill region followed by Western Hill. FSWs of Tarai Janajati have migrated from Central Tarai region. No FSW of Janajati has come from Mountain region.

Place of origin shows that an overwhelming majority of the FSWs are migrants. As a result sex trade is migrant dominant. Most of FSWs stated that they were migrated due to poverty, domestic violence, unemployment etc. Most of the migrants have come from surrounding areas of Kathmandu. Many of them come to the town in search of employment opportunities to survive. So many factors are responsible to determine the destination of the migrant. The migrants choose the nearest city because they want to customize the travel time and cost. And on the other hand, migrants choose the town where there is easily viable of the security and services. The migration pattern of FSWs into Kathmandu seems similar to the classical model of Migration. For example, more FSWs have come from the districts having proximity with the valley i.e. Central region. Moreover, like the findings of previous study (See Pathak, 2004; Baskota, 2005; Subedi and Baral, 2008; Gautam, 2008) the migration from Mid and Far Western Nepal is less frequent even in the case of FSWs.

Map 2 Distributions of FSWs



## 4.2 Caste and Ethnic Background

Customarily sex trade was adopted by *Badi* caste of western Nepal. Nowadays sex trade is not specific to any caste or ethnic group. Socially and culturally it is undesirable as well as hatred profession in the Nepalese society. However, it has been adopted by female of all castes and ethnic background for their livelihood in Kathmandu. The so-called high castes Chhetri/Brahmin are relatively higher in this business. Of all surveyed ones, fifty percent are from higher castes-Chhetri, Brahmin and Thakuri respectively. Similarly 32 percent are from hill Janajati, 10 percent are from Tarai janajati and 8 percent are from so-called lower caste *Dalit*. Among Janajati, Gurung and Magar FSWs are in greater number than Rai, Newar and Tamang.

**Table 4.2** Distribution by caste and ethnic background

Caste and ethnic background		Number of FSWs	Percent
High caste	Chhetri	13	26
	Brahmin	9	18
	Thakuri	3	6
	Total	25	50
Low caste	Dalits	4	8
Janajati (Hill)	Gurung	4	8
	Magar	3	6
	Rai	3	6
	Newar	3	6
	Tamang	2	4
	Total	20	40
Janajati(Tarai)	Madhesi	3	6
	Tharu	2	4
	Total	5	10
<b>Total</b>		50	100

Source: Field survey, Jan/Feb 2009.

Being a global phenomenon and attractive business, females of all caste and ethnic background have been involved in sex trade mainly due to poverty and domestic violence. Nepal Living Standard Survey II shows that poverty rate is higher in lower caste and Janajati than the higher castes (See NPC 2004). However, the involvement of the female of higher castes in sex trade is higher than the lower castes and janajati. As mentioned above, sex trade is not specific to any caste and ethnicity. It is the result of place specific phenomenon. According to the CBS 2001, the total number of

female of high caste is greater than the Janajati and lower caste. So their involvements have shown higher in sex trade. Same case is in Janajati and lower caste.

From migration point of view, FSWs give some allowance to the Lee's model of migration. However, this is a very divergent case in case of poverty and employment. FSWs are normally from poor socio-economic background. Moreover, this occupation is socially and legally undesirable in the context of Nepalese culture and tradition. Recent debates on ethnic and caste exclusion have always supported that caste and ethnic minorities are involved in less desirable and less advantageous profile of employment. If this is the reality this reality does not hold truth in the case of FSWs. Majority of the FSWs are from higher caste and ethnicity can not be taken as determinant factor for social and economic development.

### 4.3 Age Structure

Sex work is directly related to biological aspect of human body. It is not possible to adopt sex work at all time throughout life span. It is mainly possible during reproductive age period. All surveyed FSWs fall in this category ranging between 16-45 years. The average age of the FSWs is 27 years. Largest number i.e.54 percent of the FSWs are between 21-30 years followed by 31-40 years of age group that accounts 26 percent where as no one is below 16 and above 45 years of age. Seven FSWs are from below 20 and three are from above the age of 41.

**Table 4.3** Age structure by place of origin

Place of Origin	Age Groups ( in Years)					Total	Percent
	Below 20	21-30	31-40	41 and above			
Eastern Mountain	-	1	-	-	1	2	
Eastern Hill	1	5	-	-	6	12	
Eastern Tarai	-	5	1	-	6	12	
Central Mountain	-	3	1	-	4	8	
Central hill	2	9	4	2	17	34	
Central Tarai	1	1	4	1	7	14	
Western Hill	2	3	2	-	7	14	
Western Tarai	1	-	1	-	2	4	
<b>Total</b>	7	27	13	3	50	100	

Source: Field survey, Jan/Feb 2009.

The age structure of the FSWs shows that economically active as well as biologically strong and young population has engaged in the sex trade. For example, largest number of FSWs are between 20-40 years of age. The reason behind it is that most of the FSWs are married and are compelled to look after their children and family. They have no resource endowments and alternative jobs for their livelihood.

This age group is compared with place of origin, largest proportion of age group has come from hill region followed by Tarai region. No one has come from mountain region below the 20 years of age and above 40 years of age. Previous studies have found that there were girls under 16 who have also engaged in sex trade. However, no one has found below 16 years of age in this study.

#### 4.4 Educational Background

Education, Skill, and health are wealth of human beings. Educational attainment plays pivot role in the betterment of livelihood and occupation. It is considered as the major factor for the development of a country. From this point of view, educational background of FSWs is not satisfactory. Of all the surveyed FSWs, only 62 percent are literate and 38 percent are only literate. They have got informal education at their place of origin and can read as well as write well. Only 32 percent have primary education and 12 percent have completed secondary education. Only 3 FSWs have passed SLC examination. Education status is higher among established sex workers than street based FWSs.

**Table 4.4** Educational background by caste/ethnicity

Caste/ethnic Background	Illiterate	Literate				Total
		literate only	primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	
High caste	5(20)	3(12)	11(44)	3(12)	3(12)	25(50)
Low caste	3(75)	-	1(25)	-	-	4(8)
Janajati(hill)	7(43.75)	2(12.50)	4(25)	3(18.75)	-	16(32)
Janajati(Tarai)	4(80)	1(20)	-	-	-	5(10)
<b>Total</b>	19(38)	6(12)	16(32)	6(12)	3(6)	50(100)

Source: Field survey, Jan/Feb 2009. Figures within parenthesis indicates percentage.

Table 4.4 shows the educational background by their caste and ethnic background. FSWs of high caste are more educated, followed by hill janajati, than other caste and ethnicity. Only 3 FSWs of high caste have completed SLC and no other castes FSWs have access in higher education. It is because high caste women are at forefront in socio-economic status. Among illiterate, FSWs of Tarai janajati are in greater number followed by lower caste. Similarly, among literate ones, highest proportion of FSWs has got primary levels education.

The education status of FSWs shows that higher caste FSWs are more educated but the overall education attainment is low. Most of the FSWs reported that they are deprived of education in their childhood mainly due to poor economic status, early marriage and familial problem in the household. Beside these, the educational status of women is not satisfactory in the Nepalese society. They are not treated like their male counterparts. The investment on girl for education is considered something which has no return. Nepalese society frankly says “educating a daughter means watering a neighbor’s flower plant” as the return goes to somebody else. Despite being uneducated, most of the FSWs are schooling their children either in a private or a public school.

#### **4.5 Marital Status and Family Relation**

Marriage is a source of companionship and over all security rather than a ritual, social and sexual obligations in Nepalese society. The marital status of FSWs shows that overwhelming majority is ever-married and only 5 FSWs are unmarried. Among the ever-married ones, 64 percent FSWs are either divorced or separated. It is mainly due to domestic violence and polygamy system. Nearly 8 percent FSWs are single. Single and divorced/separated FSWs have adopted this occupation in order to earn their own and children’s livelihood without being dependent on others.

**Table 4.5** Marital status by ethnic/caste group

Caste/Ethnic Background	Marital Status		Categories of ever Married			Total	%
	Never Married	Ever Married	Married (living together)	Divorced Separated	Widow		
High Caste	2 (8)	23 (92)	3 (12)	19 (76)	1 (4)	25	50
Low Caste	-	4 (100)	1 (25)	2 (50)	1 (25)	4	8
Janajati(hill)	3 (18.7)	13 (81.25)	2 (12.5)	9 (37.5)	2 (12.5)	16	32
Janajati(Tarai)	-	5 (100)	3 (60)	2 (40)	-	5	10
Total	5 (10)	45 (90)	9 (18)	32 (64)	4 (8)	50	100

Source: Field survey, Jan/Feb 2009. Figures within parenthesis indicate percentage.

Table 4.5 shows the marital status by their caste/ethnic background where the proportion of ever-married as well as divorced/separated FSWs is higher among high caste than Janajati and lower caste followed by hill Janajati. Likewise, the proportion of never-married and single is higher among hill Janajati followed by high caste. The proportion of FSWs living together with their husband is higher among high caste as well as Tarai Janajati. Some of their husbands are unknown about their profession and some of them are involved themselves as a middleman. The following case is typical:

#### Box 4.1 Husband working as middleman

Kusum (pseudo name) was married 10 years ago. Her drunkard husband lives in his home village Tanahu and frequently comes to Kathmandu and takes money from her. It was he who first obligated Kusum to adopt this occupation for earning money. He first made contact with nearly a dozen of clients and took money from her. She made a mind that if husband pushes her to sex trade, who else should she hide from? Her husband does not care anything except money. Kusum still remembers she had earned NRs. 1500 for the first time when her client was an army man and he was brought by her husband. Her relation with family members at place of origin is still sound. Now, she has a very benevolent client. He is one of her regular clients and loves her as is ready even to get married with her and Kusum is in dilemma.



Family relation is closely related with marital status. Almost 90 percent divorced and separated FSWs have stated that there is no any contact and relation with their husband and remaining 10 percent FSWs have little connection through their children. However, their husbands have rejected them and remarried. The overall family relation is not satisfactory. Only 40 percent FSWs have relation with their place of origin. Those FSWs who are living in a home base social space have better relation with their family members than the outer living FSWs. Similarly, high castes FSWs have better relation with their family members than other caste and ethnicity. Most of the FSWs had reported that they were victim of domestic violence before adopting sex trade. Moreover, who are living with their husbands and boy friends are still suffering from domestic violence and abuse. 94 percent FSWs have claimed that their family members are unknown about their real profession. They have cheated their family members saying that they work in a hotel, office, as a wage labor and as a peer educator. Only six percent FSWs' family members know their job and some of them have accepted and some have rejected.

#### **4.6 Accommodation and Living Arrangements**

Majority of the FSWs are migrants as well as poor and are living in a rented room. Most of them stated that their living place was surrounding area where they were working. Of total 50 FSWs, 45 or 90 percent are living in rented room and only three FSWs have their own home in the valley. The remaining two FSWs are living in different squatter settlements. Among those who are living in rented room, the average rent is NRs 1500 per month.

**Table 4.6** Accommodation and living arrangement

<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Number of FSWs</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Rent	45	90
Own house	3	6
Others	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Living Arrangement</b>	<b>Number of FSWs</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
With whole family	14	28
With children	12	24
Alone	11	22
With boy friend	6	12
With friend	4	8
Spouse only	3	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey, Jan/Feb 2009.

Living arrangements in terms of room mate has been shown in table 4.6 in which, 58 percent FSWs are living in domestic or home base social space and 42 percent are living outer space or home range social space. 22 percent FSWs are living alone and there is no one to look after them. They have faced great problem especially during illness. Among home base social space, most of them are living with their whole family and with children than spouse. Six FSWs have been adopted as kept mistress and girl friend by their clients and living together in a rented room.

The living standard is not sound. They have no sufficient facilities in their room. Living standard is comparatively higher among established FSWs than street based. Most of them i.e. 60 percent are using stove and *Bhusechulo* to prepare food. Only 46 percent FSWs have TV set in their room. Almost all have mobile set at their hand. It is mainly used to contact their clients.

## 4.7 Income and Expenditure

The livelihood pattern is different in urban and rural areas mainly due to their rural urban characteristics and functions. Rural area is largely dependent upon agriculture activities where substantial portion of consumed goods is self produced. But in urban areas there is very little chance to produce required commodities and people need to buy everything to sustain their livelihoods. So, cash income is very important to sustain life in urban areas than rural areas. To earn cash income and sustain his/her life, one must do something in Kathmandu. FSWs are obligated to earn cash income and sustaining their livelihood through sex trade in different places. The income pattern of FSWs varies in different places .Table 4.7 presents average monthly income of FSWs at different places of Kathmandu. Despite having poor social status their monthly income is much more than other occupational groups such as cobblers, porters, street vendors, female tempo drivers etc (See Pathak 2004, Baskota 2005, Subedi and Baral 2008, Gautam 2008). The average monthly income is NRs 19,600. Income is not uniform in all days and months. However, this is straight forward calculation and based on average daily income as stated by FSWs. Sometimes they earn much more money and sometimes do not earn even NRs 50 too. The income is largely dependent upon place, FSWs and their clients.

**Table 4.7** Monthly income in different place

<b>Place</b>	<b>Average Monthly Income (in NR)</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Ratnapark Area	22,500	II
Gongabu	18,500	III
Thamel	30,000	I
Gausala-Chabahil	15,000	IV
Kalanki	12,500	V
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,600</b>	<b>5</b>

Source: Field survey, Jan/Feb 2009.

Thamel is the highest sex market in the valley in terms of income where monthly income is NRs 30,000. It is possible that many dance restaurants, massage parlors and hotels with well tourist accommodation facilities have led to sex trade activities. So,

FSWs are concentrated in Thamel and main clients of this place are tourists as well as elite groups.

Ratnapark and its surrounding area hold second rank. Connectivity and accessibility have increased the flow of people in these areas and social interaction is higher in terms of magnitude than other area of city. The income is lesser around ring road area i.e. Gongabu, Gausala-Chabahil and Kalanki respectively, than city core area where monthly income is lesser than aggregate average. Among the ring road area Gongabu where there is Bus Park, has highest income pattern and Kalanki has lesser income than the other places. This income pattern shows that city core area has occupied larger number of FSWs than periphery.

**Table 4.8** Income by age groups

Income(in NRS)	Age Group (in Years)				Total	Percent
	10-20	21-30	31-40	41 & above		
5000 - 9000	-	-	4	3	7	14
10,000-14,000	-	3	3	-	6	12
15,000-19,000	2	6	3	-	11	22
20,000-24,000	-	8	1	-	9	18
25,000 & above	5	10	2	-	17	34
<b>Total</b>	7	27	13	3	50	100

Source: Field survey, Jan/Feb 2009.

Monthly income not only varies over places but also with age group. The monthly income of the FSWs has depended upon their age. Table 4.8 shows the monthly income of the FSWs by their age group. Out of total 50 FSWs, 34 percent earn more than 25 thousand per month in which, about 59 percent FSWs are between 21-30 years of age followed by below 20. However, the proportion of the income is higher among the FSWs below 20 years of age. The FSWs above 40 years of age have lowest income. They earn in a month less than nine thousand which is lesser by fifty percent than the aggregate average income. Among the surveyed ones, more than half of FSWs i.e. 56 percent earn at least twenty thousand in a month. The age wise income pattern of the FSWs shows that there is negative co-relation between age and income. As age increases, the income of the FSWs has decreased. However, only FSWs' age does not determine the income, their physicality, beauty, health condition as well as dress up to some extent have affected the income. Moreover, it varies over places.

## **Expenditure, Saving and Utilization of Income**

As income is different, all the FSWs do not have same expenditure. It is determined by their family size, income and age group. Most of the FSWs spend their earning in basic needs such as *Rasanpani*, clothing, rent, health care, children's education plus care etc. In addition to these, they spend on communication(mobile phone), cosmetics, entertainment and even in drugs they are addicted to. As mentioned above income is highly fluctuated and determined by age, place and physicality. Most of the FSWs reported that the expenses are increasing daily and the market price of necessary items is sky-rocketing. The expenses are higher than income. Despite having very high average income, the FSWs are found to have frequent financial crisis and their perception to their financial uncertainties is so strong that most of them say that their income is not enough even for a simple livelihood. Twenty six percent FSWs are in debt and facing financial crisis. They have to face miserable condition to live land to mouth in a daily life. Some i.e. fifteen FSWs have reported that they have some saving in a finance company. They are able to manage their better livelihood than previous occupation. Moreover, thirty eight percent FSWs have faced financial crisis during illness. The following cases shows their expenditure, saving and utilization of income.

### **Box 4.2 Suntali is still in debt**

Suntali (pseudo name) hardly earns NRs. 12,000 in a month. She spends her earning on her children's schooling and their care. She has two children who are admitted to a private school. Moreover, she herself fills the rent for the room and other daily expenses. On the top of this financial burden, she is also obligated to spend money for her drunkard husband who is still unemployed. Thus, she has not yet been able to make any saving. Instead she is in debt of NRs.50, 000.

### **Box 4.3 Unable to make saving**

Tara (pseudo name), earns around NRs.15, 000 a month. Her expenditures are made on son's education that has been kept in a hostel. She also fills the need of her brother who is studying in +2 college. She sometimes gives money to her parents too. Personal expenses on cosmetics, snacks and communication (e.g. phone) are obvious, so she has not been able to make any saving yet.

#### Box 4.4 Aarati is main income source of her whole family

Aarati's (pseudo name) monthly income exceeds NRs. 35,000 and her income is the sole source of household expenditure for the whole family. She has a flat in Kathmandu the rent of which is high. She has parents, sister and her own son to care for. Expenses of her sister and son's education are also higher as her son is in a hostel of a private school and her sister in a college. Despite high expenditure, she has been able to make a saving of some NRs 3, 00000 by now.

#### Box 4.5 Gold necklace from own earning

Mina (pseudo name) earns NRs 18,000 a month. Her son is in a hostel in a private school. Since she does not have a big family to look after, she also makes some saving. She has a saving of NRs 80,000 in a finance company. She has also bought a gold necklace by her saving. However, a big sum is spent on cigarette and alcohol as she is addicted to them.

Overall income of the FSWs is higher than other urban poor and their expenditure is very usual to others mostly at household level. But since most of the FSWs have big families to look after, their expenditure is high. Moreover, FSWs who have children seem to have well-recognized the value of their children's education, so investment on this sector is high. In sum, although the income of FSWs is high, higher expenditure does not let them make saving on most cases.

### 4.8 Health Status and Awareness

It is said that health is wealth. A person is known to be healthy when he/she is physically, mentally and socially well (Let's keep the social status of the FSWs aside). Healthy person can do any work to earn livelihood. Health status of FSWs is poor and highly risky. Almost all the FSWs have awareness about their health condition and they have been visiting DICs, STI clinics and VCT centers for health check up. They have used condoms during sexual intercourse with their clients except their husband as well as boyfriend. Few of them stated they have used double condom to prevent HIV/AIDS and other STDs. However, some of them have ignored their health condition and were earning money keeping their life at risk. They are having sexual contact with 3-4 persons in a single day. A few number of them reported that they continue intercourse during menstruation period and even in illness using pain killer for their livelihood. Moreover, according to them there were some FSWs who offer sex work without condom to earn much money. This tendency shows their

health condition is worsening day by day and they are calling HIV/AIDS and other STDs. Out of them, 10% are suffering from HIV and other STDs.

**Table 4.9** Drug abusers by caste/ethnicity

Addiction	Caste/Ethnicity				Total	%
	High Caste	Low Caste	Janajati(hill)	Janajati(Tarai)		
Smoking only	5	2	5	1	13	26
Alcoholism only	2	-	-	1	3	6
Smoking & Drinking	10	1	6	2	19	38
Tobacco	2	-	2	-	4	8
No Addiction	6	1	3	1	11	22
Total	25	4	16	5	50	100

Source: Field survey, Jan/Feb 2009.

Besides these, from drug abuse perspective also their health condition is poor. Of 50 FSWs, 78% have at least one type of drug addiction and only 22% FSWs are free from such addiction (Table 4.9). Among addiction about 49% FSWs have drinking and smoking habit. The proportion and number of high caste FSWs are higher on both drug abusers and non drug abusers. However, the proportion of having smoking habit is higher among the FSWs of hill Janajati than other caste and ethnicity. Drug addiction is higher among established FSWs than street based.

During field visit, it was found that almost all the FSWs have faced any types of mental as well as physical health hazards. Most of them were facing the problem of regular headache, mental tension, irregular menstruation and over bleeding, pain in lower abdomen during sexual work and vaginal bleeding due to frequent sexual activity. No one was surviving without mental tension. Some of them stated that they have to face unusual sexual behaviors with their clients.

## CHAPTER V

### MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS AND SOCIAL PERCEPTION

This section shows how and why women jump into sex trade and what their motivating factors are. Particularly, this chapter describes previous occupations, motivational factors and social perception of the FSWs.

#### 5.1 Previous Occupation

Previous occupations and activities of the FSWs are not similar. According to them, they were not engaged in a single job and they had adopted different jobs to earn money in their previous life over time. However, just before adopting sex trade, most FSWs were engaged in different occupational activities in the form of wage labor. Thirteen FSWs out of 50 were not doing anything before sex trade; where eight were housewife and only 5 were students. Of all the FSWs, 16 percent were working as hotel girl as waitress and/or cleaners. Similarly 16 percent other FSWs were doing own business like tea shop, hotel owner and vegetable sellers. Some of them i.e. 10 percent FSWs were involved in agricultural activities at their place of origin. Some of the FSWs were working as housemaid in the elite family, others worked in a garment factory as a weaver

**Table 5.1** previous occupations by caste/ethnicity

Previous Occupation	Caste/Ethnicity				Total	%
	High Caste	Low Caste	Janajati(hill)	Janajati(Tarai)		
Hotel girl	5	-	3	-	8	16
House wife	5	1	1	1	8	16
Business	3	1	3	1	8	16
Wage labor	2	1	3	-	6	12
Student	3	-	2	-	5	10
Agriculture	2	-	2	1	5	10
Housemaid	2	-	-	2	4	8
Garment weaver	1	1	2	-	4	8
Others	2	-	-	-	2	4
Total	25	4	16	5	50	100

Source: Field survey, Jan/Feb 2009.



Table 5.1 shows the previous occupation of the FSWs by their caste/ethnicity. Among surveyed the FSWs of high caste had engaged in all occupation and their number is higher among these occupation except wage labor than other caste/ethnicity. Similarly, no any FSWs of low caste and Tarai Janajati had neither worked as hotel girl nor been student. Higher diversity of previous occupation of higher caste seems to give allowance to the higher economic activity rate of that caste. Complete absence of low caste (*Dalit*) in hotel may have link with tendency of untouchability.

Almost all the FSWs stated that their income from previous activities was low and insufficient to sustain even a simple life. Most of them reported that they had faced many difficulties and bad situations. Those who worked as hotel girl reported that they had faced physical and verbal sexual harassment and even had have sex forcefully. They were forced by means of psychological and physical threats to give sexual favours and to adopt bad habits such as smoking, drinking and flesh trade. Likewise who had worked as wage labor and garment weaver reported that they were socially and economically exploited and faced sexual discrimination and harassment. Housemaids were raped by their house owner. Most of the FSWs complained that they had to wait longer time to get their wage and could not get money when they demanded. Those who were housewives stated they had faced severe domestic violence and economic crisis. For others the previous work was very hard.

## **5.2 Motivational Factors**

Adoptions of sex trade as a livelihood strategy by a section of urban women have been driven by various factors. Globalization and modernization have marginalized many people in the urban areas. Rapid urbanization without the development of adequate employment opportunities has led many unskilled, uneducated and poor people to adopt various strategies for earning livelihood. The context of many FSWs is very close to the above stated circumstances. However, adoption of this legally and socially undesirable occupation does not find its context only urbanization and modernization. Many social issues such as political conflict, poverty, unsuccessful conjugal life, domestic violence, sexual discrimination and harassment etc. also have close link to sex trade. Some FSWs are also found to have been motivated to sex trade for sexual self satisfaction and some perceive that they have been 'addicted' to

sexual activities as they first begun getting motivated from friends. With out any investment and educational qualification every one can engage in sex trade. Moreover, no any extra skill, citizenship certificate are not necessary and comparatively it is easy to do and hire income than other occupation. Thus many poor, uneducated and unskilled women have been pushing towards sex trade. The following stories of FSWs show that motivations of FSWs are diverse.

#### Box 5.1 Maoist conflict obligated to adopt sex trade

Mamata (pseudo name) age 27 years form Okhaldhunga has been adopting sex trade for three years. She had left her village due to intensified conflict in the rural areas. She was a school girl when the Maoist army came to her and forced her to join the liberation army. It was beyond her interest and when threatens for joining the army was too much, her parents sent to Kathmandu and settled with their relatives. However, life in Kathmandu also was not easy so, she started to look for job. Since she had no special skill, educational qualification, citizenship, finding job became very difficult. Finally one of her friends in the locality of her relative suggested her to work in a cabin restaurant. Then she joined the restaurant as a waitress. In course of time she came to a close contact with a regular customer, who was married and employed in Nepalese army, and they fell in love with each other. Finally he married her without informing his family. A son was born to her. But the dual conjugal life could not run properly. When she asked for money with husband to care her child, he ignored it frequently. She faced economic crisis and separated. With her son, Mamata was in urgent need of regular source of income. Her qualification didn't offer her better job. She was then obligated to employ the experience she had gained in the restaurant. Some economically better-off waitresses in the restaurant had been involved in sex trade too. Thus, Mamata also made mind and now she is fully involved in street based sex trade.

#### Box 5.2 Domestic violences and unsuccessful conjugal life

Susmita (pseudo name) aged 25 has been involved in sex trade for five years. She is from Kaski and migrated to Kathmandu when she got married with a bus driver then driving from Kathmandu from Pokhara. Theirs was not only a love but also an inter-caste marriage. Both families (of her father and father-in-law) did not approve their marriage so they started living separately in Kathmandu. However, her economic condition went worse as her husband barely brought any money home. She later came to know that he was addicted to alcoholism. Two children were born to them in four years of their conjugal life. On the top of her household economic stress, she became victim severe domestic violence in those years. She decided to separate and live on her own when her husband married another woman. But, it was not easy because she was illiterate, unskilled and penniless to invest on anything. Moreover, she could not take loan for she had not taken citizenship certificate. It was the most difficult time for her when she had nothing to feed her children and pay for room. She now sighs on her

obligation to adopt sex trade on suggestion of one of her friends. Her monthly income now is around NRs 20000 and her sons are schooling in a private school in Kathmandu.

### Box 5.3 Deceived by selfish beloved

Srijana (pseudo name) is one of the FSWs in Kathmandu. She is 18 years old lady from Dhading and is unmarried. Unfavourable familial condition compelled her to come to Kathmandu. Her mother died when she was still a school girl. Her father re-married and her relation with the step mother worsened. Moreover, she came to be severally victimized by her drunkard father's behaviour. Finally, with dreams of happy and successfully life, she migrated to Kathmandu with one of her relatives and stated living together with him. She was confirmed that her dreams would come true when she came in contact of a man who worked in movie projects. He persuaded her that he would help her join movies and she needs to learn dance. He himself admitted her in a dance class. With passage of time, they fell in love and before they decided to get married, Srijana found herself to be pregnant of her beloved. The edifice of her dream collapsed when her beloved rejected her to marry on the eleventh hour. In this condition, she was ignored and even hated by her friends and relatives. She wanted abortion but she had no money. Finally she found a man in Thamel who agreed to pay her abortion and even grant her a job of a dancer in the dance restaurant he owned. It was there in the dance restaurant that she got addicted to smoking and drink. The more dangerous of the addiction was of sex work with the clients who offered the plenty of money. She is now an established sex worker in Thamel and earns around NRs.30, 000 a month.

### Box 5.4 To continue study

Rama (pseudo name) passed SLC from Dharan and came to Kathmandu for higher studies. However, the poor economic condition of her parents did not allow her study without any source of income so she started to look for a side job. Rama found it very difficult to get a suitable job so she finally got some debt from her relatives in Dharan and completed her first year's study. But the same misery repeated in her second year study. Finally she found a job of waitress in a dance restaurant through a friend. Although the remuneration in the restaurant was very low, it was at least keeping her in Kathmandu and at least she was continuing her studies. However, the recent government policy towards restricting night clubs and restaurant pushed her out of her usual job and she again came to be unemployed. Now she and some of her friends were obligated to (as they say) adopt last alternative-sex trade. They are now contact-base sex workers in Kathmandu.

### Box 5.5 Infertility and sexual harassment

Phulmaya (Pseudo name) of 33 has been involved in sex trade for four years. Her journey from her conjugal life to sex trade is very sympathetic. She was 18 years old when she got married in her village in Gorkha. However, her infertility was proved when no child was born to her in four years of her married life. Finally her husband remarried another woman. She could not live a life of dignity in her

family as her relation with in-laws worsened. She then came to Kathmandu in search for a livelihood option. In a Marwadi family she started to work as a household worker but later when she got raped by her master she left the job and joined a garment factory as a wage laborer. In the second job also she was the victim of sexual harassment. Moreover, her earning was too very little. She was thus compelled to give that job up again. Getting sexual harassment everywhere, she started perceiving this as the final and obvious destiny. Consequently, she is now an established sex worker in Kathmandu.

#### Box 5.6 An exceptional case

After having passed the proficiency certificate level, Puja (pseudo name) got married with a young man of reputed business family. She was 22 years old then and lived in her in-law's joint family for five more years. When she and her husband settled a nuclear family of their own, two children (son and daughter) had been born to them. The children were kept in the hostel but later Puja remained alone most of the time when her husband frequently visited outside the valley even foreign countries in course of business affairs. Initially she overcame the monotonous loneliness in home by visiting her friends and many places but these recreations brought a worse habit of drinking alcohol in her. Unfulfilled sexual desire consequent upon frequent absence of her husband added another psychological problem. To quench her sexual thrust, she secretly visits street clients and sometimes goes to restaurants too. She is a usual sex worker but her sex work is not meant to earn livelihood. Despite her involvement in sex outside, it is known that her relation to her husband is still sound.

#### Box 5.7 The story of failure

Kamala (Pseudo name) of 42 from Gorkha's story of livelihood strategy is a story of failure. She came to Kathmandu with her husband with whom she had made an inter-cast marriage. But this love marriage did not last long. The husband remarried another woman and she was separated. For earning the children, she opened a tea shop but it did not well. Later she started vegetable shop. Here too no adequate earning could to make for her livelihood. The next attempt of her was on foot path clothe shop. But the recent municipal policy of foot path shop removal affected her very badly. There was, she thought, no other alternative left so she involved in sex trade.

Social and human capitals are very important assets an individual should possess for a secure livelihood. Lack of educational capital, technical skills and the prevalence of poverty impeding investment for self-reliant livelihood strategies are some of the important causes of urban poor for having an insecure livelihood and high level of livelihood vulnerability and the case of FSWs is also very similar. However, the cases given above show some more serious circumstances that have motivated women to adopt sex trade as their livelihood strategies. The first case that of Mamata shows the internal armed conflict that intensified in the rural area has importantly and implicitly contributed to the migration of a young woman to Kathmandu. This

unplanned and obligatory migration has suffered all sorts of livelihood problem in the city. Her livelihood stress begins from that and the another turning point motivating her to adopt sex trade is her stressful and unsuccessful conjugal relationship with her husband. Then come educational backwardness and poverty that have restricted her to any other livelihood strategy other than sex trade. The case of Susmita is similar to that of Mamata. Her motivation to sex work starts her conflict in the family consequent upon undesirable inter-caste marriage. Even if she had to end her conjugal life, she could adopt any other livelihood strategy. However, her poverty for investment, low educational and technical status pushed her from other alternatives and sex trade attracted her because this is relatively easy business, demanded no investment but offered high income. On the same line comes the story of Shrijana who was deceived by her beloved who impregnated her and later left her. She who had already had a worsened relation with her family, got obligated to join a restaurant the owner of which helped her to abort the pregnancy. Actual motivation to sex trade is the psychological environment in case of Shrijana where she was in undeclared sexual environment. The fifth case- the case of Phulmaya- illustrates many interconnected social issues that are related not only to women's sex involvement but also to other suppressions of women in every sphere of their life. Women's social and individual rights are really very feeble. Phulmaya's weakness was only one she was infertile and she could not have children. Only with this weakness her whole life bore sympathetic story. An infertile woman is socially empty in Nepalese traditional society. Secondly women are subordinated in many spheres and one of the inequalities and exploitations is a sexual abuse and harassment. Phulmaya's motivation towards sexual trade stems out of unbearable sexual harassment she had to undergo in her working places. Thus, psychologically she got compelled to adopt this as her occupation. Not only are the financial and economic circumstances the motivational factors for adopting sex trade. Larger institutional arrangements are also equally important factors. This is exemplified by the case of Rama. She was not a sex worker only was employed in a restaurant as a waitress but when the night restaurants were restricted by municipal policy, her employment was gone. She was marginalized to such an extent that she adopted sex trade because there was no alternative she could seek for. The case of Kamala shows that she was motivated to sex trade because this occupation offered a stronger guarantee of higher income than her previous attempt which could not give her adequate earning for her livelihood.

To sum up, poverty and lack of other human capitals are not only the motivational factors but have their origin on failure on maintaining conjugal life. Most of the FSWs are divorced or separated (See chapter, IV). So, their subordinate position marginalizes them especially from economic point of view. Major point of motivation in sex trade lies in the fact that this occupation is free of investment, it insures a high income and it is relatively easy going livelihood option. It was found that most of the FSWs wanted to do otherwise for making a living. But, they had no citizenship certificate. This also is another problem. Hence, motivational factors are really complex as well as interconnected.

### 5.3 Social Perception towards FSWs

Sex trade is an ancient and widespread phenomenon. Even though it is never welcomed by any society; women, men and transgender sell sex all over the world have done so forever. Socially and culturally it is undesirable and unacceptable in the Nepalese society. Discussing sex and sexuality is beyond the social morality. Sex work is not perceived as a decent profession. There is a general perception that FSWs are like prostitutes and categorized them as ‘deviant women’. Society treats FSWs as a separate class and abuses them with less prestigious words as *Bhaloo*, *Beshya* and *Randhi*. They have no social value and morality. As sex workers, FSWs are ostracized by society, abused by the police and often their clients and are deprived of many essential services because of their profession. They are not perceived as capable in the office. Moreover, their own family members reject and dishonour them. The following cases are typical:

#### Box 5.8 Children denied calling mother

Ranjita (pseudo name) had three children when she came to Kathmandu. She had no alternatives and adopted sex trade for their livelihood. Her children were studying at public school. In the course of time, her children grew up and one day her older son of 13 years knew her profession and activities. He hated his mother left home forever. Two months later her daughter also knew her job and escaped with a boy. Nowadays they have no any connection. They do not like to call her mother at all because of her profession.

### Box 5.9 Divorced due to the occupation

Binita's (pseudo name) early conjugal life was happy in the village. She and her husband had good cooperation and love. After six months her husband was arrested as Maoist cadres and imprisoned. Her family members misbehaved and insulted her. She came to Kathmandu and worked as waitress in the cabin restaurant. She earned money and succeeded to release her husband from jail. When her husband knew all her activities he hated and beat her. He abused her saying "*taile sab ko samunne mero ijjat phalera Beshya vais*" (You put an end to my social prestige being an prostitute!). Then their married life came to an end.

### Box 5.10 Sangita suspended from job

Sangita (pseudo name of 21) an unmarried and SLC passed woman was working as a dancer in a dance restaurant. When government decided to close dance restaurant, her restaurant was closed. She became unemployed and searched for a job. Lastly she got job in a manpower company as receptionist. After one month period her boss knew her previous job as dancer. He refused to accept her as receptionist and suspended from the job.

The above cases clearly show that there is a quite negative perception of the society towards sex trade and FSWs. Sex trade is still seen by contemporary society as a crime against morality. Many people today still have an extremely negative connotation when the words '*Beshya*' '*Bhaloo*' and '*Randhi*' are applied to women who sell sex for money. Stereotypically, these women are seen as trash; these are individuals who have sexually transmitted diseases and people with no morals and respect for their body. The FSWs have been portrayed to the society in many alternative forms: as a symbol of cultural and moral decline, an innocent victim of male lust, a public health nuisance and even be a cinematic heroine.

## 5.4 Perception and Satisfaction of the FSWs

Majority of the FSWs have negative perception towards their profession and activities. They dislike their job and hate themselves. However, FSWs have adopted sex trade as the last alternative job after having faced different harassment at different places. Facing hatred as well as dishonor and being obligated, they have engaged in the sex trade. But they complain that nobody respects and loves them. Their own

perception towards society is negative because of the harassment and dishonor they had faced. Manju (pseudo name) aged 30 years says

#### Box 5.11 An example of negative perception

“Society has negative attitude towards sex trade and FSWs. People perceive us negatively and hate us. We are being regarded as hateful and dishonor character in the society. We have to face many difficult situations such as verbal abuse and sexual harassment at different places. We have to hide our face in the neighborhood. We can not walk freely in the city streets and public places. Those who recognize us as sex workers call *Bhallo, Beshya* and insult our moral character. There are no any organizations to advocate in our favour.”

FSWs are worried about their future and profession, they have quite negative perception towards police authority, Young Communist League (YCL) and tramps. It is mainly due to their misbehaviour. Maya (pseudo name) shared her experience and feelings as follows:

#### Box 5.12 Misbehaviour from police

“One late evening a police van came and arrested me and my two other friends from Ratnpark area. We were taken in custody for two days at Hanumandhoka. During this period we were badly abused and raped by policeman. The policeman fastened both of our hands and undressed us at night. After gang rape they took our naked photos. Such type of misbehaviours we had never faced before it.”

From this incident they never like police authority and hate them. One of FSW angrily said “*Sala! Police jasto phataha manchhe ta aile samma yo duniyama vetayaki chhaina*” (I have never met a bastard like a policeman in this world). Likewise, YCL as well as tramps are also bad persons in their perception. They demand money and if FSWs do not provide money they abuse and beat FSWs. All the FSWs want to live in a respected manner and expect positive perception from the society. Most of them reported that their life and profession are not sustainable and honourable. Some of them are looking for better job and have approached to different NGOs and INGOs for respected as well as honourable job. Larger number of FSWs reported that they have no alternatives and are obligated to adopt sex trade. Ranjana (pseudo name) says “*Hamile pani yasai samaj ma basera biknu parchha; Hamilai samajle bujhideos ra gali galauch ra ghrina nagaros.*” (This is the society we should



live in so I wish the society would stop hating us. Instead I expect a normal perception from the society).

Most of the FSWs i.e. 84 percent are dissatisfied and only 16 percent somehow perceive their own profession satisfactory. Those who were dissatisfied reported that sex trade is not a sustainable and decent profession. Majority of them stated that “*Galama ragat vainjel matra yo kam garna sakidaina*” (This work can be done only till there is enough youthfulness and physical fragrance. They were ready to leave it if somebody provides them other sustainable and honourable job. However, few of them are satisfied and want to continue their profession. The case of Goma (pseudo name) is typical example. Goma of 32 years says

#### Box 5.13 An example of satisfaction

“I am illiterate and have no any extra skill. On the other hand I have no citizenship certificate too. In this situation how can I get higher income easy job like this. For me it is good and I am satisfied. It is easy to do as my desire.”

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **LIVELIHOOD ASSETS AND VULNERABILITY CONTEXT**

The term livelihood can be used in many different contexts. A livelihood in its simplest sense is a means of gaining a living. Livelihoods are the means of people used to support themselves, to survive, and to prosper. It is an outcome of how and why people organize to transform the environment to meet their needs through technology, labor, power, knowledge and social relations (Hock, 2001). It comprises a complex and diverse set of economic, social and physical strategies. A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living.

Livelihood is defined by a number of individuals and organization including Department for International Development (DFID). DFID has presented a slightly modified version of the definition originally developed by Robert Chambers and Godron Conway. Livelihood is defined as adequate stocks and flow of food and cash to meet basic needs. Blaikie et.al. have defined livelihood as “ the command an individual, family or other social group has over an income and/or bundles of resources that can be used or exchanged to satisfy its needs” (1994:9). Likewise, Dahl (1993) defines livelihood as means for living on a sustainable basis. Livelihood is determined by a number of factors. People’s access to different levels and combination of assets has probably the major influence on their choice of livelihood options. Enormous diversity of livelihood strategies exist at every level within geographical areas, across sectors, within households and over time. Therefore, specific livelihood outcomes are mainly determined by environmental, socio-economic and cultural factors. Livelihoods are also shaped by political within which they operate (Hoeck, 2001). Many livelihoods are largely predetermined by accident of birth by their parent’s occupation and some are less predetermined and improvise through education and migration (Chambers and Conway, 1991)

The term ‘livelihood’ attempts to capture not only what people do in order to make a living but the resources that provided them with capabilities to build a satisfactory living. In livelihood approach, resources are referred to as “assets” or capital and are

categorized between five or more different assets types owned or accessed by family members. The thing people do in pursuit of a viable living are referred to in the livelihood framework as “Livelihood activities”. This chapter tries to analyze FSWs’ livelihood strategies, particularly their assets and vulnerability context within the sustainable livelihood framework, which is adopted as a conceptual framework for the study developed by DFID.

### **6.1 Livelihood Assets of Female Sex Workers**

Livelihood assets are the core elements for people to make a living. People require a range of assets and these assets in turn help people to gain better livelihood, then the assets become important. Sometimes if people lack these assets then they are unable to sustain their life. Though there are numerous assets, SLA identifies five core assets: namely, human, social, natural, physical and financial upon which livelihood is built. Natural capital refers to the natural resource stock and environmental services from which resource flows useful for livelihoods are derived. These include land, forest, marine/ wild resources, air quality and erosion protection. Networks and connectedness, memberships of social groups, relationship of trust, reciprocity and access to wider institutions of society fall under social assets upon which people draw in pursuit of livelihoods. Human capital represents the skills, knowledge, and ability to labor and good health improvement to the ability to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives. A physical capital comprises the basic infrastructures such as transportation, communication and water energy and production equipment and means which enable people to pursue their livelihood and finally financial capital are those available to people (whether savings and supplies of credit or regular remittances and pensions) and provided them with different livelihood options.

FSWs are earning their living in urban areas through sex work. They have neither any assets nor any alternatives as defined categorically in SLF. The strongest and special asset of the FSWs that exists as livelihood assets is their own physicality which is not explained in the livelihood framework. These assets differ from person to person and place to place. Livelihood assets, described in the framework, of the FSWs are very limited. Most of the FSWs are uneducated and backward. Educational attainment and

health status are described in previous socio-economic section. They have no extra skills and knowledge related to their livelihood strategy and even if they have other skills they are useless in front of sex trade. Only 16 per cent i.e. 8 FSWs have skills like knitting and sewing. The main livelihood strategy of the FSWs is tacking money through sex work with their clients. Most of the FSWs are directly dependent upon their physicality for sustaining their livelihood. Physicality is interlinked with their health status. The health status is worsening and highly risky. There is high potential of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Majority of them are either drug addicted or have any health problems. Almost all the FSWs were in mental tension. Physically and mentally they are not energetic and healthy so handwork for livelihood is beyond their ability. In case of natural assets of the FSWs, it is generally uncertain. None of FSWs have land endowment. They have no access to forest and water resource. However, by the nature of work, FSWs are using urban natural resources such as open space, nodal point of city, park sites, and recreational areas etc. where they search their clients.

A key asset for both rural and urban poor is social capital. Of all the five livelihood building blocks, social capital is intimately connected to transforming structures and process. In fact, it can be useful to think of social capital as a product of these structures and process through these oversimplifies relationship. FSWs are socially ostracized and perceived as soiled, unacceptable as well as unmarriageable. Despite the fact that sex trade is socially and legally undesirable job in Nepalese society, they are adopting this strategy. So there are no any social organizations to which the FSWs are formally attached and have had a creative input into their livelihood. Moreover, majority of the FSWs have no citizenship certificate. However, it was found that they are tied on a strong informal social network and use it as important tools to sustain their occupation within their own territory. Peer educators from different NGOs are trying to make unity among them. But the mutual trust and reciprocity (understanding) between FSWs is not so satisfactory. Their social network with their place of origin and family members is also poor. They are excluded by the family members and the society. Nevertheless, their interaction with clients from different sectors is more than the home base social space. Adopting an illegal and undesirable work, they are deprived of their access to mainstream of development and have lack of social capital. The living standard of the FSWs is not sound. Majority of the FSWs

are living in the rented room and only few (3) FSWs are living in their own home in the valley. They live in room where there are no proper drinking water and sanitation facilities. Most of them have no gas stoves and are using kerosene stoves and *Bhusechulo* for preparing food. They have got the facility of electricity and to some extent of communication. Some of them have productive assets like TV and radio and almost all the FSWs have mobile phone. Majority of the FSWs come at their working place by public buses and taxies.

Income and expenditure pattern in previous socio-economic chapter shows financial capital of the FSWs. Money earned through sex work is the only main financial asset of the FSWs. Generally, financial capital shows that their monthly average income is higher and better. But there is no regular earning and the income is highly fluctuated and affected as per many factors such as age, place, physicality and even time. Despite having very high income, the FSWs are found to have frequent financial crises in daily life. Their expenditure pattern is uncertain and easily earned money goes easily as a results they are unable to save money. Only fifteen FSWs are able to make some savings. Many FSWs are facing debt problem too. Twenty six percent FSWs are in debt.

## **6.2 Vulnerability and Sustainability of FSWs' Livelihood**

Sex trade is an illegal phenomenon and itself it is very vulnerable and unsustainable in the Nepalese society. FSWs are very vulnerable from legal right. Hence, the space they use for their livelihood strategy i.e. to serve their clients itself is uncertain and vulnerable. Time to time they have been invaded from different places by other occupational group. It was once again (at the end of report writing) attempted to have a glance upon the scenario of FSWs and their occupation in the field after three months of the actual field work. It was found that the FSWs were invaded by other occupational groups from their usual working place in different parts of the study area. This is an example of how they are vulnerable, especially in terms of use of space for their livelihood strategy. State is seen to be in dilemma. Neither hotels and restaurants have got legal permission to conduct sex trade, nor has state itself specified red light area to sex workers. It is also vulnerable and unsustainable in the sense that sex work remains suitable for certain period in life span as when they pass

adulthood sex trade does not remain obvious. At that stage FSWs end with their livelihood means.

Economically, FSWs are also vulnerable and unsustainable. However, on the basis of income they are not vulnerable. Generally, their monthly income is higher than other urban poor (See Chapter IV). To some extent, their profession is sustainable from monthly income. But there is not regularity and stability in the income. It is highly fluctuated and affected by age, physicality, place and even time. Sometimes they can not earn even 50 rupees. Despite having high income, FSWs are found to have frequent financial crisis in daily life. Moreover, still they are facing debt and borrowing problems. Only few of them are able to make some savings. Hence, despite having high income, FSWs are also vulnerable and their profession is unsustainable from economic aspects too.

Likewise, there is high social vulnerability too. Sex trade is unacceptable in the Nepalese culture and society. It is regarded as social evil and is not respected and honorable job. They have hidden identity and dual character in the society. Their social life is not prestigious and they are ostracized by society due to their profession. There is quite negative social perception towards FSWs and their profession (See chapter V). They have to face hatred and dishonour from society. Sex trade being an illegal activity, there is no any formal organization to advocate in their favour. Hence, society has made them and their profession more vulnerable and unsustainable.

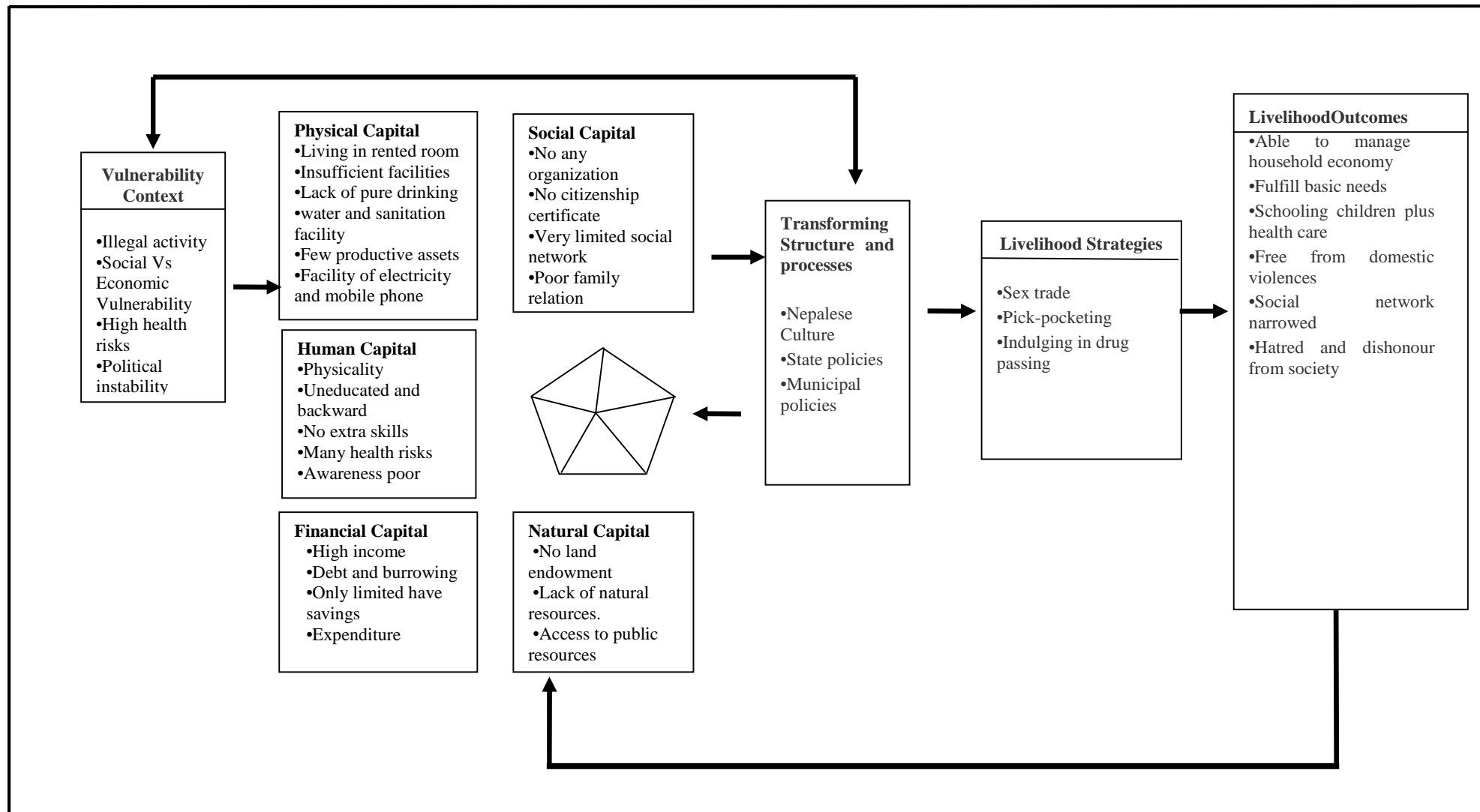
Most of them are dissatisfied and are feeling self-humiliation. Sometimes, they are unable to earn money during such time they engage in social evils such as indulging in drug passing and pick-pocketing. From this second livelihood strategy also they are vulnerable. Policemen often raid in their working place and arrest them. Moreover, policemen, Young Communist League (YCL) as well as other tramps frequently demand money, abuse and torture them, thus have made their occupation vulnerable. Similarly, urban policy has also marginalized them and made more vulnerable. Most of the FSWs are acting sex trade hiddenly and their family members are unknown about the job. So, from family side they are also vulnerable. FSWs are regarded as high risk sub-population as well as vulnerable because they have many health risks like HIV/AIDS and other venerable diseases. They have not adequate livelihood

assets and even having assets are in unfavorable condition. In this way livelihood assets also have made their occupation unsustainable and vulnerable.

Seasonality and trends also have affected the livelihood of FSWs. Most of them are concentrated at city core area and high interactive places. Different political assembly and procession, cultural program like concert, night party, fairs etc, are common activities of such areas. These activities sometimes highly increase their income and often they have to face social discrimination and sexual harassment. Festivals like *Dashain, Tihar, Mahashivratri* and other occasional feast and festivals of valley increase their income as well as influence their livelihood too. At that time flow of their clients is high and results to increase their contact. Likewise, FSWs earn more money on Friday and Saturday because many employers of different sectors have leisure time on these days and they want to refresh and take entertainment by visiting restaurants and FSWs. Natural season such as winter and summer is seen to have no any significant negative impact on their livelihood. Generally, winter season seems to be more fertile season and rainy season has obviously a negative influence on street FSWs.

In this way from every perspective of livelihood FSWs have remained in vicious socio-economic circumstances and are highly vulnerable as well as their occupation is unsustainable. The overall livelihood context of female sex workers have been plotted in sustainable livelihood frame work popularized by DFID which is the conceptual framework of the present study.

**Figure 7.2: FSWs' Livelihood in Sustainable Livelihood Framework:**



Source: Adopted and Modified from DFID. 2002



## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 7.1 Summary

Sex is an unavoidable and inevitable psychological and biological need of human beings. Sex trade is one of the oldest and widespread phenomena all over the world that is related not only to society, law and culture but also to the economy of people involved in it. However, generally it is perceived as an indecent and hated profession. Much has been researched on legal profession and prestigious jobs but there are only a few studies on Female Sex Workers (FSWs) who, despite being socially, culturally and legally undesirable as well as a hated job, have adopted sex trade as a main way of earning a livelihood and are struggling with a low quality of survival. The present work has emphasized on FSWs from perspectives of livelihood where sex trade has been taken as the main livelihood strategy of urban poor women. Therefore, the aim of this study is to understand the women's causes of marginalization that led them to adopt sex trade with a focus on the motivational factors, livelihood and sustainability and vulnerability context of their livelihood. This study is based on primary information where a total of 50 informants were selected from comprising a total of 25, 10, 5, 5, and 5 from Ratnapark and its surrounding areas, Gongabu Areas, Thamel, Gausala-Chabahil and Kalanki area respectively, that were collected in 45 days of field work in January/February 2009. With an orientation of qualitative analysis, observation, unstructured and semi-structured in-depth interviews with the informants, unstructured interviews with key informants are employed to generate primary data for the study.

Overwhelming majority i.e. 84 percent of the FSWs are migrants to Kathmandu and the number of migrants is different within geographical regions and zones. Moreover, no FSW has come from Karnali and other western parts of the country. Almost all Caste/ Ethnic groups have been involved in sex trade. The so-called High Caste Brahmin/Chhetri are relatively higher than other caste/ethnicity in this profession. 50 percent FSWs are from higher caste- Chhetri, Brahmin and Thakuri, 32 percent are from Hill Janajati, 10 percent are from Tarai Janajati and 8 percent are from so-called Lower caste (Dalit). Economically active as well as biologically strong and young women are engaged in sex trade where the largest number i.e. 54 percent are between 21-30 years of age and no one was found below the age of 16. The educational status of

the FSWs is poor. Only 62 percent are literate and FSWs of high caste are more educated than other caste/ethnicity. Educational status is higher among established sex workers. However, almost all the FSWs are schooling their children. Overwhelming majority i.e. 90 percent FSWs are ever-married and among them 71 percent are either divorced or separated and the proportion of ever-married and either divorced/separated is higher among high caste. The family relation is not satisfactory and 94 percent family members of the FSWs are unknown about their job. Accommodation and living arrangement is not sound. 90 percent FSWs are living in rented room and only 6 percent have their own home. 42 percent are living in home range social space. They have not sufficient facilities at their room. Living standard is comparatively higher among established FSWs. Average monthly income of the FSWs is NRs.19, 600 and it is highly fluctuated. The income has been found to be affected and varied as per many factors such as age, place, physicality and even time. Overall income of the FSWs is higher than other urban poor but the expenditure is very usual to others, mostly at household level. Most of the FSWs spend their earning in basic needs such as *Rasanpani*, rent, children's education plus care, health care, clothing etc. All the FSWs use condom during sexual activities. However, some of them have ignored their addiction and their health condition and are earning money keeping their life at risk. 78 percent have at least one type of drug addiction and this addiction is higher among established FSWs.

Previous occupation and activities of the FSWs are not similar. Most of them were not engaged in a single job. 26 percent were not doing anything before sex trade and rest were engaged in different occupational activities such as housewife, hotel girl, business, agricultural activities, student, housemaid, wage labour etc. respectively. Their income from previous activities was low and insufficient to sustain even a simple life and had faced physical and verbal sexual harassment. Motivational factors of the FSWs are complex and interconnected. Poverty is often stated as the main factor driving them to engage in such an undesirable and hated job. Together with poverty the respondents specified political conflict, unsuccessful conjugal life, domestic violence, employment opportunities, sexual discrimination and harassment as motivational factors to various extents. Moreover, without any investment and educational qualification, no any extra skill and citizenship certificate, anyone can engage in such easier and higher paying job-sex trade. Societal perception towards

FSWs is quite negative. Society has categorized them as deviant women and treats them as a separate class and abused them saying *Bhaloo, Beshya, Randhi* etc. Nobody likes to respect and honour them. FSWs are ostracized by society, abused by police and often by their clients and are deprived of many essential services. Moreover, their own family members reject and dishonour them. Majority of the FSWs are dissatisfied and have negative perception towards their own profession and activities. They are feeling self-humiliation and are searching other honourable job. However, they are obligated to adopt sex trade as the last alternative job after having faced different harassment at different spheres.

FSWs are earning their livelihood in urban areas through sex work. They have neither adequate asset nor any alternatives for living. The main income generating and livelihood asset is their own physicality which is differing from person to person and place to place. They lack human, natural and social capital. Financial and physical capitals are also not able to cope shocks and stresses. The livelihood strategy which they have adopted is socially, culturally and legally undesirable and is not sustainable. They lack activity space and on the other hand sex work remains suitable for certain period of life span as when they pass adulthood sex trade does not remain obvious. There is high potentiality of health risks of HIV/AIDS and other STDs. They are vulnerable and unsustainable from economic and social aspects too. Police, YCL and other tramps frequently abuse and torture them. Similarly, urban policies have also made them vulnerable. Their second livelihood strategy like pick-pocketing and passing drugs are also social evils and are not sustainable. In this way from every perspectives of livelihood, FSWs are remaining in vicious socio-economic circumstances.

## **7.2 Conclusions**

Livelihood strategies of people are not always socially, culturally and legally acceptable as well as desirable. Many poor women of the urban areas are obligated to adopt undesirable livelihood strategy for sustaining their livelihood. The strategy, i.e. sex trade, which they have adopted, is still unacceptable and illegal activity in many parts of the world including Nepal whereas in other parts it has been legalized. The issue of the sex trade is quite debatable in society. It has been regarded as social evil

and has spread many perversions in Nepalese culture and society. Moreover, it is also an immoral work and hatred profession. However, many urban poor women are obligated to adopt sex trade. They have no other alternative options and sources of income. For such FSWs, this profession is better than other social evils such as robbery, social violences, criminal activities etc. Thus, the debate on sex trade depends upon your perception and understanding.

Occupational adoption is not strictly related to caste/ethnic background. In urban areas different caste and ethnic women are involved in sex trade and they have taken it as the main way of earning livelihood. They have no resource endowments (livelihood assets) that are categorically defined in sustainable livelihood framework popularized by DFID. The main livelihood asset of the FSWs is their own physicality and it is only one main income source of the FSWs in urban areas. This physicality is not defined and explained as livelihood asset in the framework. Thus, the framework is incomplete to assess the livelihood of FSWs. Moreover, livelihood framework can not assess the livelihood of those people who have adopted socially, culturally and legally undesirable job.

Since the sex trade is a lucrative and attractive business, number of FSWs is increasing rapidly in urban areas. However, most of them are conducting their activities hiddenly and secretly. They do not want to accept and present themselves as sex workers and present in the society. They are in dilemma about their profession to continue or discontinue.

Finally this study concludes that many studies have shown that poverty has made peoples' live vulnerable. However, not only the poverty but many social, psychological, political factors and institutions have significant role to determine the livelihood vulnerability of the people.

### **7.3 Recommendations**

Many urban poor women have engaged in sex trade to sustaining their livelihood. The number of FSWs jumping into sex trade is increasing rapidly. They have no other sources of income and are obligated to adopt sex trade. The strategy which they have

adopted is socially, culturally and legally unsustainable. It is very important to address such social evil that has affected society as well as culture. So, concerned authorities and agencies should discourage the FSWs from adopting sex trade and should provide them other stable source of income.

FSWs are regarded as high risk sub-population and are earning their livelihood keeping their life at risk. Most of them are ignoring their health status and continuing their sexual activities. There is high potentiality of HIV/AIDS and other STDs to them. So, many effective awareness program should be launched and aware them about their personal health status as well as HIV/AIDS and other STDs.

Sex trade is a place specific characteristic of urban areas. Being a lucrative business sex trade is flourishing in urban areas all over the country. It is almost impossible to avoid sex trade from urban areas. On the other hand demand of sex is high that has made sex trade more fertile. In such situations to balance society and culture, state should regulate the sex trade and should specify red light areas in certain places where sex trade is very high.

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**APPENDIX I**  
**Individual Survey Schedule**  
**Prepared for the research on Livelihood of Female Sex workers in**  
**Kathmandu**

**A. General Information**

a) Caste/Ethnicity.....b) Place of origin..... c) Religion.....

d) Marital status.....e) Nationality..... f) Age.....

g) Family Size: ..... h) No. of Children..... (Son..... daughter.....)

i) Education: (Literate...../Illiterate.....)(Degree if literate.....)

1) Since when have you been adopting this occupation?

.....  
.....

2) What did you do before this activity?

.....  
.....

**A) Income, Expenditure & Living Arrangements**

1) Do you have any property in your place of origin?

A) Land.....Ropani/Kaththha B) House: .....C) Cattle  
.....

2) How much money do you collect a normal day?

.....  
.....

3) Is there fix rate or depends on bargaining?

.....

1) Does income remain similar all days and seasons? If not what days do you have higher and lower income?

.....  
.....

4) What do you spend your income for? (Utilization of money)

.....

5) Do you make saving in a month? If yes, how much?

.....

6) Do you make the saving in a bank or finance company? If yes, how much money by now you have deposited?

.....

7) Where are you living? (Place in Kathmandu)

.....

8) Are you living in

a) Rented room..... b) Own Home..... c) Others.....

9) Who are you living with?

a) Spouse..... b) Whole family..... c) Friends ..... d) others  
.....

10) If with friend which is his/her place of origin?

.....

11) If you are with husband, what is his occupation?

.....

12) How many people are sharing your apartment?

.....

13) Do you shift your residence time by time?

.....

14) What are the commodities you own in Kathmandu?

a) Sleeping bed.....b) cloth (quilts/mattresses).....c)  
stove.....

d) Radio/TV.....e) Utensils.....f) Others (Jewellery)  
.....

.....

**C) Health, Education and Awareness**

1) Do you have any health problem?

.....

2) If yes, what is the problem?

.....

3) Where do you go for treatment?

.....

4) In case of sickness or inability to work, how do you arrange expenses?

.....

5) If you are not continuing your studies, why?

.....

6) Do you know about HIV/AIDS? What do you do to avoid its danger?

.....

**C) Motivational Factors, Perceptions and Satisfactions**

1) Who did you first come to Kathmandu? What is the main cause of choosing this occupation?

.....

.....

.....

2) Is any of your family members involved in this occupation?

.....

3) Do you have any skill for other jobs? If yes why did you not adopt that?

.....

.....

1) Where are your family members? If they are not in Kathmandu do they meet you? Or do you go to meet them?

.....

.....

2) If you are married do you have children? If yes who do they live with?

.....

3) Do your children go to school? A private or government school?

.....

4) Do women like you have any organizations?

.....

5) Are you satisfied with your job?

.....

6) What are your perceptions on other people?

.....

.....

.....

7) What is your attitude towards society?

.....

.....

8) What thing you do and do not like of your customers?

.....  
.....

9) How is your relation with your family members?

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10) What are the major problems in your occupation? With police/ authority?

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11) What do you suggest to solve your problems?

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Life history

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**Thank You for Your Cooperation**

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Checklist for observation**

- 1) Site of working place (location).
- 2) Way of searching clients.
- 3) Behave of publics and their clients.
- 4) Urban environmental situations.
- 5) Vulnerability context.
- 6) Livelihood assets.

## **APPENDIX III**

### **Checklist for Focus Group Discussion and Key Informant Interview**

- 1) Causes to choose this profession.
- 2) Living arrangements.
- 3) Earning and expenditure.
- 4) Other works besides sex trade.
- 5) Public perception and behaviour.
- 6) Social status.
- 7) Livelihood assets.
- 8) Risk, difficulties and vulnerability.
- 9) Satisfaction and own perception.
- 10) Motivational factors.

**Thank You for Your Cooperation**

