Sex work and HIV/AIDS-related stigma in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Sex work and HIV/AIDS-related stigma in Bangladesh

Rehana Akhter

This paper explores the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS and sex work and its effect on female sex workers in Bangladesh. In order to identify the roles of two sex worker organizations (Durjoy and Nari Mukti) and to develop the recommendations for them, I conducted my MA thesis in Bangladesh in 2009. In Bangladesh, there is a need for more research on social issues related to HIV/AIDS. Hence, this study's exploration of both stigma and AIDS issues is valuable. To collect information on these issues, I interviewed eight individual sex workers and conducted six focus group discussions; in total there were 39 participants. I also conducted ethnographic field observations in a brothel and four drop-in-centres (DiC) for sex workers. I developed two case studies of individual sex workers, who experienced severe stigmatization due to their work and the misconceptions surrounding the transmission of the HIV virus. I also interviewed an HIV positive man to identify the marginalized position of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Bangladesh. I used content analysis and qualitative descriptive methods in order to analyze my data. I concluded that sex work and HIV/AIDS issues are highly stigmatized in Bangladesh and offered the participants' recommendations and my own for enhancing the organizational capacity of Durjoy and Nari Mukti to fight stigma and promote human rights for sex workers. I presented possible implementation strategies for these recommendations for the organizations as well as their partner NGOs and the government of Bangladesh. The findings might be helpful for the sex worker organizations in order to ensure social justice for their members.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronyms	Meanings of acronyms
BAPS	Bangladesh AIDS Prevention Society
CARE	Cooperation, Assistance, and Relief in Everywhere
Durjoy	Durjoy Nari Shangha
GFATM	Global Funds to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis, and Malaria
HASAB	HIV/AIDS Alliances in Bangladesh
ICDDRB	International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research Bangladesh
IGA	Income generating activities
Nari Mukti	Nari Mukti Shongho
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SSS	Society for Social Service
SWOs	Sex worker organizations
SWNOB	Sex Work Network of Bangladesh

Sex work and HIV/AIDS-related stigma in Bangladesh

Introduction

In Bangladesh, stigma surrounds prostitution and HIV/AIDS. Before beginning a job with sex workers and people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs), I was not aware of their vulnerable situation. My knowledge about these issues developed when I started to work directly with this population. Indeed, after joining Concern (an international humanitarian organization working to reduce distress and poverty) as a Project Manager in 2004 for their Socially Disadvantaged People's Program, my perception of prostitutes changed from a stereotypical negative image to a new positive image. Like many people, I had blamed sex workers for transmitting HIV/AIDS. After visiting brothels and talking with sex workers, as part of my job, I observed their vulnerability and the prejudices they face from society. I questioned my feelings when I realized that this group of vulnerable sex workers is under threat from HIV/AIDS, and they alone are not responsible for transmitting this disease. These realizations encouraged me to choose issues related to stigma as a topic for my master's thesis. For that reason, I returned to Bangladesh in the summer of 2009 to conduct my fieldwork.

Bangladesh is now approaching a risk period in the trajectory of its HIV/AIDS epidemic, yet people lack knowledge and an open public sphere to discuss HIV and sex-related issues. According to UNAIDS (2005), only 20% of married women and 30% of married men in the rural areas of Bangladesh have heard about HIV/AIDS. At the same time, the stigma of sex work and discrimination against sex workers prevents these people from obtaining social justice (Parker & Aggleton, 2009). It is my fervent hope that the recommendations in my thesis would serve as a catalyst to motivate SWOs—along

with local, national, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, AIDS activists, and the sex workers' network of Bangladesh (SWNOB)—to address the problems related to stigma. Since in Bangladesh, stigma applies not only to women as sex workers but also to individuals suspected of carrying the HIV/AIDS virus, I decided to examine the community organizing processes of two SWOs: the Durjoy Nari Shongho (Durjoy), a street-based SWO, and Nari Mukti Shangha (Nari Mukti), a brothel-based SWO insofar as they protect sex workers' human rights. Nari Mukti is an organization working with the female brothel-based sex workers in the Tangail brothel, and Durjoy is an agency working with the female street-based sex workers in Dhaka.

My previous work with these organizations gave me easy access as a Canadian researcher in Bangladesh, collecting information for my thesis. I visited a brothel in Tangail (a district town, about 100 km from the capital, Dhaka) as well as four Drop-in-Centers (DiC: where street sex workers meet during the day to rest) in Dhaka to conduct my interviews with the members of Durjoy and Nari Mukti and some female prostitutes who are not affiliated with these organizations.

I conducted my field investigation in Bangla, the official language of Bangladesh, since none of my subjects understood English. I used the qualitative research method to collect data. I used three sets of open-ended questionnaires in individual interviews, focus group discussions, and ethnographic field observations with my respondent groups. There were eight individual interviews in total (five in DiCs and three in the brothel), and six focus group discussions (covering 31 respondents: 13 in DiCs and 18 in the brothel). Out of the eight individual interviews, I developed two case studies of individual sex workers, one from the brothel and one from a DiC. These women experienced severe

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stigmatization due to their work and the misconceptions surrounding the transmission of the HIV virus. In my results and discussion section, I also describe my informal interview with an HIV positive man (non-sex worker) to identify the marginalized position of PLWHAs in Bangladesh.

This thesis is comprised of four chapters, in addition to a general introduction and conclusion. In the introduction, I describe the reasons for conducting my thesis. In addition, I elaborate upon the methods of my data collection. As well, I present the purpose, the statement of the problem, and the theoretical framework of my research. I define the necessary terms related to my research.

In the first chapter, I provide background information about Bangladesh. In addition, I analyze different aspects of Bangladesh that play important roles in the country's overall socio-economic condition. Primarily, these aspects include poverty, health care services, women's position, sex workers and their organizations. Next, I describe brothel and street-based sex work. In this section, I elaborate upon the sources and contexts of stigma at different levels of the social structure, such as family and the community. Then, I discuss the human rights issues and the ways that sex workers' social rights are violated. Lastly, I present the organizing activities of Durjoy, Nari Mukti, and the SWNOB to identify their organizing practices to fight stigma.

In my second chapter, from the perspective of different social theories, I review the literature related to five themes of my research: human rights, HIV/AIDS, sex work, stigma, and community development processes. I make the link between my field data and these studies. I review, compare, and critically analyze other researchers' work in order to enhance my knowledge and avoid duplication of this type of research.

I describe my methodology in chapter three. There, I explain my choice of data collection methods and methodology. I also highlight differences between qualitative and quantitative research. Additionally, I discuss the research techniques of my data collection, management, and analysis processes. I go on to describe the usefulness of an action-based research model and other research models that I used in this study. In addition, I explain the process of participant selection, the content analysis approach, and ethical issues. I explain the rationale of my research and its significance. Finally, I describe the limitations of my fieldwork and my plans for disseminating suggestions arising from my study.

In the fourth chapter, I analyze the study data. Here, I describe my research subjects' experiences, knowledge of, and opinions about stigma, the community organizing systems of Durjoy and Nari Mukti, and the human rights of sex workers. This is done concurrently with an elaboration of my reflections and observations. Moreover, I describe brothel-based prostitution from its beginning when Bangladesh was part of India to the present. While I describe both brothel-based and street-based prostitution in the Bangladeshi context, I provide more details for brothel-based prostitution than for street-based prostitution. The latter operates much the same in Bangladesh as it does in the west, but the brothel environment is markedly different. A detailed elaboration could be helpful for readers who are not familiar with the Bangladeshi context. Furthermore, I present the brothel-based power struggles and the effects they have on sex workers' lives. Also, I explain how the interview participants in my study described the effects of human rights violations in their daily lives. Lastly, I discuss the community organizing processes

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of Durjoy, Nari Mukti, and the SWNOB in order to explore how their organizations address their members' social problems.

Finally, I offer the participants' recommendations and my own as a means of enhancing the organizational capacity of Durjoy and Nari Mukti to fight stigma and ensure sex workers' human rights. In addition, I provide possible implementation strategies for these recommendations for the SWOs as well as their partner organizations and the government of Bangladesh. In my conclusion, I outline two different categories of recommendations: firstly, the research subjects' ideas; and secondly, my own suggestions to address their problems.

The statement of the problem

The major focus of my thesis is to explore the community organizing systems of two Bangladeshi SWOs in order to identify their limitations in addressing the stigma related to HIV/AIDS and sex work. Identifying these institutions' organizational limitations and offering recommendations to enhance their capacities could help them in fighting stigma. In particular, social stigma has a deep-rooted, negative socio-economic impact on marginalized groups, such as sex workers. When sex workers' human rights are violated due to the negative attitude from the police and general public, prostitutes are discriminated against. Similarly, the stigma of HIV/AIDS affects the households, families, communities, and the health care systems of the disadvantaged groups. These narrow views are based on societal perceptions due to a lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS (Parker & Aggleton, 2009, p. 2). In my research, it is important to explore the sources and consequences of stigma at different levels. Notably, the case studies of two stigmatized prostitutes and the life experience of the PLWHAs are crucial parts of my

thesis as real portraits of societal stigma. The research participants' sufferings are illustrations of marginalize people's cultural vulnerability. Therefore, the SWOs need a comprehensive action plan that offers them guidelines for organizing their community to fight stigma. It is my hope that my research will help the SWOs to do this.

The purposes of the research

The specific purposes of my research are as follows:

• To increase knowledge of stigma related to sex work and HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh;

• To determine the current effective working strategies of Nari Mukti and Durjoy in fighting stigma surrounding their members;

• To recommend strategies that the SWOs can use in helping them better address stigmatization and the rights of their members.

The theoretical framework

I developed my three research-focused questions based on my thesis purposes. These questions, which are the main part of the theoretical framework of this research project, are as follows:

1. What kind of stigmatization related to HIV/AIDS and sex work is faced by the brothel- and street-based sex workers in Bangladesh?

2. In response to this stigmatization, what are their organizations doing?

3. What would be the best strategies to ensure that sex workers' human rights are recognised and protected?

In searching for answers to these questions, I employ an action research approach. Such an approach plays an important role in integrating academic and community

research. It provides an opportunity to build a partnership between the academic and community milieu. This approach allows me to link my academic research with the research I did in the sex work communities of Bangladesh. In my literature review chapter, I explore community-based and action-based research models and explain how they shaped my study. Along with other theories, I review those of Stringer (1999), Smith (1981), and Morris (2002).

In the field of Human Rights, I focus on human rights issues in general and specifically the brutality that sex workers in Bangladesh experience. In this context, I review the pertinent literature related to the police violation of sex workers' human rights. Based on the scientific literature, I describe sex workers' social exclusion and explain the root causes of their marginalization. The literature related to the human security approach gives me the opportunity to review different policy level initiatives and roles of different groups who have the decision-making power in this society. As a result, I explore possible future directions for promoting sex workers' human rights.

Finally, in the discipline of community organizing and development, I relate my findings to the SWOs' organizing and capacity-building processes. I also compare brothel and street-based prostitution. Similarly, I analyze the roles of the state, the SWNOB, the SWOs, and NGOs in addressing sex workers' social problems. I synthesize the forms and context of HIV/AIDS-related stigma in the literature review chapter. I analyze and review Shragge's (2003) "activism and social change" approach in order to evaluate the community organization of Nari Mukti and Durjoy. This theoretical framework analysis helps answer the research focused questions and develops definitions of several terms (Rossman, 2002, p. 87), which I explain in the next section.

The definition of terms

     Stigma. Stigma is identifiable as the culturally and socially negative view of a group of people in society. Stigmatizing means labelling groups or individuals, categorizing their behaviour as extremely shameful, and outwardly displaying disrespectful attitudes towards them. I define stigma from three points of view: my own perception, Goffman's view, and my research participants' experiences.

From my perspective, stigma is the label that is imposed on people who do not conform to accepted norms of a particular social group; thus, in Bangladesh, a woman who resorts to prostitution as a way of making a living carries a stigma because her behaviour does not conform to the socially acceptable behaviour of Bangladeshi women. Such a stigma can destroy her sense of self-respect and cause her to feel guilty about her taking on such a profession even though she may do so as a result of intense economic and social constraints. Hence, people who violate the accepted norms and rules of a social group may be stigmatized. Additionally, society uses stigma (that is, labels) to keep the social group in line. Thus, a thief is stigmatized with the label of "thief" in the hope that such a stigma may discourage others from thieving.

According to Goffman (1963), when a person receives extremely negative attitudes from mainstream society, this creates a social exclusion through stigmatization.

The respondents of my research have identified stigma in their day to day experiences. For them, stigmatization comes from violating the established social rules, such as becoming pregnant outside of marriage, becoming carriers of sexually transmitted diseases. Breaking such rules may lead to living in extreme poverty and lacking access to health and housing services.

In addition, Malcolm et al. (1998) describe HIV-related stigmatization as they appear at different levels, from societal to individual (pp. 347-348). For example, the theme of "significantly discrediting" a stigmatized person who is considered to have "an undesired difference" provides a conceptual definition of stigmatization. Stigmatization as a form of a condition and its perceived threat as a means of social control are vital elements in marginalization, social exclusion, and implementation of power over people (p. 349). Similarly, two types of stigma, "perceived" and "enacted," have been described by Scambler and Hopkins (as cited in Malcolm et al., 1998). The "perceived" stigma refers to the perceptions that other people have of a stigmatized person's condition; conversely, "enacted" stigma represents the real experiences of discrimination (p. 350). When people suspect sex workers of being carriers of HIV, it constitutes a stigmatization based on perception. On the other hand, because of their work, sex workers experience real discrimination, or "enacted" stigmatization, in society. The authors' illustration of stigmatized situation in family, community, health care systems, and migration presents an in-depth analysis of HIV contexts and forms (pp. 358-363) similar to the issues of human rights for sex workers.

Human rights. As we observe that sex workers' human rights are violated in several ways, it is important to establish what those rights are. According to Donnelly (2003), "Human rights are, literally, the rights that one has simply because one is a human being" (p. 10). In other terms, this means that human rights are for all human beings regardless of their colour, race, sex, and so on. Life and dignity are basic human rights. After the Second World War, the Human Rights Declaration introduced three types of rights: 1. political and civil rights, such as freedom to speak or vote; 2. Social,

economic, and cultural rights, such as access to health or education; 3. Collective rights, such as religious freedom. Civil and political rights include rights of freedom from abuse, equal protection, and political association. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights cover social, political, and economic rights, which have a link with the human security issues (Steiner & Alston, 2000, p.159).

The human security approach. As a part of human rights, the human security approach needs to be clearly illustrated. According to Kofi Annan (as cited in Anthony & Poku, 2007), human security means freedom from fear and freedom from want. According to Anthony and Poku (2007), freedom from want is achieved when people's basic needs (food, education, cloth, and shelter) are fulfilled and people are free from any crisis, at any moment, from anywhere. On the other hand, freedom from fear means the realization of human dignity. This dignity includes not only physical safety but also insurance of civil, political, and cultural rights (p. 4). In order to ensure human security, all forms of challenges should be addressed. A community is challenged in many ways, such as seeking ways to deal with poverty and a lack of education (Susan, 2008, p. 23).

Community. Community and its development initiatives are crucial elements in my research to ensure sex workers' social justice. According to Morris (2002), community means:

> Any group of people who share some characteristic or experience. It
> can be broad and based on geography, like everyone living in Pie, it
> can be a social group sharing one or more characteristics, such as

refugee women in Canada, or it can be narrow, such as a lesbian

with breast cancer living close to nuclear power plants. (p. 9)

The Bangladeshi sex work community fits Morris' definition of a community since sex workers share many "characteristics and experience[s]" (p. 9). In addition, according to Hillary (1955), there are several defining elements of community, but social interaction, bonds or ties, and geographic area are basic elements of a community (Alamgren, 1992, p. 244). I analyze these elements for different reasons: first, social interactions are events in which people relate to each other and respond accordingly (Webster's New World College Dictionary, 1996). Second, bonds or ties refer to the development of close and interpersonal relationships between family members, colleagues, or friends. Bonding is a mutual, interactive process, and something that ties or restrains (Alamgren, 1992, p. 243). Third, the concepts of geographic areas or boundaries refer to land or geographic location (English Heritage, 2004). Most of these elements are present in the sex workers' living environment in Bangladesh. For instance, brothel-based sex workers have the opportunity to interact with each other and form social relations for achieving their organizational goals and community organizing.

Community organizing. I concur with the opinions of Shragge when he states that, based on any organization's activities and services at the community level, it is crucial to analyze and differentiate between a community's activities and its organizing processes (2003). These two processes differ from each other. For example, the SWOs can deliver activities such as health services to its members on a day to day basis. On the other hand, in order to ensure a real community organizing process, such as collaborating to achieve the legal recognition of sex work, the SWOs need to develop a flexible

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framework and the necessary leadership skills to make it function efficiently. In a particular case, sex workers fought to achieve their burial rights and received a piece of government land as a graveyard. Such an organizing process demonstrates sex workers' leadership skills and an effective community development initiative.

According to Shragge (2003), organizing is a process rather than the establishment of values for an organization (p. 20). Processes, like alliance building and networking among grass roots organizations, are crucial to create social change (p. 23). The Bangladeshi sex workers' response to a government proclamation that all brothels would be shut-down by 2000 is an example of a community organizing process to address perceived injustice. In response to the proclamation, 62 NGOs organized a coalition to challenge it and, thus, achieved the legal recognition of brothel-based sex work (Jenkins & Rahman, 2002, p. 3). Shragge also raises several concerns about "[w]hether or not the activists will find a place within community organizations, what kind of openness there will be for them and what kind of challenges they will bring" (p. 37). These concerns are pertinent to the sex work community.

Sex work community. In order to address prostitutes' social problems, their community leaders play vital roles. For example, in Bangladesh, there are several people who are concerned or involved with sex workers. Although there are different people related to the sex industry, primarily sex workers, pimps, clients, police, landlords, and brothel administrative authorities are involved in this profession. On the other hand, governmental, non-governmental, community-based organizations, and the general public are indirectly related to this community.

Sex worker organizations. Organizations of sex workers are important vehicles in addressing stigma when they are developed from within the sex work community. In general, SWOs are social institutions establishing their social relationships in order to create social change. In particular, Durjoy and Nari Mukti provide the sex workers with vehicles that work in their common interest and create concrete and meaningful changes in their lives. This function is usually framed by formal membership, organizational rules, and community development processes (Bendix, 1962).

Community development process. The SWOs' main target is to ensure their members' development by implementing their organizational strategies. According to Lyon (1987), development refers to a dynamic and value-laden theme, which is a reflection of positivism (p. 114). Indeed, when a community works collectively along with others in order to create positive change, their community development process starts (Shragge, 2003). Similarly, when sex workers are able to organize themselves to ensure their human rights, their community development process might begin.

All of the above terms are linked to my literature review and the themes of my thesis. Having offered a general introduction to my thesis, I present background information about Bangladesh in the next chapter. This context will familiarize readers with the specific political, economic and social issues of the country, which will in turn facilitate a better comprehension of stigma associated with AIDS and sex workers there.

Chapter One: The Problem

1.1 The background of Bangladesh

Bangladesh has been an independent country since 1971. It is located in South Asia, and is bordered by India and Myanmar. Bangladesh is segmented into six divisions (Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Dhaka, Sylhet, and Chittagong), 64 districts and 460 sub-districts (see the map of Bangladesh in Figure 1.1). The Bangladeshi climate is tropical and the topography is mostly flat. It is a country that is prone to flooding. In 2007, more than half of the country was flooded (Harapainen, 2007, p. 11). The total area of the country is 144,000 square kilometres, which is about 15 times smaller than Quebec (Bangladesh Fact Book & the World Fact Book, 2009). 156 million people live in this country. It is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with 2,100 people per square mile; by comparison, the population density of Canada is 9.27 per square mile (Bangladesh & Canada: geography & population, 2009). 83% of the people are Muslims, 16% are Hindus, and the rest are Christians and Buddhists (Bangladesh: land & people, 2009).

1.2 The political system

Bangladesh follows a parliamentary democratic republic system. The Head of State is the President, but the Prime Minister is the main political authority. The current Prime Minister is a woman, and the former Prime Minister was a woman. Although two women have consecutively been leading the country, women's socio-economic status is not strong in Bangladesh. Rather, they are frequently abused, a topic which I elaborate upon in the women's position section. The participation of only a few women in the country's political power structure is not all that is needed to enhance their

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empowerment. Rather, there is an enormous need for women's increased participation in all spheres of Bangladeshi society (ADB, 2001).

1.3 The socio-economic situation

The main source of export income comes from the garment manufacturing sector, which makes up 60% of the country's gross income. The per capita income is $1,230, while in Canada, per capita income is $36,280 (The World Fact Book & Bangladesh Fact Book, 2009).

There are numerous socio-economic problems in Bangladesh (Bangladesh: Economy, 2009). This country is largely dependent on foreign aid. The World Bank categorized the country as one of the world's most "heavily indebted poor countries" based on its present economic condition (I-PRSP, 2002, p. 31). At the same time, there is a high rate of corruption (Bangladesh: History, 2009). Adding to this dire picture is the report by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), which declared Bangladesh as the most corrupt country in the world every year from 2001 to 2005 (TIB, 2006). However, from 2006 to 2009, Bangladesh was not identified as the most corrupt country in the world. This may have been partly due to the caretaker government that replaced the political party system from 2007 to 2008, working with TIB to develop strategies to fight corruption. They successfully increased transparency and accountability in the government (TIB, 2007, p. 8). According to TIB (2009), corruption affects health, education, poverty, and the political system of a country. In fact, the country suffers from a lack of health services for its citizens, a low level of education, weak networking within and among governmental agencies, NGOs, and CBOs, and poor infrastructure and communication systems.

1.4 Poverty

Poverty is globally defined as people living with an income of less than one

dollar per day (World Bank, 2002). Two people out of three live in extreme poverty in

Bangladesh. Poverty is 20% higher in the rural areas compared to urban areas and 80%

of the people live in rural areas in Bangladesh (Osman, 2004, p. 263). Although half of its

citizens live in deprivation, Bangladesh has made recent progress in reducing poverty as a

result of one of the strategies of the Millennium Development Goals (WHO, 2007). One

of the aims of the Millennium Development Goals is reducing world poverty (United

Nation, 2007). In this case, the Bangladesh government prepared its first draft of the

poverty reduction strategy paper in April 2002. The state set for itself several goals to

reduce poverty, such as reducing the proportion of people living below the poverty line

by 50%, eliminating gender disparity in education, and eliminating social violence

against disadvantaged groups (I-PRSP, 2002, pp. 40-41). Unfortunately, the government

has made little progress in meeting these goals. According to the World Bank, the state

should prioritize and implement strategies to ensure that the poor have access to

education and health services (World Bank, 2009).

1.5 Health care services

Because of the poor infrastructure in Bangladesh, most of the health care services

are private and urban-based. The public health care system lacks doctors, nurses, and

hospital facilities (Harapainen, 2007, p. 17). The private health care system is too

expensive for the poor (WHO, 2008). NGOs play a vital role in improving the state's

health facilities (Harapainen, 2007, p.16). They work with private health care providers to

ensure better health services for their project participants. For instance, CARE and Mari

Stopes implemented a health program for improving maternal health care. In Bangladesh, there are about 4,060 NGOs in the health, population, and nutritional sectors working with their project participants. However, according to the WHO (2008) report, in 2004, there was only one community health worker for every 10,000 people in Bangladesh. This illustrates the problems faced by the average Bangladeshi in having their health needs met. NGOs can build a bridge between community-based organizations and the government to ensure that the public health care system is accessible for all, especially for women, who are the most vulnerable (ADB, 2001).

1.6 Women's position

In this section, I describe the socio-economic situation of women in Bangladesh, which has a strong link with my thesis, since the target group of my research is women in prostitution. Religion, family, norms, social values, and gender all have an impact on women's position. Family is the core social concept in this traditional society. Males control families, and children are viewed as god's gift—assuming that they will be the security for their parents in the future (UNICEF, 2005, p. 1). The minimum legal age for marriage is 18 for women and 21 for men. However, according to the UNICEF data (2005), Bangladesh has the highest child marriage record in the world and more than two-thirds of adolescent girls (aged 10 to 19 years) are married (p. 3). At the marriage ceremony, the girls' parents have to pay a dowry to their daughters' husbands' families even though dowries have been legally banned since 1980 (UNICEF, 2005, p. 3). Women are abused in different ways. Sixty-seven per cent of women are physically abused in their families, usually through beating and sexual harassment (UNICEF, 2005, p. 3). Moreover, according to a Human Development Center study (2006), there were 1,550

reported incidences of rape in 2003 (Human Development in South Asia, 2006).

Furthermore, according to UNICEF (2005), of the 2,200 children who commit suicide

every year, two out of three of them are females (UNICEF, 2005, p. 3). These numbers

paint a picture of unequal relationships between males and females where women are

suppressed and disadvantaged (ADB, 2001).

Women's health and socio-economic status are neglected or devalued by the

culture (Harapainen, 2007, p. 23). Women are considered useful for childbirth, child

rearing, and managing households. They do not have access to the greater economic

sector, such as the market economy or the local governmental decision-making processes.

Education for women is a low priority in the country, contributing to the country's poor

socio-economic condition. Out of the total literacy rate of 43%, 54% are males and 32%

are females (Bangladesh Fact Book, 2009). This gender gap exists because of the

tradition of educating boys rather than girls. As a result, employment opportunities are

limited for women, compared to those for men. However, in the past decade, women's

participation in the service sectors, NGOs and at governmental levels has increased

(World Bank, 2009). One of the vital achievements of the government was establishing

the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in 1978 (Hashmi, 2000). This ministry is

trying to address women's issues and ensure their active participation in society.

However, it needs to have as part of its policy agenda the provision of a safety net for

women and the marginalized groups, such as sex workers (Harapainen, 2007, p. 24).

1.7 Sex workers' issues

Sex work is not considered a profession in Bangladesh although the number of

sex workers is increasing day by day, with an estimate of more than 150,000 women in

the trade (Social Initiatives, 2003, p. 6). In Bangladesh, sex workers are mainly identified as brothel, hotel, apartment, and street-based prostitutes. The legal status of prostitution is ambiguous. In 2000, the Bangladesh High Court ruled the brothel-based sex trade to be officially legal for women over the age of 18 years (BBC News, 2000). This verdict gives brothel-based prostitutes' legal status. However, this verdict is unknown to many people. On the other hand, street-based sex work is still illegal, so the police can arrest any street-based sex worker, charging her for disturbing the citizens' peace in public places (Social Initiatives, 2003).

Sex workers are addressed by several terms that stigmatize their work. For instance, "prostitute" means a woman tempting men by her dress, a woman who is common or enjoyed by all, and a woman having sexual ties with many men (Banerji, 1989, pp. 1-2). Additionally, Chowdhury (2004) describes the social status and the language used by the government in the 1991 national census to refer to sex work and prostitutes as having a negative impact (p. 6). It is interesting that the government addresses sex worker as beggars or vagabonds although they earn money and are not dependent on the state. By dishonouring sex workers with these terms, society denies or hides their existence which leads to their work not being clearly defined and all the associated problems that arise from this. In response, their organizations work to counter these issues and try their best to improve the situation of their members.

1.8 Sex worker organizations

Many sex workers are affiliated with an organization formed in response to their extensive needs. According to Chowdhury (2004), the worldwide sex workers' movements emerged after realizing the serious effects of HIV/AIDS in 1990 (p.2). These

SWOs were established with the support of NGOs to address their members' oppression and HIV/AIDS issues (Chowdhury, 2004). According to Parker & Aggleton (2009), "Female sex workers are identified as 'vectors' of infection who put at risk their clients and their clients' sexual partners and, these stigmatized perceptions are held by both the government and the public" (pp. 2-3). In this context, the SWO's fight against stigma plays a crucial role in improving their members' vulnerable condition in Bangladeshi society. For example, the country's thousands of sex workers have started to unite against the social prejudices that they experience both in brothels and in the streets (Mitu, 2006).

1.9 Brothel-based sex work

In Bangladesh, a brothel is housing structured for sex work in the cities. Brothels are allocated by the local administration. Of the 18 registered brothels, there are now only 11 operating. The other seven were closed by the state without a plan to rehabilitate the sex workers there (Azim et al., 2002).

During my visit to Tangail brothel, I saw that the rooms were unhygienic and crowded. Inside this brothel, drinking, gambling, and the like are a regular occurrence. This brothel is not only used for the sex trade, but is also viewed by the police and society as a centre of criminal activities, like trafficking drugs and smuggling. In general, there is a strong political influence linked to brothels. For example, in 1998, one of the main reasons for closing the Tanbazar brothel was an internal conflict between two political leaders who shared the income from the brothel rents (Azim et al., 2002).

In a brothel, *sardernis* (plural of *sarderni*) exert strong control over young sex workers. These *sarderni* organize and run the brothel. Since clients usually prefer young sex workers, older sex workers often become *sarderni* and start their own businesses

with the money saved from their sex work, buying their own young girls. These girls have to work as bondage sex workers for two to five years (sometimes longer) under the *sarderni's* control. Police and *mastans* (local criminals or hooligans) maintain links with *sardernis,* receiving bribes from them (Tahmina & Moral, 2004).

I learnt from my field observations that the general public thinks the brothel-based sex workers are the main carriers of the HIV virus. However, several studies do not support this (Jenkins & Rahman, 2002, & Azim et al., 2000). According to a survey of two brothels in Bangladesh in 1998, there were no HIV infected sex workers among the randomly selected sample of 392 subjects (Jenkins & Rahman, 2002 & Azim et al., 2000). Similarly, out of 267 subjects, only four HIV infected sex workers were discovered in another brothel (Jenkins & Rahman, 2002). In another survey of 1,075 sex workers associated with three brothels, there were no HIV infected sex workers (Azim et al., 2000). These studies suggest that both in brothels and in the streets, sex workers are not likely the main carriers of this virus.

1.10 Street-based sex work

Street-based sex work occurs in streets, parks, hotels, or apartments. Although these sex workers work independently, they are abused by thugs (*mastaan*) and police, who either rape them or refuse to pay for their services. According to UNAIDS report in Bangladesh (1999-2000), between 50% and 60% of street-based sex workers reported being raped by police and between 40% and 50% reported being raped by local criminals (p. 6). Despite this abusive situation, many sex workers prefer to work on the streets to avoid the dictatorial management inside brothels (Tahmina & Moral, 2004). Street-based

sex workers are increasingly coming from closed or existing brothels; Durjoy helps its members to find shelter at DiCs.

In general, because the street-based sex workers work at night and go to different places during the day, it is hard to organize them and give them information about organizational activities. DiCs provide operational structures, different services, and resources for the sex workers. DiCs face many difficulties that make it hard for them to implement their activities. For instance, Durjoy has a special DiC in Dhaka, which acts as a day care centre for the street-based sex workers' children. The centre is encountering severe financial difficulties and may have to close. However, with the assistance of donors, the SWNOB and NGOs, Durjoy manages 40 DiCs at different places in Dhaka and addresses sex work and HIV/AIDS issues (Durjoy, 2009).

1.11 HIV/AIDS issues

Two neighbours of Bangladesh— the Indian Hill States and northern Burma— are experiencing severe AIDS epidemics (UNGASS, 2008). Most significantly, India is the highest risk-prone country for HIV/AIDS infection in Asia (Barnet & Whiteside, 2006, p. 9). The most alarming point is that many Bangladeshis go to these countries for different reasons, such as business, tourism, migration, sex work, and treatment for sickness. As a result, interaction with Burma and India make these countries a strong threat for HIV/AIDS transmission in Bangladesh (UNAIDS, 2005). Unfortunately, it is a misconception for the state that Bangladesh is not at high risk of HIV/AIDS transmission, and that the country's predominantly Muslim culture protects people from its transmission. More significantly, HIV/AIDS is now a global concern with more than 33 million people infected worldwide with the AIDS virus (WHO, 2009).

In addition, HIV/AIDS issues have a close link to the sex industry (WHO, 2000, p. 9). According to available data, Bangladesh still has a low prevalence of this epidemic, with less than 1% of its population being in the 'high risk' category. The high-risk population includes sex workers and drug users (Harapainen, 2007, p. 27). In Bangladesh, an estimated 6,300 people live with HIV (UNAIDS, 2009). However, as of December 2008, the government reported only 1,495 HIV positive people, 476 individuals living with AIDS, and 165 having died with an AIDS diagnosis. Despite the reported low incidence, there is a great chance of HIV being spread because the state does little to educate people about HIV/AIDS (Lighthouse, 2007).

The unwillingness to use condoms by sex workers' clients is a major cause of the transmission of the HIV/AIDS virus. For example, according to UNAIDS 2005 survey, in Bangladesh, only 40% of sex workers reported using a condom with their most recent client and only 23% of both sex workers and their clients properly understood methods of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV (UNAIDS, 2005). Furthermore, regular condom use among street-based sex workers is only 2% (UNAIDS, 2006). Most alarmingly, most married men who have unprotected sex with sex workers do not use condoms during intercourse with their wives (UNICEF, 2005). Information dissemination alone is not enough to prevent HIV/AIDS. For example, a survey of the Tangail brothel found that 36% of brothel-based sex workers were aware that condoms prevent STDs, but only 2% of their clients used condoms regularly (Sethi & Jana, 2003, p. 44).

Fortunately, many groups are involved in the HIV field in Bangladesh. Besides international NGOs, a larger body of small community-based organizations, self-help HIV positive groups, faith based organizations, private organizations, and media are

involved in HIV prevention (UNGSAS, 2008, p. 15). The Ministry of Health and Family

Welfare has chaired national and international programs on HIV/AIDS issues. A National

AIDS Committee was also established in 1985 to deal with HIV/AIDS issues (Social

Initiatives, 2003, p. 7). Suffice it to say, these various types of initiatives from the state

are helpful weapons in fighting this epidemic. Indeed, while NGOs and CBOs implement

educational activities related to HIV/AIDS that include community participation, CBOs'

active involvement in policy making is still limited. Notably, most of the projects focus

on HIV prevention, treatment, care or support; and only a few direct programs address

stigma related to AIDS that all marginalized groups, especially PLWHAs and sex

workers, live with (UNGSAS, 2008, p. 14).

1.12 Stigma related to HIV/AIDS and sex work

Reaction to the stigma of HIV/AIDs or other STDs takes different forms and

crops up in different contexts. Within the family, the stigmatized sex worker might be

beaten or castigated, or her lover might abandon her. I learnt from my ethnographic field

observations that sometimes co-workers verbally or physically attack the stigmatized sex

workers. Sex workers are also abused by clients, police, hooligans, and service providers

(gas, electricity), who blame sex workers for being the main carriers of HIV/AIDS and

STDs (Data from ethnographic field observations, Tangail, July, 2009). Unfortunately,

when the state intentionally ignores this profession and the high officials in government

consider sex workers as a public nuisance and carriers of this virus, sex workers face

stigma at the institutional level. According to Parker and Aggleton (2009), these

outcomes reflect the pre-existing negative societal views of sex work (p. 4).

There are many reasons for and sources of stigma. After a brothel eviction, sex workers carry on their trade in hotels or apartments or on the street. Since the sex workers are no longer confined to a specific area and are observed plying their trade in public, this reinforces the public perception that they are to blame for spreading this virus throughout the country. Sex workers are unable to raise their voices to protest the pre-existing stigma associated with their trade. Moreover, the general perception is that if a person is infected by the HIV virus, he or she caught it as a result of unethical sexual activity, which is a sin in Bangladeshi society. Hence, people do not feel sympathetic towards sex workers (Azim et al., 2006).

The health professionals see sex workers as STD and AIDS bearers, which adds to their vulnerability. Moreover, when sex workers come to clinics for treatment, both the clinics and the sex workers are stigmatized. The public fear that clinics that work with PLWHAs might not sterilize their equipment and prefer to use the services of other clinics (Sethi & Jana, 2003). As a result, clinics charge sex workers higher fees to make up for lost business. In addition, when a sex worker is randomly selected by the state or NGOs (during HIV/AIDS survey) for HIV testing, this selection stigmatizes them in the community's eyes, although there are very few HIV/AIDS infected sex workers who are identified in brothels or in DiCs (Jenkins & Rahman, 2002).

Additionally, in Bangladesh, the religious leaders, who strongly influence public opinion but do not understand how this disease is transmitted, consider the sex work community as the main source in its transmission. These leaders also blame western culture for the evolution of this disease and think that the developing countries are infected by this pandemic through globalization (Field notes from ethnographic field

observations, July, 2009). However, many religious groups are receiving human rights

training and acting positively. Due to the cultural norms and traditional values, people are

not comfortable discussing HIV/AIDS, since it is related to sex. Hence, sex workers'

human rights are neither protected nor promoted by the general public (Social Initiatives,

2003, p. 10).

1.13 Human rights for sex workers

Although Bangladesh is a signatory member of CEDAW, the state fails to protect

sex workers' rights (Ahmed, 2002, p. 6). Because there is no independent institution to

protect human rights, this injustice is likely to go unchecked. In the Ministry of Health,

there is no department to monitor HIV-related discrimination against sex workers (Social

Initiatives, 2003). Although the government has shown leadership and commitment to

increase awareness of HIV/AIDS issues, it has made no effort to ensure that sex workers'

human rights are protected. However, not all sex workers see themselves as victimized,

oppressed, or exploited. Instead, many are taking control of their own lives, finding

solutions to their problems, acting for both their individual and collective interests. Some

of the most successful sex work interventions have been initiated by SWOs, allowing

them to organize themselves for their own safety (Sethi & Jana, 2003). The next section

describes two SWOs in more depth to identify their organizing practices to fight stigma.

1.14 The community organizing processes of the SWOs

The SWOs have their specific program strategies to fulfill their organizational

goals. For instance, they rely on peer support to carry out their programs: sex workers

share their own experiences to help the community become more aware of social justice,

safer sex practices, and legal issues (how to deal with police harassment, for example).

Durjoy and Nari Mukti also follow the organizational empowerment approach. Empowerment is a process that enables individuals and groups to act independently in their own interest and in the interest of the community by overcoming barriers like the mainstream community's reluctance to accept activities of SWOs.

Durjoy and Nari Mukti have many challenges to address their members' social problems. They both lack sufficient resources and funding to fight the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS, and both struggle with illiteracy among their members. Nari Mukti has the further threat of brothel eviction (Durjoy & Nari Mukti, 2009).

1.14.1 About Durjoy. According to the organizational profile of Durjoy, this SWO was established in February 1998. In Bangla, *Durjoy* means to be invincible. There are around 2,500 members affiliated with this organization. The vision of Durjoy is a world where sex workers and their children will live with dignity and self-esteem. The mission of this organization is to establish human rights for sex workers, to promote legal recognition of the sex work profession, and to protect sex workers and their children from HIV/AIDS. I learnt that Durjoy received the Red Ribbon Award at the International AIDS Conference in 2006 for its outstanding contribution in the frontline response to HIV and AIDS. It obtained registration from the department of Women's Affairs and NGO Bureau in Bangladesh.

1.14.2 About Nari Mukti. Nari Mukti was established in Tangail with organizational support from CARE in 1997 and achieved its registration from the Social Service department in 2000. *Nari Mukti* in Bangla means the freedom of women. The goals of Nari Mukti are to improve the socio-economic and psychological conditions of its brothel-based members. Other purposes of this organization include helping its

members become self-reliant, promoting mutual support among its members, and furthering the public's respect for sex workers. It also aims to prevent police and *mastan* harassment in the red light areas and to arrange small loans for aged sex workers who want to re-integrate into the mainstream community. To implement these plans, this institute also tries to network with the state and with local and like-minded international organizations. At the same time, Nari Mukti has started advocacy programs with different stakeholders, such as the local administrative officials and political leaders, to prevent brothel eviction. Both SWOs collaborate with the Sex Work Network of Bangladesh (SWNOB).

    1.14.3 About the SWNOB. According to the SWNOB profile, this network serves as a "collective voice" for all Bangladeshi SWOs. Since abusive behaviour and discrimination towards sex workers is increasing, sex workers want to work together to fight discrimination against them. Through this network, many sex workers have visited other countries to observe the organizing processes of foreign SWOs in order to enhance their own collective organizing processes (visit to Kolkata, India).

    According to its profile, this organization was established in 2002 as a national network of sex workers in Bangladesh. Presently, 29 SWOs are members of the SWNOB, which covers 11 brothel and 18 street-based SWOs. There are about 5,000 sex workers affiliated with the SWNOB in different locations in Bangladesh. The goals of the SWNOB are to establish unity among SWOs in order to ensure sex workers' and their children's rights and to establish a discrimination-free society where sex workers live with dignity.

The SWNOB has already met several challenges. For example, it still struggles with funding constraints, a lack of accountability, and a dearth of human resources. Worst of all, this network does not have legal registration (Discussions with the staff and members of the SWNOB, Dhaka, August, 2009).

1.15 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the background information of Bangladesh and its various socio-economic aspects to make readers familiar with its context. Moreover, I have presented the ways that sex workers and the PLWHAs' human rights are violated. Finally, I have explained the organizing systems that Durjoy, Nari Mukti, and the SWNOB have used in addressing their members' social problems.

In Bangladesh, sex workers are extremely stigmatized by their families and by society at large. Their overall suffering due to HIV/AIDS-related stigma is demonstrated in various ways. During my field observations and interviews, I learned that they are unable to participate in social gatherings, such as religious festivals, marriages, or funerals. Not only do prostitutes encounter discrimination, but PLWHAs suffer stigma due to the misconceptions surrounding HIV/AIDS. Although the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh is comparatively low compared to countries that are more risk-prone, there is still a gap in knowledge among the citizens about HIV/AIDS issues, reflecting an urgent need for education and intervention (Azim et al., 2008).

I have also learned from my field observations and interviews that the SWOs try their best to handle these social problems; but within their limited network and capacities, they are not in a position to fully address all their members' problems. With the enhancement of the members' leadership skills and the assistance of the government,

these SWOs might be able to strengthen their community organizing systems to address stigma. To do this, all must work together to respond to stigma. We need to realize the potential of grassroots organisations in promoting the recognition of human rights for all.

During my stay with sex workers as I was collecting data for my thesis, I observed their plight and felt that their stories demanded to be presented at both local and international forums. I thought that I might give a voice to these vulnerable women. Prostitutes' human rights are either neglected or violated, especially the right to health and education (Mitu, 2006). According to UNAIDS Asia Pacific Regional Report (2005), "Stigma and discrimination continue to be serious hindrances to HIV/AIDS efforts in prevention, testing, counselling, treatment, and obtaining reliable data, as well as a danger to those living with HIV/AIDS" (p. 1). Bangladesh must deal with several factors related to the transmission of this virus, from its people's behaviour to the lack of knowledge about the mode of transmission of this disease. Since Bangladesh is a country where men dominate and women are often subjected to severe abuse and inequality there is a long way to go before the problem is dealt with (Social Initiatives, 2003).

It seemed to me that participating in my qualitative research method—consisting of focus groups, individual interviews, and ethnographic field observations—helped the participants enhance their leadership skills. Similarly, I thought that, if sex workers told their stories, they might enhance their communication skills and develop their communities' awareness of cultural oppression and discrimination. Additionally, possibilities of global networking with other organizations might be discovered as a result of the dissemination of my research in Canada. Social action through enhanced leadership might help make them feel empowered. Once this work is completed, the

research findings could be useful for other research purposes and for influencing public

policy in Bangladesh to promote the rights of sex workers. Finally, these research

findings could be useful for others to review as a secondary source related to stigma

surrounding HIV/AIDS and sex work. In the next chapter, I review several studies related

to my research topic.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Based on my three research questions, my literature review follows the issues of sex workers and the violation of their human rights, particularly those related to the stigma of HIV/AIDS and sex work. In this chapter, I look at the research that has been done regarding these issues. My research gives me a vantage point from which I can explore the way that the Bangladeshi sex work community addresses these issues and offer recommendations that would help them resolve problems related to them.

Throughout this review process, I compare, analyze, and criticize others' work in order to enhance my knowledge of these themes and cover the methodological gaps that are discovered through this review. I elaborate upon my literature review in five categories: stigma, human rights, HIV/AIDS, sex work, and community development issues. Based on these themes, my critical analysis covers the human rights violation of sex workers and other social issues such as stigmatization, since these significant problems were not addressed by the policy level initiatives of many states. The state, donors, and NGOs are mainly focusing on prevention, treatment, and care to address this pandemic neglecting the stigma surrounding this epidemic (Poku, 2007).

My five categories are as follows: first, I have outlined the reasons for local and international violations of the human rights of sex workers. In this part, I have reviewed and analyzed the abusive behaviour of the police and street hooligans towards sex workers. Due to this inhumane treatment, not only sex workers, but also their children are unable to claim their basic rights from state. Second, there are various types of stigma and discrimination surrounding this profession. At the same time, I have synthesized the relevant professional studies which were developed to explore the sources, forms, and

context of stigma related to HIV/AIDS. Third, I have analyzed the literature on the partnership and feminist models that are linked with my data collection processes. Fourth, I have analyzed the "standpoint" theory of Smith and the work of other authors based on sex workers' vulnerable conditions and how they are controlled and manipulated by state and other powerful parties. I have also elaborated upon the similarities and differences of Shragge and Smith's works on feminism and community development issues.

My literature review makes links with the Bangladeshi context and other researchers' scholarly work in my results and discussions section. These reviews are useful in understanding the underlying causes of many social problems as well as working to resolve them. For example, by reviewing the literature related to the human security approach, I can now critically think about the international political system that dominates a poor country's development agenda.

In sum, this literature is helpful in enhancing my knowledge of conceptual and methodological issues about stigma and community development, which have similarities and which have already been done by others in this field. The methodological strengths and weaknesses of other works were taken into consideration so as to make better guidelines for me to develop my research design. Most importantly, this process of review was crucial for me to know whether similar studies have also been conducted in order to avoid duplication. Moreover, the readers will become acquainted with the social theories related to the human rights issues from this literature review chapter.

2.1 Social theory

Before exploring social theory, I have elaborated upon the usefulness of social theory at the level of practice. Shragge, a renowned community activist and professor in

School of Community and Public Affairs and director in Graduate Diploma in

Community Economic Development at Concordia University, states that we need social

theory because theory will be our guide rather than our recipe to achieve social change

(Shragge, 2003, p. 60). Using this approach, we need to establish links between social

theory and practice. Any theoretical framework or model, such as social action or local

development theory, can provide directions to address social problems. However,

compared to a laboratory test or result, social theory is generally unable to provide a

solution for a specific issue. Rather, social theory can be useful as a vehicle to understand

power dynamics and relationships within and beyond a community for social change

(Shragge, 2003, p. 60). For example, SWOs can address the violation of their members'

human rights by working with appropriate models in order to resolve the problem.

I echo Shragge's (2003) concern, "How do theory and models contribute to the

everyday demands of practice" (p. 40). In my opinion, it is important to critically review

theory and models before identifying practical ways to deal with oppression. For

example, in order to identify community-organizing practices that would be useful for the

SWOs, I examined social theories and scientific reports about the human rights violations

of prostitutes both in Bangladeshi and in the international context.

2.2 Reports by Human Rights Watch

I have reviewed the literature on sex workers' vulnerability as researched by

Human Rights Watch. For the past 30 years, Human Rights Watch has been one of the

world's leading independent human rights agencies and has been dedicated to defending

and protecting social justice through research and advocacy. The organization pressures

states to take action against human rights abuses of the oppressed (HRW, 2006).

2.2.1 Abuse by the police in India. Human Rights Watch (2002) investigated abuse by police towards outreach workers who engaged sex workers and high-risk populations (homosexuals or injection drug users) in different states in India (p. 3). They interviewed approximately 40 NGO outreach workers and visited 19 NGOs that were addressing HIV/AIDS issues (p. 6). Human Rights Watch conducted face-to-face and telephone interviews. The organization also sent survey questionnaires via electronic mail to respondents to obtain their opinions on these contentious issues. However, their interview results do not specify which method (random or purposive) is used in each case. The recruitment process of participants and the investigation sampling method is also not reported in the methodology (p. 8). Most significantly, the purpose of the study is not clearly elaborated upon in this report. Although Human Rights Watch claims to address "many topics" through open-ended questionnaires, these terms are not explained in the method section. It is also not clear whether they interviewed the police, even though they were the accused perpetrators in the allegations (p. 8). Importantly, Human Rights Watch did not interview any sex worker or homosexual, crucial interviews since they were the main victims of abusive behaviours (p. 8). Consequently, the methodology of this study remains unclear due to not interviewing the key victim groups in the culture.

The results of the report noted that when the Health Department of the Indian government provides condoms and information to the NGO staff in order to combat HIV/AIDS, the police department harasses the Health Department workers. This report claims that the police are resentful and abusive towards AIDS peer-support groups and outreach workers. This raises the question of how a state can control this epidemic without cooperation from the police (p. 3). The report concludes that the risk of

transmission of the HIV virus is higher for sex workers and homosexuals. There is also a

greater possibility for sex workers to frequently come into contact with clients who are

homosexual or injection drug users (IDUs). However, beyond using the term "traditional

high-risk groups" to identify those who are more likely to carry the HIV virus, the

sources of transmission of the virus are not explained clearly in this study (p. 31).

Finally, the researchers make recommendations to three parties: the Government

of India, the National AIDS Control Organization, and external and internal donors, such

as the World Bank and the United Nations agencies. To the Government, they suggest,

"Parliament should conduct an inquiry into human rights violations against

HIV/AIDS...." (p. 6). This recommendation fails to specifically suggest the name of the

parliamentary body or authority to conduct the investigation.

2.2.2 Abuse by the police in Bangladesh. I identify similarities between the

Indian and Bangladeshi reports on police attitudes towards sex workers. The report from

Human Rights Watch (2003) is about the human rights abuses perpetrated by the police

and the powerful criminals (*mastan*) on marginalized groups. In addition, the outreach

workers of different human rights and community-based organizations express their bitter

experiences with police officers and *mastans*. These powerful parties frequently abuse the

oppressed people by subjecting them to physical attacks, abduction, illegal arrests, and

forcing them to pay bribes. The report raises an interesting question: why does this abuse

by police and *mastan* happen? The response is that the police are corrupt and *mastan* use

their unmonitored power over vulnerable people for gain (p. 12).

The section on methodology of the report is very short and unclear. For instance,

the way participants were selected is not reported and the purpose of the study is not

clearly elaborated upon. Like the Indian report, the researchers conducted their fieldwork

through phone, face-to-face, and electronic mail interviews. Human Rights Watch

interviewed the members of SWOs, staff of NGOs, USAID, the World Bank, human

rights organizations, lawyers, and doctors. They interviewed 34 female sex workers, 17

homosexuals, and 12 IDUs (p. 13).

In sum, the main finding of this report is that there is a lack of supervision by the

health department of the state, which consequently raises the risk of transmission rates of

the AIDS virus in Bangladesh. If the state takes preventive measures to stop police and

*mastan*s' abusive behaviours, sex workers' human rights will be protected (pp. 13-15).

Unfortunately, Human Rights Watch tried several times to talk to the Health and Home

Ministries of the Government of Bangladesh but without success. Therefore, the report

was produced without any comments or opinion from the state about this abusive

situation. This lack of governmental input slightly weakens this report. If Human Rights

Watch was able to motivate the government to provide the state's opinion, it would

enhance the credibility of its report (p. 10). Human Rights Watch makes

recommendations to three parties: the Government of Bangladesh, internal and external

donors, and the United Nations. Human Rights Watch makes these recommendations

more specifically in its Bangladeshi report than it did in its Indian report (p. 14).

2.3 Survey findings about abuse by the police in Bangladesh

Similar to the above mentioned reports, there is a survey report that has been

conducted by the consulting firm Social Initiatives (2003), appointed by CARE

Bangladesh. The study was conducted on two levels: first, the literature was reviewed

and there were interviews with sex-workers. Second, a survey was launched to identify

the opinions from leaders and policy makers. Four hundred respondents participated in the survey. Along with the policy developers, there were high governmental officials, elected members of Parliament, religious leaders, journalists, staff of NGOs, and political leaders (p. 7). There were focus group discussions with street- and brothel-based sex-workers. The subjects were selected purposively (p. 7). Mainly males responded to the survey. Only 22% of the respondents were female, and most of them had master's degrees. The female participation was less than one-third of male participants (p. 4). CARE should provide an honorarium to ensure more female participants, and consulting firms should also be motivated to engage more woman participants. Otherwise such studies will likely continue to obtain a disproportionate number of male opinions.

In addition, the study suggests that people are not aware of prostitution and ignore the issue. The report mentions, "Prostitution is considered taboo for discussion" (p. 10). The survey pointed out how the larger civil society believes that AIDS is the result of sin (pp. 15-20). The survey also found that some people want to stop sex work altogether but that sex worker movements stand against this. All of the respondents support implementation of rehabilitation and the organization of education programs for sex workers' children so that the children will not enter this trade (p. 21). In trying to ban sex work, the civil society hampers sex workers ability to make their own decisions. Consequently, the recommendations to abolish this work challenge sex workers' empowerment in achieving their rights (p. 5).

2.4 Research on feminist ideologies

The feminist perspective within the sex work movement is split between those who are anti-sex work and those who are pro-sex work (Chowdhury, 2004). The anti-sex

work group encourages female prostitutes to stop sex work, and they promote initiatives by the state or non-governmental organizations to rehabilitate and create jobs for prostitutes. In contrast, the pro-sex work group demands sex work should be recognized as a socially accepted profession and sex workers' rights should be protected so that they can perform their jobs with dignity (p. 3).

In addition, according to Chowdhury (2004), in Bangladesh, sex work movements or their demands to protect prostitutes' bodies or promote their rights and identities are generally viewed as an influence of western culture (p. 2). I agree with Chowdhury when she points out that if sex workers cannot control their bodies and make decisions about their profession, they will not be able to ensure their rights. As a result, the evolution of sex workers' movements and their organizational capacity building processes become a central theme and a milestone to ensure sex workers' social justice.

2.5 SWOs to fight against discrimination

Crago's (2008) research with SWOs' members from eight different countries is related to my research topic since it focuses on sex workers' rights and related policy issues. The main theme of her study is that sex workers around the world are stigmatized and this is due to laws and policies that do not address their vulnerabilities. In this context, several SWOs have emerged and are fighting to ensure prostitutes' human rights. This study describes the SWOs demands that their work be recognized by the state and all those concerned in order to protect sex workers' rights. SWOs advocacy initiatives with different entities encourage them to challenge their oppression (pp. 4-5). The purpose of the report is to explore the success and challenges of the SWOs and their future strategies to fight discrimination against them. Of interest, Durjoy, one of the

SWOs in my research, was selected by Crago. She clearly explains the reasons for selecting these organizations. However, the method of this report is not clearly described (pp. 10-14). This report was helpful to compare my field data with her information about Durjoy's activities and the vulnerability that sex workers frequently encounter.

2.6 Sex workers' vulnerability

Ullah (2005), a prominent figure in exploring sex work issues and their links with social theory, describes the sex workers' lives and their difficulties. The purpose of the study is to elaborate upon sex workers' vulnerabilities, but it points out that this trade is in great demand. Another purpose of the study is to analyze the sociological themes of interconnected processes and ties between prostitution and other institutions (p.111). The researcher randomly selected 221 sex workers (brothel, hotel, and street-based) for this research. However, the reason of this random selection is not mentioned. The data was collected using closed and open-ended questionnaires by female interviewers, and the author supervised the work for its quality control. The results show that the sex work trade is expanding in Bangladesh and it is essential to ensure that not only sex workers' rights are met, but also their children's rights (pp. 111-113).

2.7 Sex workers' children's rights and the international child rights

Steiner and Alston's (2000) work has a link with my research. The authors are prominent figures in the exploration of international political economy and the link between human rights and the law. In this book, chapter six examines human rights movements and their debates on issues of gender, children, and religion. The International Children's Right has declared that all children should be protected and their rights should be promoted by states but in Bangladesh, children of sex workers are not

entitled to birth certificates because they are the children of sex workers (HRW, 2008). This finding is important for my study because not only are sex workers' children's rights violated, but prostitutes are also vulnerable because they lack access to health services.

2.8 Lack of access to health care for sex workers

Since violence against sex workers in Bangladesh is a major problem, the article written by Ara (2005) is another resource linked to my field research. Ara is a Program Officer from Action Aid Bangladesh, an International Humanitarian Organization. The author describes the health problems and diseases of sex workers. She analyzes the violation of the health rights of sex workers, their sources of support, and the barriers sex workers encounter when they require assistance (p. 6). Ara reviewed literature and conducted in-depth interviews with sex workers, gynaecologists from the Marie Stopes Clinic Society, and staff of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (p. 8). She conducted six brothel-based and 10 street and hotel-based focus groups with participant sex workers. The paper suggests that different stakeholders of the sex work community are needed to improve the health situation of their members. The author argues that NGOs have the ability to mobilize sex workers and organize them for positive social change (p. 25). However, when the community-based NGOs are not integrated, their power to address various social problems is limited (Sethi & Jana, 2003).

In the next section, I discuss the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS and its consequences.

2.9 HIV/AIDS and sex work-related social issues

2.9.1 Sex work and HIV/AIDS. A study by Jenkins and Rahman (2002) is another resource for my research. Jenkins is with Family International and Rahman is

with IMPACT. Their study identifies brothel-based sex workers as high-risk populations for the transmission of the HIV virus and STDs. The purpose of their study is to document the changing situation in brothels in terms of sexual behaviour. Two national surveillance studies (1998 and 2000), that involved all 11 registered brothels, explored sex workers' sexual behaviour and attitudes. There were in total 1,147 sex workers in 1998 and 867 in 2000 for these surveys (Jenkins & Rahman, 2002, p. 100). Following the results of these two surveys, this study describes how vulnerable populations become more marginalized due to policy changes and their consequences, such as the closure of brothels and the resulting increased possibility of spreading STDs or HIV in street-based sex work (p. 98). There was a stratified selection of every ninth room of the brothel. The researchers clearly describe the reason for this sample selection process (p. 97). The authors conclude that continuous follow-up and policies to protect sex workers from this epidemic are urgently needed (p. 98).

2.9.2 HIV/AIDS status in Bangladesh. Azim et al. (2006) conducted a cohort study which is related to my work. The researchers are familiar with the field of HIV/AIDS and sex work-related vulnerabilities (ICDDRB, 2008). The purpose of the study is to explore bi- yearly risk behaviour related to the prevalence of HIV, hepatitis C, and syphilis. This study selected and compared 130 female IDUs in Dhaka (82 sex workers and 48 non-sex workers) by using the descriptive statistics and logistic regression method of data analysis (p. 1). The methodology of the study is illustrated clearly and concisely. The main findings of the study report that none of the respondents had HIV. The result concludes that female sex workers, including IDUs, are at risk because of their sexual behaviour. They suggest making health services accessible to

these vulnerable groups is imperative in addressing problems related to the issues of HIV/AIDS (p. 1).

2.9.3 HIV/AIDS issues in Bangladesh. Azim et al. (2008) conducted another research project in which the authors presented the past and current status of this pandemic. Like other research on the status of the HIV virus, the researchers find that HIV/AIDS still has a low prevalence in Bangladesh compared to other countries. However, the risk is related to its behavioural trends, whereby any time there could be a high risk of transmission of the HIV virus through injection drugs and sexual behaviour (p. 322). Similar to other research, they also explore whether or not IDUs are the highest risk population concerning transmission of HIV. The purpose of the paper is to analyze HIV data and research studies, related to surveillance of HIV and behaviour among high-risk populations in order to identify the dynamics of this pandemic (p. 311). The findings indicate that there is a lack of research on HIV intervention programs.

2.9.4 Sources of HIV/AIDS-related stigma. The links with pre-existing sources and the vicious cycle of social stigma in sex workers' lives are vital elements in understanding their vulnerabilities. As a result, why and how a conceptual framework is urgently needed to address these social problems has been elaborated upon by Parker and Aggleton (2009). This is a proposal for further action to fight the stereotypical societal image. The authors focus on stigma and discrimination, which are derived socially and psychologically (p. 1). This paper has similarities with the study by Malcolm et al. (1998). In these two papers, the sources, contexts, and forms of stigma encountered by vulnerable people have been elaborated upon. How this stigma is demonstrated in society is also discussed. They argue that there is a lack of thinking about the origin of stigma

surrounding HIV/AIDS. The writers claim that these situations need to be understood as a social rather than as an individual process (p. 1).

Parker and Aggleton (2009) recommend identifying an agenda for research and intervention in three layers. First, they suggest conducting research in "exploratory and hypothesis-generating studies" (p.11). To implement these studies, research is needed to explore the structural sources of stigma through case studies and community research. Second, they recommend implementing "investigative studies" where research needs to investigate social systems in different contexts, such as from local to international levels (p. 12). Third, they advise conducting further research on the topic of "strategic and policy-oriented studies." In this field, their suggested study would be to identify the policy, intervention, and program needed to successfully address social stigma (p. 12). Although there is a lack of in-depth analysis of sources and contexts of stigma, their arguments for exploring new research are helpful for further positive action. For this reason, we need further research in which feminist and partnership methods are crucial to exploring social issues.

2.10 Research on partnership and feminist models

In this section, I review some scholarly literature in order to examine SWOs' organizing strategies and their members' power struggles. I analyze the partnership model and elaborate upon feminist approaches that challenge the ruling power.

2.10.1 The "standpoint" theory and the ruling power. Prominent sociologist Smith's (1999) "standpoint" theory is vital in understanding the sociological method of inquiry to address women's oppression. Smith is a Professor emeritus and a famous activist for addressing women's issues. In her 1981 article, Smith uses a sociological lens

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to elaborate the "standpoint" of women. She points out problems related to the feminist method of sociological thinking. She highlights the way women live when their environment is dominated by men (p. 1). The main theme of this book is women's oppression and their vulnerability without the support to challenge the dominant power (p. 2). She states, "Taking the standpoint of women means recognizing that as inquirers we are also located in ways which bring us into determinate relations with those whose experience we intend to express" (p. 7). Responding to her comments on women's suffering developed through an exploration of their experience, I think even women who have little political power can resist domination. For instance, members of the SWOs can protest against discrimination towards them despite not being welcome to participate in advocacy meetings with the police department, which only allow the executive members to attend and discuss their issues.

Additionally, Smith's standpoint theory focuses on how to collect new knowledge rather than already established knowledge (p. 7). My view is that when a dominated group of people wants to take a stand against domination, they need strong organizational support. For example, SWOs are small and weak in terms of their organizational development but by sharing their stories as a form of resistance to the ruling power, they can hope to be successful at forcing authorities to recognise their needs and start to address them. Hence, protesting through their individual experiences, sharing through wider organizational actions or alliances with NGOs, would give them a stronger standpoint against the "taken-for-granted values", and attitudes of the powerful. I believe that from this standpoint, women and other oppressed people can create social change.

Furthermore, in her "standpoint" theory, Smith (2005) opines that people can demonstrate their suffering by exploring and acting through social organization (p. 17). Smith's idea has similarities and differences to Shragge's work. Shragge presents ideas related to the importance of community organization that are similar to Smith's concept of ruling relations. He suggests that, when the oppressed challenge their oppressors, they are raising their voices for positive social change. According to Smith:

> The ruling relations are those that coordinate our doings and work in particular local sites with the doings and work of others elsewhere and at different times; they coordinate trans-locally; they are objectified…they are based in and mediated by texts-printed, written, electronic, film, television, audio, and so on. (as cited in Frampton et al., 2006, p. 19)

Shragge (2003) elaborates upon feminist movements and their perspectives in the fight against oppression. Shragge opines that the feminist movement is a strong tool for fighting domination and that woman's decision-making abilities and solidarity against patriarchy can build social justice (p. 64). According to Gutierrez and Lews, the aim for feminist organizing is, ".... the elimination of sexism, racism, and other forms of oppression through the process of empowerment" (as cited in Shragge, 2003, p. 65). Ultimately, by practising a feminist approach, the oppressed can stand up to the dominating power.

Shragge's work contrasts with Smith's in his description of overall community development issues from different groups' perspectives. His discussions on feminist ideologies and movements are part of different community development struggles.

Shragge does not focus so much on feminist ideology or movements as the tools of real community organizing processes. In contrast, Smith's main ideas in her "standpoint" theory are based on her critical observations and elaborations on women's oppression in society. Her ideology differs from that of Shragge in that she emphasizes that women's issues should be addressed and presented through their own stories and resistance against dominating power. Shragge (2003) opines that it is essential for marginalized groups to collectively fight to create progressive social change from every corner (p. 64).

2.10.2 The dominating power and sex workers' resistance. Chowdhury (2004) elaborates upon the "standpoint" theory in describing the Bangladeshi sex workers' oppression. This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association. Chowdhury has conducted several research projects on sex workers' human rights issues in the Bangladeshi context. The purpose of the study is to explore the stories of prostitutes' daily lives and their opposition to the culture (p. 1). Here, "the taken-for-granted" system of the society as well as its norms, values, beliefs, and the organizational challenges encountered by the prostitutes, are illustrated. This theory points out the methods of social action by the dominated groups against the dominating class (p. 1).

Chowdhury conducted her empirical field study in Bangladesh and collected data through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, informal discussions, and participatory field observations. She interviewed sex workers, feminist leaders, policy makers and staff of development agencies, and activists (p. 8). Nevertheless, she fails to discuss how the participants were recruited for this study. Her study contains two ideas: sex workers' resistance against the dominant sections of society and how activists challenge the anti-sex- work feminists through the "standpoint" approach (p. 9).

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However, the way they organize and their organizational standpoints or actions need to be further analyzed (p. 10). When Chowdhury describes development and the business activities of Nari Mukti as a large source of social capital, she neglects to describe the challenges likely involved in implementing this social entrepreneurship (p. 13). The practice of challenging the dominant power by the oppressed is important to me since, in essence, is what the SWOs are engaged in and are facing a myriad of challenges.

In addition, the author describes how sex workers protest cultural discrimination individually and collectively. She explains that the sex workers protest individually by talking about their experiences. This explanation is important in understanding the underlying causes of their suppression and how these are intertwined with human rights, poverty, and gender issues, which I elaborate upon in the next section.

2.11 Human rights, gender, and poverty

2.11.1 Human rights, gender, and poverty. Visweswaran's (2004) article explores criticism on human rights reporting in South Asia from a feminist perspective. Visweswaran is an Associate Professor in Anthropology and Asian Studies at Texas University, Austin. She illustrates how feminist theory does not account for cultural differences in some nations and geographic areas (like South Asia). Moreover, human rights abuses tend to be more frequently reported in poorer countries, whereas in richer countries like the U.S., they go unreported. However, her purpose is not to criticize the human rights organizations' reporting on South Asian gender issues, but rather, her objective is to identify some of the unintended consequences of feminism as a way of giving women power (p. 506), when women's rights are separated from states and placed in an international realm.

In addition, she analyzes cultural systems in the context of specific countries and the imperialistic impact on developing nations. She opines that discussions on human rights in South Asia are framed as cultural crises rather than failures to protect women's rights. This kind of misinterpretation presents South Asia as an exclusively patriarchal society in a global context, whereas violence against women in developed countries remains hidden. Similarly, she also focuses on feminist movements in South Asia and in the developed world, which contribute a lot to promoting human rights. However, she neglects to analyze the world protocol on the foundation of human rights, while she stresses the fact that some countries offer asylum to people whose human rights are abused (p. 507). Finally, she points out that some feminist theorists overlook the fact that gender-based violence is not only domestic, but that the influence of capitalism has a negative impact on the lives of women in developing countries (p. 506).

Her data presents a wider picture of the effects of the international political economy and the overall human rights problem of South Asia and the U.S. Similar to her, Veltemayer (2007) suggests that the international political economic framework imposes ultimate domination, capitalism, globalization, and individualistic approaches to community development processes (p. 5). Notably, for more than five decades, many international organizations and financial institutions have been working to remove poverty, but their efforts have failed (Veltemayer, 2007). For example, in Bangladesh, many international and national organizations are implementing the U.S. political economic system by introducing different kinds of community development strategies. After three decades since independence, however, the citizens are still fighting poverty, and the state has failed to address many socio-economic problems. Although the

Grameen Bank and many other non-governmental organizations are targeting the poor and women in hopes of improving their livelihood status, overall poverty has not been reduced, as I pointed out in the introduction chapter. In my opinion, in order to obtain social change, strong community organizing processes are necessary catalysts.

2.12 Community organizing processes and development

2.12.1 Study of activism and community organizing. In the remainder of this chapter, I review contemporary literature regarding community organizing and development issues, especially the research surrounding activism and social change by Shragge. I have analyzed Shragge's (2003) book because the community organizing processes of the Bangladeshi SWOs and their challenges to ensure members' human rights have strong links with his experience. His book provides a perspective for my study of the community.

In this book, the professor describes his 30 years of experiences with activism and community organizing processes. He explains the historical trends of community development practices from 1960 to 2003. He interviewed several activists to collect their voices for community development. His elaboration upon the processes and challenges of local development in order to create social change through grassroots organizing systems are the main themes of this book. These personal and complex social journeys could be helpful models for community organizations in order to implement their development strategies. The purpose of the book is to illustrate his personal experiences on community development issues, practices, and challenges (p. 10). This book is important for my understanding of community organizing and development steps and strategies. Of the six chapters, I have reviewed all but the fifth, the only one not related to my topic.

2.12.2 Community organization. In his introductory chapter, Shragge (2003)

critically analyzes community organizing systems (p. 9). He explores the processes of

change in social movements from the past to the contemporary trends, in order to

discover new strategies for the future (p. 11). In this study, he also raises his main

concern regarding the nature of "accomplishment"; he argues that "accomplishment" is

relative and its success depends on how people use it—what kinds of norms and political

culture address this issue (p. 9). His ideas on community organizing practices and

systems for establishing progressive social change are useful milestones for local

development (p. 10). With regard to the systems of social change, he states, "The process

that leads to social change begins when large numbers of people act collectively in their

own self-interest to promote economic and social justice" (p. 10). I found this idea useful

in exploring the SWOs' actions as processes for enhancing their capacity-building

strategies. For example, when executive members of SWOs attend advocacy meetings

with the police department to address their members' social problems, their collective

actions are motivated in part by self-interest. These capacity-enhancing initiatives help

them stand against discrimination.

2.12.3 The democratic capacity building process. It is important to analyze the

process of democratic capacity building for achieving social change. The democratic

capacity building process is different from the political democratic process. The

democratic capacity building process can have an influential and leading role in the

formation and organization of a group (p. 135). For example, when members of the

SWOs develop their ability to work with each other democratically, they empower

themselves and their united efforts lead to their development as a whole. Additionally,

community members ensure their active participation in a democratic process and establish three vital elements of the decision making process: "education, alliances, and mobilization," the core values of a democratic capacity building system (pp. 133-137). The SWO's active participation in local to global decision making systems would be successfully implemented by organizing a true democratic practice.

2.12.4 Community organizing against oppression. According to Shragge, the community development initiatives began because of the global inequality and class struggle. Consequently, capitalism, racism, discrimination, patriarchy, and domination contribute to an uneven global milieu (p.11). Shragge uses his experiences to illustrate neighbourhood actions to organize the poor in the fight against oppression from the mainstream of society. I agree with Shragge in that without a strong form of collective action, the oppressed cannot raise their voices to challenge oppression. Also, active participation in the local level for community development is crucial to ensure human rights, which is also challenging for the SWOs. His argument about community organizing as the process of "political opportunity" is helpful to understand that the SWOs have limited organizational capacity to challenge the powerful. Another important point of the author is that to form real democracy, people must have control over their lives and voices (p. 16). At the same time, he claims that to challenge oppression, opposition is a prerequisite because it develops values and power. These arguments are relevant to the design of different community development models and theories.

2.12.5 Models and theories of community organization. In his second chapter, Shragge elaborates upon the theoretical and practical analysis of models to make the reader aware of community organizing. The writer also elaborates upon the historical

perspectives of community organizing from 1960 to 1990 (pp. 37-59). Following Rothman (1968), Shragge describes three models of practices: "locality development, social planning, and social action" (pp. 37-70), which I define below.

First, the locality development model is designed to focus on a common need of any group in society. The central idea of this approach is that many people from different communities unite to address their social problems and fight to achieve their common goals. In this way, the local community approach will be successful in creating social change. This model emphasizes the participation of citizens from all walks of life (p. 69). For example, if any sex worker is abused by a client in a brothel, and many sex workers unite to protest, a local level (brothel context) action can be spread to all brothels in the common interest of sex workers.

Second, the social planning model is a technical approach. It is the opposite of a bottom-up development process. Generally, this approach is used to solve problems technically (p. 70). For example, when organizations engage consultants to resolve a local problem, this engagement constitutes technical assistance. This model is neither participatory nor suitable for grassroots level development.

Third, the social action model encourages the powerless community to challenge those in power through direct action or by confrontation. Through a collective community organization, people are capable of challenging dominant groups. As a result, the marginalized will be able to raise their voices and power (p. 70). This model would be useful to the SWOs if they, with the support of NGOs, use it to get themselves organized and to challenge stigma. Shragge explains these approaches related to the power struggle

He argues that community development cannot start with models. Rather, models are useful tools for the practice of social action (pp.71-72).

2.12.6 Social action and legalization. In his third chapter, Shragge explains the social action model from different perspectives. He claims that none of the models of development or action can achieve social change in isolation; there must be opportunities for community development (p. 75). His discussion on the historical perspective of social action starts with Saul Alinisky. Alinisky's definitions of community organization and social change are useful for grassroots organization movements, as he states (1971), "Change comes from power, and power comes from organization. In order to act, people must get together…" (as cited in Shragge, 2003, p. 77). From this statement, it is clear that without joint action, networking, and integration, the oppressed are unable to build a coordinated resistance to challenge their oppressors.

2.12.7 Community organizing and social movements. Shragge elaborates upon the social movements and organizing guides. He discusses the women's movement and that of the North American Left-wing and their success in obtaining social change (p. 75). His six factors for organizing are important guides for community development processes. These are; a catalyst (not a leader), decision making ability, flexible organizational structure, freedom from external forces, leadership from native settings, and networking (p. 91). He concludes that social vision and community development processes are correlated. An organization must be a democratic place where all members can raise their voice (p. 105).

2.12.8 Community organizing practices. In his fourth chapter, Shragge outlines the history of community development as a major form of practice and its underlying

causes. He analyzes "Community Asset-building" and "Community Economic Development" models for social change and the roles of civil society. Shragge introduces various definitions from different scholars in order to understand the development process, which he describes clearly and concisely (pp. 107-109). According to Frank and Smith, "Community development is the planned evolution of all aspects of community well-being..." (as cited in Shragge, 2003, p. 109). Shragge also examines four types of traditions for community development through social movement, which are: "democracy, education, alliance-building, and mobilization" (p. 133). All of these elements of community development are crucial for social change.

2.12.9 Community organizing for social change. In his concluding chapter, Shragge elaborates upon community organizing and social change issues under a lens of local activism. He explains "integration and opposition" as development terms that draw clear differences between politics of practice (p. 196). My point of view is that sex workers are considered as a high risk population for transmitting the HIV virus and consequently are severely stigmatized. By implementing collective action, the SWOs will not only be able to address HIV/AIDS issues but can also create a changing environment. Therefore, building relationships between organizations and the sex work community is a key factor in achieving the real success of these organizations. I concur with Herscovitch where she mentions (1997), "Social change means working with, instead of for people, and helping people help themselves. It means believing in the abilities and capacities of those whom we consider disadvantaged" (p.1).

In sum, we know that HIV/AIDS is a consequence of many social problems, such as poverty. The community organizing systems of the SWOs can be catalysts in creating

social change. Therefore, Shragge's book is a vital resource in helping me understand community organizing processes, development, and strategies of SWOs. Along with Shragge's work, other scholars' research findings provide me with an enormous opportunity to critically review secondary information related to my thesis. Based on the reviewed literature, I present a summary of my reflections of the chapter below.

2.13 Conclusion

Many scholars' studies about sex workers' human rights show that their human rights are violated frequently. For instance, the Human Rights Watch reports, both Bangladesh and India, highlight the abuse of sex workers and NGO staff by police and notorious hooligans. Human Rights Watch also claims that cultural and social structures surrounding HIV/AIDS vary from one place to another. Activists and scholars argue that it is vital to explore the stigmatization related to AIDS and sex work at a local level and then act jointly to ensure the human rights and security for sex workers.

The Human Rights Watch report (2002) explains that the state fails to address the abuse that sex workers suffer at the hands of police. This indifference on the part of the state to protect citizens' rights increases social injustice (pp. 10-15). Similarly, the survey report (2003) finds that there is a large-scale, powerful civil society which can extend its support to protect sex workers' human rights (p. 5). My view is that along with law and order, there is an urgent need for policy formation and its implementation to promote social justice for the vulnerable. This policy formation process needs to be initiated by the government together with national and international donors in Bangladesh, such as the World Bank, through a collaborative approach (Sethi & Jana, 2003). More research to develop and implement policies on stigma, sex work, and HIV/AIDS is essential.

Additionally, Parker et al. (2009) clearly suggest conducting more research to address stigma and discrimination against sex work and HIV/AIDS in order to effect progressive social change (p.1). I have observed a lack of research that addresses stigma surrounding AIDS and sex work, especially in the Bangladeshi context. My research aims to fill some of this void and further knowledge on this culturally sensitive topic.

In order to ensure sex workers' human rights, the government, along with the NGOs, can play crucial roles. Ara (2005) opines that NGOs have the ability to mobilize SWOs to create social change. However, it is important to keep in mind that many NGOs do not work together to create social change. For this reason, NGOs' power to mobilize SWOs is not always a useful tool to ensure sex workers' rights. Social policy involves a community, but citizens must be included in policy-making in order to effect positive social change (Sethi & Jana, 2003). However, without practical community development strategies by governments, communities remain weak. Although various strategies have failed to alleviate poverty because of the existence of many socio-economic problems, I hope one day to see a world where community development is strongly present and states have created safety nets for the poor.

In addition, in order to fight stigma, a massive community organizing system is useful. For example, Shragge (2003) claims that by the grassroots communities organizing at local levels, the marginalized can create social change for their own betterment (pp. 133-137). Shragge also claims that to diminish oppression, opposition to or resistance against the power of the dominating groups is essential (p. 16). This idea is similar to Smith's "standpoint" theory (1981). Smith argues that women are vulnerable in society but they can challenge their oppression by sharing stories about their daily

struggles. This "standpoint" approach of challenging male domination of female sex workers would create an improved situation for female sex workers.

I have seen that many scholars fail to describe their research design and methodology clearly. For example, how the participants were recruited or the reason for their chosen sample design is not elaborated upon in some research studies, such as the report of Human Rights Watch (2002). Moreover, their sample selection process (random or purposive) is not clear (p. 8). The purposes of many studies are not presented either. Similarly, in their survey report (2003) to identify people's perceptions of sex work, Social Initiatives failed to ensure a balanced number of male and female respondents (p. 4). This kind of gender imbalance raises the question of the reliability of the study. Moreover, recommendations made by Human Rights Watch in India (2002) are not specific in outlining further actions by the state (p. 6). It is important to keep in mind that in any suggestion to improve citizens' rights, research recommendations should be specific. My literature review and reflection have been useful in analyzing my data and helped me focus on five issues which I discuss below.

First, violations of the human rights of sex workers in the global and Bangladeshi context are described in various studies. I have discovered that sex workers are abused at different levels and their children's rights are trampled (HRW, 2006). Most importantly, studies point out that in Bangladesh, brothel-based sex workers are a high risk population in transmitting the HIV virus and other STDs. Therefore, seven brothel closures have long term implications on the spread of the virus through an unregulated street-based sex trade (Jenkins & Rahman, 2002). In contrast, another study points out that despite the fact that various surveys show that no sex workers have HIV, they receive unjust treatment

from society due to the misconception that they are the major carriers of this virus (Azim et al., 2006).

Second, the forms and context of HIV/AIDS-related stigma have been illustrated in some studies. Stigma surrounding AIDS has had negative consequences at all levels, from the personal to the global (Malcolm, et al., 1998, p. 347). Parker et al. (1998) also bring forward the same ideas of stigma towards marginalized groups due to the misconception of this epidemic, which are obstacles to sex workers receiving fair treatment. All of the authors claim that the sources of stigma surrounding this epidemic are widely neglected. Hence, they recommend that the different levels of power, both community and state, should work together to challenge any negative societal view.

Third, some scholars have discussed feminist and partnership issues and the challenges that the oppressed face in organizing against oppressive powers. The feminist approach, using sex workers' daily life experiences as a means of opposing stigma and fighting for their rights, is important in my opinion, in the Bangladeshi context.

Fourth, the ideologies of human rights, gender, and the effect of globalization have been described in Visweswaran's article (2004). The author explains that human rights violations in the U.S. are not reported as frequently and severely as in developing countries. Hence, the public are not informed about the violations of human rights of the oppressed in developed countries.

Fifth, considering the condition of overall community development, truly informed community organizing processes would be helpful to address different social issues, such as HIV/AIDS issues. At the same time, models can be used to design and implement community development programs. For example, the social action model

described by Shragge can be useful to confront domination and give the oppressed groups' power over the prevailing social groups to ensure social justice and fight stigma.

In conclusion, my literature review is divided into the above five sections involving human rights, stigma, HIV/AIDS and sex work, community development or organizing issues, and the feminist approach to challenge ruling power. I have decided to review these particular works, since their main findings and themes are closely related to my thesis, especially to my methodology.

Finally, as I already mentioned, I have explored methodological gaps in some of the literature, such as the lack of explanations of how participants were recruited and the inadequate descriptions of the chosen sample design in the Human Rights Watch report (2002). Similarly, in his empirical research, Ullah (2005) fails to provide the reasons for his sample selection procedures (p. 111). Therefore, based on the identified gaps in some of the research, I present my methods and methodology as clearly as possible in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Generally, conducting research with a marginalized group such as sex workers is challenging. However, as a Bangladeshi with work experience at SWOs, I have had the unique opportunity to enter into this community and conduct my research. The specific purposes related to the methodology of this research project are to gather knowledge on the stigma related to HIV/AIDS and sex work and to identify the existing community organizing processes of Durjoy and Nari Mukti to fight this stigma. With these objectives in mind, I developed guidelines for data collection and analysis procedures. I used focus group discussions, individual interviews, case studies, and ethnographic field observations as parts of my research methods. For instance, in order to explore the personal oppression of sex workers, face-to-face interviews were used as an appropriate tool to gather information that I could not collect through focus groups.

The main goal of this chapter is to explain my choice of methods for collecting and analyzing data and of the methodology for this study. What are the differences between methods and methodology? According to Berg (2007), methodology refers to how data is collected, organized, and analyzed (p. 351). On the other hand, methods are techniques or approaches to collect and analyze data. Therefore, I identify my research methodology as the means or ways of data collection, organization, and analysis. How the research was conducted from its planning to finishing stages is my research methodology. In contrast, face-to-face interviews, case studies, focus group discussions, and ethnographic field observations are my methods of data collection, and content analyses and the qualitative descriptive approach are my methods of data analysis.

In this chapter, I have explained the processes of my qualitative social inquiry from the data collection phase to the presentation of results phase. I have illustrated a qualitative research approach and compared it to the quantitative investigation approach. I have elaborated upon the research techniques of my data collection, management, and analysis. I have justified my chosen research tools. I have discussed the usefulness of an action-based research model and other research models that I used in this study. The models that I used extensively were the community-based and partnership approaches, whereas I used the participatory and feminist action-based models more moderately. In addition, I have explained the process of participant selection, the content analysis approach, and ethical issues. Finally, I have described the limitations involved in conducting my fieldwork and outlined my plans for disseminating recommendations arising from my study.

3.1 Qualitative descriptive research method

In general, the qualitative descriptive method offers researchers a way to explore socio-economic issues in order to find solutions for social problems (Berg, 2007, p. 8). By following this approach, researchers have the opportunity to examine social settings and people's lives in order to describe social structures, organizations, people's roles, and beliefs. This process also allows for exploring the systems of various social controls and relationships. Moreover, this technique provides an opportunity for further research initiatives by re-examining or verifying existing research methods (Berg, 2007, p. 9).

In analyzing trends, researchers can identify local concerns and determine their causes and effects. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), "[Qualitative data] is a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable

local contexts" (p. 1). Hence, local situations can be closely viewed by using a qualitative descriptive approach.

By examining the social setting of the Bangladeshi sex work community, I collected data in order to present their social structures, community development strategies, human rights issues, and their social interactions. After gathering the raw data, I analyzed these by using a descriptive process. This model allowed me to critically review the field information and record it in order to elaborate upon my three research-focused themes of stigma, human rights, and community development issues.

In the field of social science and health, this descriptive research model is used as a qualitative method and provides opportunities for researchers to maintain their data efficiently. Indeed, rigorous and close fieldwork and analysis can motivate researchers to interpret data accurately. The qualitative descriptive method is not only used for analyzing data but is also helpful for choosing samples, collecting data, and presenting information (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 334). In fact, when a clear-cut research descriptive process is required in order to present incidents or events, this method is helpful.

3.1.1 Nature of a qualitative descriptive method. Analyzing this method is helpful in order to understand the nature of my social investigation. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2003), "Qualitative research is a field of inquiry in its own right" (p. 3). This approach is associated with several ideas, paradigms, and hypotheses. The data I collected through case studies, focus group discussions, participatory action research, interviews, and ethnographic field observations proved comparable to the data described by the above researchers. I agree with the authors (2003), when they say, "Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world" (p. 4). Indeed,

through an in-depth field observation, a researcher has an opportunity to understand and view the real world situation.

Additionally, the qualitative research approach can be an interpretive description of a qualitative work (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 335). This process provides a "comprehensive summary" of an actual incident or issue narrated by an interviewee. I explored the real conditions of the Bangladeshi sex work community in order to analyze and present the study results to the Bangladeshi SWOs, the government, and the NGOs. This approach has different characteristics, which I describe below.

3.1.2 Characteristics of a qualitative descriptive method. Some basic characteristics of this approach are vital for social inquiries. First, research questionnaires need to be open-ended and flexible structures (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 338). For this reason, I ensured that my questions were minimally structured and open-ended. For example, in focus groups, a question regarding the knowledge on HIV/AIDS was posed as, "Do you have any comments about HIV/AIDS and sex work?" This type of open-ended question encouraged respondents to express their opinions freely rather than in confined or structure-based answers.

Second, this method involves exploring and illustrating the real-life experience of participants. In this context, I conducted case studies of sex workers in order to collect information about their experiences in dealing with stigma.

Third, this process necessitates staying in close contact with research subjects in order to collect data through ethnographic field observations (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 337). My close field observations allowed me to speak informally with different people from the sex work community in order to verify my field findings and physically observe sex

workers' real lives. Hence, based on my data collection processes and the nature of this approach, my work can be identified as following a qualitative social inquiry-based method from its planning to concluding stages.

In addition, there are other characteristics of a qualitative social inquiry which I found helpful in my research methodology; they are as follows:

1. The qualitative method is holistic and provides a broad picture of the social milieu;

2. The cultural settings and systems of relationships are observable;

3. Allowing for face-to-face and close participant observations, it cultivates an intimate process of data collection that enhances the analysis;

4. Content analysis is a vital part of such an analytical system;

5. There are strong ethical concerns;

6. Others can "supplement, validate, explain, and reinterpret" data (Janesick, 2003, p. 57-58);

7. Local contexts can be described vividly (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10).

I found that these characteristics were useful in my project. For example, face-to-face interviews and through my field observations, I established a friendly rapport between the research subjects and myself. Most significantly, if I had concentrated too much on quantitative issues, my intention to identify the real social world of this vulnerable group would have been hampered. The qualitative approach is different from the quantitative method, as I shall illustrate below.

3.2 Qualitative versus quantitative methods

In general, qualitative research does not focus on quantity. In contrast, the quantitative system is based on measurements, numbers, and statistics. Quantitative methods also emphasize research based on various types of causal relationships between variables. On the other hand, qualitative studies are capable of identifying a person's views through detailed interviews and close ethnographic field observations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, pp. 13-16).

In my results section, I have presented and quantified the number of respondent sex workers, their socio-demographic pictures, and their stigmatized situations. I have synthesized my research findings in two ways: some portions of data have been presented in a quasi-statistical form or a quantitative approach, and others have been presented as descriptive qualitative analysis. Importantly, working at the brothel and DiCs for ethnographic field observations, I took great care to build a rapport with the sex workers in order to smoothly conduct my pre-test sessions with some of them.

3.3 The pre-test sessions

Before starting interviews, focus groups, and field observations, I conducted some pre-test sessions with the members and staff of Durjoy and the Sajeda Foundation (a local organization working with street-based sex workers) in order to finalize the questionnaires and to avoid any unexpected situations in the data collection phase. The purposes of these tests were to be sure that the participants were able to understand the questionnaires; to plan how to address any unanticipated issues; to understand how long it would take to finish interviews; and to check proper utilization of the equipment, such as the recorder (Cone & Foster, 2006, p. 228). Through these pilot tests, I was able to

fine-tune my data collection processes and make changes where they were required. For example, I thoroughly discussed the meaning of stigma before asking the participants about it in interviews, in order to make this term commonly understandable. Hence, based on their feedback, some sub-questions regarding the meaning of stigma were slightly modified in Bangla from their original English version. For example, in many western contexts, stigma does not apply when an unmarried woman becomes pregnant. On the other hand, in Bangladesh, this issue involves strong shame for the pregnant woman. As a result, I modified the explanation of stigma in order to better suit the Bangladeshi context. Moreover, some logistic issues, such as the times and locations for data collection, were settled in these sessions in order to smoothly collect and analyze data.

3.4 Data collection procedures

There were eight individual interviews in total (five in the DiCs and three in the brothel), and six focus groups (covering 31 respondents: 13 in DiCs and 18 in the brothel). Out of the eight individual interviews, I developed two case studies. Besides these case studies, I analyzed all the face-to-face interviews, the focus group interviews, and the findings from the field observations. I used a voice recorder to tape all the interviews with the full consent of the participants.

The data were collected by two note-takers and me. The first note-taker was unable to continue due to illness and other commitments, so I hired a new person who had extensive experience working with vulnerable communities in Bangladesh. We discussed research procedures and the meaning of some terminologies such as "human rights issues," to streamline our understanding of the concepts to avoid confusion.

Since I am writing my thesis in English, upon my return to Montreal, I translated the data from Bangla to English. Before writing my findings, I listened to the tape recordings, reviewed the participants' answers and their organizational documents, and consulted with my note-takers in order to ensure the reliability of my field data. I also developed a synopsis of the field findings.

3.5 Data collection through focus group discussions

In my group discussions, I focused on the respondents' knowledge and experience with HIV/AIDS, human rights, and their organizing strategies (See the focus groups' questionnaires in Appendix 2). Focus groups were useful techniques to understand sex workers' confidence, attitudes, and internal coordination regarding their community organizing processes (Hardina, 2002, p. 341). The number of sex workers in each group ranged from three to eight. They were a homogeneous group and felt comfortable expressing their opinions in front of each other. Moreover, these discussions were a good way to gather insightful information from this particular marginalized group and allowed me to give an enriched description of how readily they shared their ideas with me (Renaud, 2003, p. 192).

According to Schutt, "The focus group is an interview style designed for small groups of unrelated individuals, formed by an investigator and led in a group discussion on some particular topic or topics" (as cited in Berg, 2007, p. 144). However, I found that group participants were related to each other. Consequently, since the members of the SWOs were organizationally and professionally affiliated with each other, they sometimes had trouble in expressing their opinions freely. Nevertheless, focus groups helped me gather data ranging from a general background to specific topics. Innovative

group thoughts and concepts were evoked. Most importantly, the participants and researchers learnt from each other. I also found there are specific advantages and disadvantages of a focus group.

3.5.1 Advantages

1. There is flexibility in selecting the number of participants, time, and cost;

2. Focus group information can be collected from a large source;

3. In-depth opinions can be collected from different groups;

4. Participants can feel empowered by sharing their experiences;

5. A focus group technique does not need a complex sampling method (Berg, 2007, pp. 148 -149).

3.5.2 Disadvantages

1. It is difficult to elicit an individual opinion since data are collected through group discussions and individual participants are often shy about expressing their true feelings and opinions in front of a group;

2. A dominating participant can interrupt the flow of the interview;

3. Researchers need to be cautious in using the data for a quantitative inquiry;

4. The quality of the data depends on the facilitator's skill (Berg, 2007, pp. 148-149).

In addition, it is important to maintain group harmony by ensuring equal and active participation for all members of the group. In my case, group discussions with the general members of SWOs were implemented without any problems. In contrast, in the group discussions with the executive members of both Durjoy and Nari Mukti, the more vocal participants or dominating characters tried to interrupt those who were shyer.

However, my note-taker and I made the research objectives clear and encouraged all to express their opinions freely.

3.5.3 General overview of focus group questions. In keeping with the research queries, focus group questions provide an opportunity for subjects to express their opinions on attitudes, behaviours, and customs (Berg, 2007, p. 145). According to Krueger, (2004), "The group interview is distinctive in that it uses a set of questions deliberately sequenced or focused to move the discussion toward a concept of interest to the researcher" (p. 391). Therefore, I used my research-focused themes in group interviews to obtain knowledge of the group's experience.

Additionally, I encouraged subjects in a conversational manner to express their opinions to other group members. The note-taker's and my primary responsibility was to keep the discourse on the research centred topics and to involve all participants in discussions as much as possible. The guidelines were designed to ask "think-back" questions, allowing participants' time to reflect on their previous experiences and arrive at conclusions on specific issues. For instance, I asked a question about experiences they have had involving stigma: "Do you have any experiences about the stigma related to sex work? If so, can you tell us when, where and with whom?" (See the focus groups' questionnaires in Appendix 2). This type of question gave the participants an opportunity to reflect on their life experiences (Krueger, 2004, p. 391). I developed questions from the general to the specific in order to shift smoothly to the more crucial themes. For example, I started with the basic demographic information of participants and then moved to their specific views of human rights issues.

3.5.4 Specific overview of focus group questions. The focus group

questionnaires were specifically organized based on participants' group attitudes and

actions in order to address sex workers' social problems. For instance, I asked a specific

question on the focus groups' questionnaires about organizational activities addressing

stigma: "When dealing with stigma and discrimination, does your organization work in

harmony with other organizations?" This type of inquiry was not only helpful in

exploring the group's experience with their organizational development but also was

useful in motivating groups to further their actions.

In addition, questions were designed to develop links between the research

objectives and the overall context of the sex work community. For instance, one question

was, "Does your organization plan activities that address your human rights, especially

when thwarted by stigma related to HIV/AIDS?" These inquiries provided insightful

knowledge about the group's views of their organizations and were useful for making

links with my research purpose of identifying the organizing processes of the SWOs.

3.5.5 Reasons for using focus groups. Focus groups were useful in exploring sex

workers' group dynamics in order to understand the depth of knowledge that individuals

had about group activities. This framework was also helpful in uncovering sex workers'

social justice issues and encouraging further collaboration to ensure their human rights.

For instance, I asked, "Have you individually or jointly taken action against stigma

surrounding HIV/AIDS and sex work?" This kind of question helped me identify their

group activities, which I could not discover so easily through the one on one interviews.

3.6 Differences between focus groups and individual interviews

There are some differences between a traditional interview and a focus group interview. I realized that a group discussion was more cost-effective than several individual interviews. For example, I spent more money on eight individual interviews than on interviews with the six focus groups; the latter gave me data from 31 individual women. I followed the suggestion of the SWOs and their partner NGOs that I arranged refreshments for all group discussions and provided the participants with a lump sum as a group honorarium. In contrast, for the one-on-one interviews and ethnographic field observations, I had to pay each sex worker and the SWOs. The SWOs received honoraria for allowing me to conduct my field observations at the brothel and DiCs in order to raise funds for their organizations. As a result, the individual interviews were more expensive than the group discussions.

Furthermore, in a group discussion, there is a wider scope for observing different people's attitudes and perceptions at a given time. On the other hand, a face-to-face interview provides an in-depth analysis of one person's perception. Therefore, the analysis can be more rigorous than that of a group discussion. Responses and meanings from a focus group are socially developed, whereas individual results are based on unique or individualistic ideas. In a group session, participants can learn from each other, which is not possible in a face-to-face interview. In a group discussion, the dynamics or group feelings are observable. On the other hand, an individual interview can provide a close, one on one interaction-based environment between subjects and researchers, in which greater depth can be achieved in both the questions and their answers. Time can be saved in a group discussion compared to a face-to-face interview (Berg, 2007, p. 150).

3.7 Data collection through face-to-face interviews

I collected data through individual interviews based on general and specific questions, which I describe below.

3.7.1 General overview of face-to-face interview questions. Face-to-face interview questions help researchers identify the personal experiences of different individuals; they, the researchers, can then draw generalizations pertinent to their field of study. Furthermore, in order to ensure useful ways of accessing information and participants' perceptions, face-to-face questions are helpful. Open-ended interview questions provide an environment for learning about the interviewee's feelings, attitudes, opinions, and behaviour vis-a-vis a specific topic or question (Berg, 2007, p. 98).

3.7.2 Different types of face-to-face interview questions. Berg (2007) describes four types of individual interview questions—essential, extra, throwaway, and probing—which I compared with my individual questions. First, the essential questions are designed to cover the main themes of a study (p. 100). Based on my main topic regarding stigma related to HIV/AIDS and sex work, I posed several essential questions. For example, "Do you know what stigma is? Or, what is the social viewpoint regarding sex work?" (See the individual interview guideline in Appendix 1). Second, the extra questions are similar to essential questions but are developed in a slightly different way (p.100). In my case, my extra questions were "Are you conscious about your human rights, and if so, are you getting your rights?" These questions were slightly different from the essential questions but were helpful in ascertaining the subjects' ideas related to human rights issues. Third, the throwaway questions (for example, the name and address of a participant; see Appendix 2) are placed at the beginning of an interview to collect

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demographic information (p. 101). In my case, I asked the basic socio-demographic

information of participants regarding their marital status, number of children, and

education status as my throwaway questions. Fourth, the probing questions are used to

verify data elicited through essential and extra questions (p. 101). For instance, I asked

the question, "Could you tell me more about stigma?" after I had asked about individual

experience involving stigma. As with the questions for the focus group, I developed

individual questions, ranging from a general to a specific theme, in order to cover all four

types of questions.

      3.7.3 Specific overview of face-to-face interview questions. In my individual

interviews, the focus was to explore the sex workers' personal experiences as they related

to stigma. Moreover, the individual questions provided an avenue to understand sex

workers' life experiences as narrated by the sex workers themselves. For instance, their

personal experiences of oppression were explored in response to the question, "Have you

ever been abused by any powerful person from inside or outside your work place? If so,

how?" (See the individual interview guideline in Appendix 1). This kind of question was

useful in discovering ways in which they were victimized, which differed from one

individual to another.

      3.7.4 Reasons for using individual interviews. Due to the very personal nature

of their experiences, prostitutes often preferred the individual interviews because they did

not want to share in front of others. Some bonded sex workers shared information about

their bitter relationships with their pimps. These personal stories were helpful in

developing the case studies in order to understand their social vulnerability. Thus, this

tool helped me draw conclusions and make generalizations based on these cases.

3.8 Data collection for developing case studies

Case studies were vital learning tools in understanding prostitutes' specific situations. In general, a case study can be identified from a case or person or incident in order to develop more general conclusions (Stake, 2003, p.137). From my case studies, generalizations can be made concerning sex workers' disadvantaged position in Bangladeshi society.

Additionally, Hagan defines a case study as, "A method involving systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how the subject operates or functions" (as cited in Berg, 2007, p. 293). Through a case study, the researcher can observe a social unit, be it a family, an institute or a community. Case study methods are widely used in the field of social science.

3.8.1 Advantages. A case study provides an opportunity for reflection or objectivity. Moreover, it helps to create a generalized view of a social world of individuals. Finally, there are opportunities for learning and determining best practices for organizations or communities (Berg, 2007, pp. 294-297).

3.8.2 Disadvantages. A disadvantage can arise if researchers do not have the skill to document and report a case accurately (Berg, 2007, p. 298).

It is important to carefully choose a case that represents a wider culture. In order to choose a representative group or individual from a large-scale population, it is equally crucial to find and select them from different reliable sources. These sources can be determined by doctors, social workers, or program evaluators (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, pp. 151-152). In my case, I told the SWOs about my plan to develop the case studies, and

they helped me choose two participants. The cases were selected purposively rather than randomly in order to make further generalizations. Lastly, a case study is similar to an ethnographic field observation, since both methods are used in analysis and reflection to understand a real life experience.

3.9 Data collection through ethnographic field observations

Ethnographic field observations are crucial to explore the cultural settings of a closed environment. My ethnographic field observations were implemented through informal sharing and open-ended questionnaires. These findings were useful for understanding sex workers' cultural settings, their organizing strategies, and the abusive conditions which they lived in. Indeed, from a neutral point of view, I discovered the vulnerability of sex workers by observing their daily life experiences. An ethnographic field observation is useful in social research to help the researcher understand not only what is, but also what can be (Renaud, 2003, p. 191).

In addition, according to Van Maanen (1982), an ethnographic field observation "…. involves extensive field work of various types, including participant observation, formal and informal interviewing, document collecting, filming, recording, and so on" (p. 103). In keeping with this definition, my field engagements with sex workers in the brothel and the DiCs included conducting observations and informal discussions, reviewing organizational documents, and documenting their daily lives.

Berg (2007) describes five conditions —easy access; part of a research; scrutiny; rights and safety; and listening, watching and observing— to conduct ethnographic field observations, which are utilised in my field work. First, to start an observation, researchers must have access to a culturally sensitive environment (Berg, 2007, p. 177).

For instance, in Bangladesh, sex work is not openly discussed in mainstream society; and thus, strangers or newcomers in brothel communities may arouse suspicion. In my case, my working connections with the local partners of the SWOs gave me comparatively easy access to the brothel so that I could conduct my fieldwork.

Second, it is the period when the ethnographer must begin to feel as though he or she is a member of the community being studied. Indeed, ethnography requires that researchers feel part of the environment they are studying (Berg, 2007, pp. 178- 180). Since I had more than five years of experience working with sex workers, I felt a part of their community during my field work. For example, I spent a huge amount of time during my field observations in the brothel and the DiCs; I attended one of their internal conflict resolution meetings which I would not have been able to attend without first establishing a strong rapport with the sex workers. The presence of their local partner NGO staff also helped me to interact with sex workers freely.

Third, sometimes, too much scrutiny can lead to respondents growing suspicious and giving inaccurate information (Berg, 2007, pp. 180-182). For example, if an inexperienced researcher observes sex workers' daily lives but does not live among them, the participants may not feel comfortable in providing data and the researcher may not feel comfortable in gathering it. Hence, data can be wrongly interpreted. In my case, my ability to communicate in Bangla and my similar cultural background allowed me to observe the participants closely and understand their problems from a perspective of shared norms.

Fourth, the rights and safety of researchers and participants are vital (Berg, 2007, p. 182). In this context, before starting the actual research inside the brothel or DiCs, I

had several meetings and discussions with the executive members of both SWOs and their local partner NGOs to minimize unexpected situations. However, inside the brothel, when clients came, some of them felt uncomfortable and were suspicious due to fear of disclosure. To diffuse these fears, the note-taker and I briefed them on the research and handled the situation with the assistance of the staff of the SWOs.

Fifth, watching, listening, and learning are the key concepts for observation (Berg, 2007, p. 182). Therefore, listening, observing, and enhancing my learning from informal discussions and interviews helped me to successfully gather and manage data.

3.9.1 General overview of ethnographic observation questions. In any field observation, it was essential to verify the data collected during the observations instead of relying only on participants' self-presentation (Berg, 2007, p. 179). My questions allowed me to collect data through informal conversations, as did my participation at SWOs' meetings and activities, such as income generation activities (IGA) skill development trainings for the members of Nari Mukti. After collecting data through individual interviews or group discussions, I crosschecked and verified some answers by observing and asking further probing questions. For instance, I observed the attitudes of *babus* towards sex workers and spoke to the NGO staff and sex workers other than the *babus*' lovers about their own observations. To verify the respondents' comments regarding their oppression, I checked with other sources involved with the sex work community, such as the NGO staff and other sex workers, all of whom were familiar with the daily lives of sex workers (See the ethnographic field observation guideline in Appendix 3).

3.9.2 The ways I conducted ethnographic field observations. In order to obtain data through field observations, Berg (2007) puts the field observation process into four

"aspects" (pp.194-196), which I found similar to my field observations. First, taking in the physical setting allowed me to understand the overall surroundings of the brothel and DiCs. Second, developing relationships with people helped me build a close rapport with the sex work community. Third, tracking, observing, and asking questions helped me maintain my schedule and adhere to the selected topics. Fourth, locating subgroups through sample populations was a useful strategy in order to collect data from all strata.

3.9.3 Reasons for using ethnographic field observations. Ethnographic field observations helped me develop my research objectives. For example, one of my objectives was to identify the type of discrimination that sex workers faced; by observing the way *sardernis'* talked to their bonded sex workers. I noticed that, within the brothel, the young and poor sex workers were more vulnerable and stigmatized than the older and wealthier sex workers. Thus, my field observations provided unique opportunities to identify and explore the underlying causes of many social problems of the sex work community which I could not identify only through interviews or focus groups.

In addition, ethnographic field observations were vital for verifying and crosschecking data that I gathered from focus groups and individual interviews. As part of my field observations, I discussed some of the sex workers' social problems with various people from the local community, such as the owners of shops next to the brothel. These people saw the prostitutes on a daily basis and could often verify data collected from the sex workers. Moreover, I redesigned some questions in order to explore real findings and compare these with field observations. For example, "What is the brothel power structure?" became "What is the power relationship inside and outside of the brothel with the sex work community"? These queries helped me question neutral and

objective sources, such as the NGO staff, about the brothel's hierarchy, which the executives or *sardernis* were reluctant to describe. After collecting data, I organized different data management stages, which I elaborate upon below**.**

3.10 Data management procedures

Data management is an essential part of qualitative research. Before starting data collection, a plan for data categorization, analysis, and storage is a crucial part of this procedure. This plan can be implemented through the repeated process. This repetition means that data management and analysis are connected to each other (Meadows, Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2004, p. 890). After completion of any research, it is important to ensure quality, accessibility, documentation, preservation, and analysis of data (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 45).

My data management system followed a repetitive process, allowing close connection with the data organization phase, an integral part of my data organization system. For instance, before going to Bangladesh, I developed my research proposal and research question guidelines based on my topic of interest. Thus, I reviewed the existing literature in order to explore other works in my field. This re-examining of literature was an important step in my analysis technique (Meadows et al., 2004, p. 890).

It is essential to store raw field notes, tapes, and edited hard copies as part of data management. In this case, I stored all raw data, especially field notes gathered in Bangladesh and Canada, and kept it for four years. It is also crucial to store, not only raw data but also partially processed data, such as write-ups or transcriptions, and coded data, such as the names of participants and their numbers to identify them (Rehena 1, Tanni 2 and so on) in order to ensure proper data management (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 46).

In my research proposal, I outlined my procedure for managing my data. The participants' responses are my raw data, and it is essential to manage it properly for further research.

Additionally, data storage, retrieval, and analysis are the primary steps of a research project. Miles & Huberman (1994) clearly put it, "How data is stored and retrieved is the heart of data management...." (p. 46). Properly stored data means that, if ethical issues arise regarding a study, the research methods can be examined; storing data is in itself an ethical thing to do. In addition, a secure management system assures others that interviews were conducted in an ethical manner.

I analyzed the raw data carefully. After gathering the data, my note-taker and I re-checked and organized it. For example, we counted and checked the answer sheets and tape recordings to make sure none were missing. Thus, I reviewed these findings to make sure they were consistent, logical, and valid; then I documented them in a descriptive manner. I compiled the main findings from focus groups, interviews, and field observations systematically to analyze their different results. In Bangladesh, if something was unclear or missing, we re-visited respondents in order to re-collect information. I drew some diagrams, developed charts and, structured tables after data synthesis in order to present data accurately from its raw form (Meadows et al., 2004, pp. 890-891).

3.11 The structure of questionnaires

In order to collect data, I developed flexible guidelines for the different types of interview questions: focus group, face-to-face, and ethnographic questions. My note taker and I created an enabling environment for respondents to speak freely in response to open-ended questions. For example, for demographic information, I asked some basic

non-intrusive questions related to education and family life. Additionally, under the

section on the participants' basic socio-demographic information, I asked questions about

their marital status or number of children they have (See questionnaires in Appendices 1-

3). Moreover, responding to a question about their organizing processes, the sex workers

had the opportunity to describe more clearly their own situations. Also, to obtain insight

into a specific group and to achieve a broad range of participatory discussion, I asked

questions like, "Do you know what HIV/AIDS is and how HIV can be transmitted?"

Finally, following the open-ended question technique, I adjusted my questions in

keeping with the participants' responses. For example, I asked, "Have you any

recommendations for sex worker's organizations and the policy makers which would

help fight stigma related to HIV/AIDS and your work?" (See Appendix 3). I collected

and kept all the responses regardless of whether they were recommendations or other

types of comments. This allowed me to more effectively capture the beliefs,

organizational activities, community organizing processes, and experiences of the

differently situated subjects. Moreover, open-focused discussions or interviews allowed

the communication to flow in a conversational manner. I offered refreshments to keep the

members of sample populations comfortable and energized.

3.12 Sampling method

It is important to carefully select the participants from a large group in order to

represent the general population accurately. According to Neuendorf (2002), "Sampling

is the process of selecting a subset of units for study from the large populations" (p. 83).

In order to implement a research design that can draw generalizations from a wide

population, the sample method can use randomly or purposively selected participants

(Neuendorf, 2002, p.83). However, Miles & Huberman (1994) argue that qualitative research sampling methods must be purposive rather than random. They claim that if a research population is selected randomly within a small group of people, there is a risk of bias selection (p. 27). Following this argument, I intentionally categorized my small group of brothel and street-based sex workers into three sub-groups: executive members, general members, and non-members from Nari Mukti and Durjoy. Then, I purposively selected subjects from each category based on their availability and interests.

3.12.1 Stratified sampling This system is useful when the researcher is studying a group that is made up of two or more sub-groups. Once the sub-groups are identified, the researcher can choose representatives from each sub-group and thereby ensure that the study offers a good representation of the entire group (Berg, 2007, p. 42). I followed a stratified sampling system to purposely draw and categorize the participants from each category (executive members, general members, and non-members) in my study. In this way, I obtained representatives from each stratum of the sex work community as Neuendorf (2002) suggests (p. 66).

3.12.2 Purposive sampling. Researchers use their knowledge and experience to purposively select participants in order to confirm that certain groups are included in a research design. However, there is the possibility of a lack of wider "generalizability" (Berg, 2007, p. 44). With small numbers, it is difficult to make generalizations about the larger population, so I was careful to ensure that the selected participants represented the various sub-groups and that no sub-strata were missed. I purposively differentiated between sex workers and other marginalized groups because sex workers are highly stigmatized in this culture (more so than many other groups) and in a very particular way.

3.13 Research variables

In a scientific research project, variables are important ingredients to clearly present research results. According to Krippendorff (1980), a variable "is a symbol which stands for any one of a set of two or more mutually exclusive values, such as objects, states, categories, qualities, or elements'' (p. 88). In my work, I identified variables and used them to collect data through my question guidelines. For example, participants' age, number of children, and income were among my research variables.

3.14 Research reliability and validity

Research reliability and validity are important in my research from the research design to data collection step and the data analysis to concluding stages.

3.14.1 Research reliability. I was cautious from the research design phase to the data collection phase in order to ensure its reliability. Research reliability is essential to validate research findings. Reliability is important when implementing variables. Data becomes reliable when it is meticulously measured and analyzed; it is essential to crosscheck data multiple times. Thus, in repeatedly obtaining the same results, data reliability is ensured (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 129). In my research project, I conducted pre-test sessions in order to receive research participants' feedback. Their suggestions helped me make my questions clearer before using them in the individual and focus group interviews. Moreover, my note taker and I discussed the plan of data collection and the analysis methods. I also discussed the main findings of the research with my supervisors and note takers. Through these activities, I made data reliable from the beginning to the end of this project.

Additionally, after data collection, I crosschecked the outcomes and took steps if something was missing or unclear. In this case, I was careful to validate my research findings by conducting a "result sharing and feedback receiving" workshop, in order to crosscheck data with the workshop participants. My validation workshop was conducted with this goal in mind, as a means of systematically verifying data, thus making it reliable (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 155). In this workshop, general sex workers, executive members of Durjoy and the SWNOB, BAPS, the business community, and representatives from civil society were present. They provided valuable comments on the raw data, and I incorporated their opinions in my analysis. However, reliability is not the only way to confirm the validity of data (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 129).

3.14.2 Research validity. In this phase of data validation, I focused on data analysis right to the finishing phase to ensure that the analysis of the raw data was factual and reliable. An "empirical truth'' is the synonym of validity. Through content analysis, data can be scientifically validated beyond the capacity of a casual study. The core question of a study is whether the results would be meaningful and trustworthy to participants. It crossed my mind that the local context and the findings must be consistent with each other. To ensure the validity of my study, I added such variables as benefits and risks that the participants may have encountered. My goal was to develop a data analysis procedure that included the essential elements of both validity and reliability.

3.15 Data analysis procedures

I analyzed the findings, opinions, and recommendations from all sources in a two-phase process. Firstly, I organized the raw data into categories that I could use in the content analysis, such as organizing demographic information or the organizational

capacity building processes of the SWOs. My field observations were part of the first step. Secondly, working with one category at a time, I analyzed the data on the individual participants. These two steps were used consistently in this project in order to retain the meaning and sense of the data (Renaud, 2003, p. 192). Based on data analysis and the study findings, my reflections were given in each section.

I reviewed the constitutions and the organizational documents of Durjoy and Nari Mukti as secondary information. My note-taker and I attended a workshop reviewing the Population Council of Bangladesh and National AIDS/STD Program's current model for dealing with stigma-related to HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh. Different groups of participants attended this workshop, including HIV/AIDS intervention workers and SWOs. The purpose of our participation in the workshop was to collect information as secondary data about social stigma and discrimination related to AIDS. I also included the documents from this workshop in my literature review as part of my data analysis method.

3.15.1 Focus group data analysis. After collecting data from a group, I systematically analyzed it. I transcribed the raw data from the follow-up questions and focused discussions. I reviewed the questionnaire answer sheets, records, and notes (Berg, 2007, pp. 162-163). Throughout this process, I analyzed the responses and tried to draw links between the social milieu and the raw data.

Furthermore, it was important to ensure qualitative data reliability by avoiding confusing it with quantitative information. For example, if three respondents out of six answered a question in the same way, this did not show that 50% of the whole population would be the same. Therefore, this type of percentage-based analysis or findings was not meaningful. Thus, I did not report that 50% of respondents provided the same answer to a

specific question, such as, "What are the leadership structures in your organization"? In fact, this kind of result was neither reliable, nor meaningful. However, I presented participants opinions in the form of quotes gleaned from interviews.

Additionally, I precisely transcribed all taped answers into text. At the same time, I included probing questions and answers in my write-ups. I carefully examined the answers to check the reliability of my data. When I facilitated group discussions, my note takers took notes; in keeping with Berg's advice, I included these notes in my analysis.

3.15.2 Data analysis of the ethnographic field observations. I analyzed my ethnographic field observation findings by reviewing the field notes and the organizational documents of the SWOs and transcribing the taped interviews. I used ethnographic field observations to describe the sex trade environment, using information gleaned from informal sharing, and the open-ended questionnaires. In addition, I used two methods of data analysis to analyze the ethnographic field data: inductive content analysis and ethnographic narrative accounts (Berg, 2007). First, I read and verified data with my note taker and described these using the content analysis method. I have explained the content analysis method in section 3.16. Second, I identified and extracted themes, topics, and issues in a systematic way from raw data. For instance, in my introductory part, I described some themes or terms such as stigma.

3.15.3 Face-to-face interview data analysis. I critically analyzed data from individual interviews to develop the case studies. Based on these cases, I determined whether the sex workers were individually or collectively capable of protesting discrimination that they experienced. I rechecked, edited, and corrected field notes before writing the case studies.

Overall, I followed the methods of data reduction, display, conclusion, and verification to synthesize data (Berg, 2007, pp. 47-48). To do so, I reduced raw data in order to place it in my focused themes. Thus, I presented data through focus groups, interviews, and field observations in a compressed and organized way. For instance, I presented all DiC focus groups' findings under the street-based participants' socio-demographic information. From the data collection phase to the analysis phase, I reviewed different literature and theoretical frameworks in order to analyze the field findings and, in doing so, I followed the content analysis model.

3.16 The content analysis approach

In a content analysis process, researchers identify specific elements that they can use to make an in-depth examination of their collected data. These elements might include themes, characters, and concepts pertinent to the study. In describing these various elements, researchers use specific technical terminology particular to the field of study and to the topic being studied. In general, a social research process includes symbolic meanings, charts, and implications of results. The content analysis method is useful in synthesizing data systematically and scientifically. The purpose of this tool is to provide new thinking, knowledge, experience, and in-depth analysis of events and guides for social study. Any message can be interpreted through different metaphors and concepts, which provide a meaning for academic research. Consequently, analysis should accurately present written forms and concepts based on the factual data and information (Krippendorff, 1980, pp. 22-23).

Additionally, human or computer-based coding systems are used to analyze or ensure its "template analysis style". This approach is used to thematically analyze

qualitative data. The template analysis process engages the creation of a coding system using a template or a pattern that the researcher follows in analyzing the data. From this data, researchers can organize and sum up ideas in a meaningful and useful way (Krippendorff, 1980, pp. 23-24).

Similarly, a "quasi-statistical analysis" style is used to numerically summarize the descriptive data. In the socio-demographic part of my thesis, I quantify the participants' opinions: by categorizing the different responses and then counting the number in each category. In particular, content analysis is a process used when straight description is required. Thus, in order to conduct research through a content analysis approach, it is important to know who, what, when, and where an event has occurred (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 340).

Based on its advantages and disadvantages, this approach requires reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing as a complete scientific research cycle (Neuendorf, 2002, pp. 10-13).

3.16.1 Advantages of content analysis. The content analysis process is cost effective since this method does not necessarily require an expensive or complex computer-based program, such as SPSS. Rather, researchers need only a word processing program to record findings that researchers process themselves. Content analysis helps in analyzing data through discussion and documentation (Berg, 2007, pp. 327-328).

3.16.2 Disadvantages of content analysis. Content analysis is sometimes ineffective in testing casual relationships between variables (Berg, 2007, p. 328). For example, through the content analysis method I could not examine whether the brothel-based prostitutes were more stigmatized than the street-based or the vice versa. This issue

might be explored if there was a system to identify the casual relationship between stigma and the working place of prostitutes by using the content analysis method.

3.16.3 Basic elements of content analysis. In order to analyze my raw data, I chose to follow five of Berg's (2007) seven elements: technical terminologies, themes, characters, items, and concepts (pp. 312-313). I list these in the table below along with an explanation of how I used each element.

Table 3.1

The basic elements of a content analysis

	Elements	*How I used the elements*
1.	Technical terminologies	I employed certain technical terms in describing the various elements in the introductory part of my thesis, such as the human security issues.
2.	Themes	I developed three basic themes; stigma, human rights, and community development issues to explain my analysis.
3.	Characters	Two specific characters (that is sex workers) with severe stigmatized experiences were documented in case studies.
4.	Items	Items were selected from focus groups, interviews, and ethnographic field observation data to illustrate my main points. For example, sex workers' age or number of children.
5.	Concepts	I used different concepts, such as qualitative descriptive approach to explain my findings.

Along with the content analysis approach, I followed different social research models as guidelines in developing my work; below, I elaborate upon these models.

3.17 Usefulness of social research and other research models

3.17.1 What is social research? Before launching a research project, the concept of social research must be understood. According to Morris (2002), social research is a systematic way to get information about what is happening from different sources (p. 8). She defines social research, "as the systematic collection of information, also called data, from a variety of sources" (p. 52). Research, especially social research, helps give voice

to experiences and asks questions in order to solve problems. Through research, individuals or groups can explore gaps in services, community needs, and solutions. The core question for a researcher is: Where am I? (Namaste, 2007). The main purpose of research is complex because it requires focusing different ideas to ensure its success. Any research model can have links to an action-based research process.

3.17.2 The action-based social research. It is important to be sure that action-based research is an appropriate way to address social problems. According to Morris (2000), "Action research is research conducted for the purpose of social change, often with a specific action or actions as the goal" (p. 10). Analyzing this statement, I found the methodology of this particular thesis helped me identify oppression and increased my awareness of sex workers' real life situations. However, my research findings were ineffective in challenging the government policy on human rights issues because the SWOs have limited access to the state's decision-making apparatus. In this case, neither I nor Nari Mukti nor Durjoy were able to influence government policy. The findings of an action-based study were useful in exploring the various social problems facing sex workers and identifying solutions for them. As Morris (2002) further states, "Action research is a process that allows someone or a group to create or add to knowledge about an issue or situation through a collaborative and reflective process" (p. 52). In this context, links between models and an action-based process to ensure "collaboration" and the "opportunity to enhance knowledge" are significant elements in my social inquiry.

3.17.3 The research models that I used. I have had the opportunity to launch my thesis by following a partnership and community-based research approach. Nevertheless, I was unable to continue my study by following a participatory action

research-based model (PAR) since not all steps of this model were used in my research cycle. For example, I was unable to engage my subjects while developing my question guidelines, which PAR encourages. At the same time, I recognize my study partially followed a feminist action-based approach. The arguments by Morris are useful in supporting this approach. Morris argues that a study can be feminist-based when researchers respect marginalized women's active participation in their work (Morris, 2002, p. 9). Since I recruited female prostitutes in my study and valued their life experiences, my study was helpful in gathering feminist knowledge through their active participation. In fact, through this study I was able to give a voice to sex workers' experiences and show them that they were not "alone" (Morris, 2002, p. 9).

   3.17.4 The feminist action-based research model. The feminist research approach is different from mainstream research. In general, feminist research focuses almost exclusively on women, often on how they are oppressed in society. This kind of research plays the role of a negotiator between the researcher and others (Morris, 2002, pp. 52-53). According to Brayton, feminist research is a negotiating process between the researcher and other agencies, such as financial institutions or the state at the individual and institutional levels (as cited in Morris, 2002, p. 53). This kind of negotiation was difficult to implement in Bangladesh where the public is not sympathetic to prostitutes.

   Additionally, feminist research includes change, welcomes cultural diversity, and supports networking to raise women's voices and mobilize communities (Morris, 2002, p. 53). Many of the above mentioned elements (such as supporting and encouraging women to raise their voices) were applicable in my data collection processes, but I recognize that my research only partially follows the feminist approach since it lacks several of the

elements listed by Morris. For example, through my project and networking it was not possible to mobilize the sex work community. This is because Bangladesh is a traditional country and it is reasonable to assume that the public and government would not be open to discuss sex work and AIDS related issues. Consequently, my research design did not include agencies other than those directly connected to the sex work community. In addition, the research processes were not designed with the intention of using the research results to negotiate with the public.

Interestingly, there is a general perception in Bangladesh that the feminist approach is a western system, which is not appropriate for this cultural setting (Data from ethnographic field observations, Dhaka & Tangail, July, 2009). As a result, marginalized groups are not in a position to raise their voices to create social change through feminist action-based initiatives. In the future, after conducting several research projects with the disadvantaged groups and disseminating these results to the public, a culturally sensitive and participatory feminist action research approach might be created.

3.17.5 Participatory action-based research model. There are different conceptions on PAR-based model. As Morris states (2002), "Participatory action research is research in which research participants are ideally involved and in control at every stage of research, and in which the goal is to take action on the research findings for positive social change" (p. 10). According to Kemmis and Taggart (2003), there are three elements to define a PAR process: ownership, community-based analysis, and initiatives to further community action (p. 337). The authors also describe seven features of a PAR method: it is a cultural system of research, it is participatory, it is related to real life and

uses collaborative approach, it is "emancipatory", it is a complex process, both theory and practice are transformed, and it is reflective (Kemmis & Taggart, 2003, pp. 384-386).

These criteria encourage a researcher to involve participants in the entire process, from research design to the sharing of results. In my case, I was unable to involve the participants in the design and analysis stages. However, I included them starting from the pre-testing phase to the data validating phase. If I share the results with the respondents and SWOs, it might give them a sense of ownership of this project. Thus, I recognize my research partly follows the PAR model and partly follows the partnership-based model.

3.17.6 Partnership-based research model. In recent times, governments and donors have encouraged the implementation of partnership approaches between the academic and the community level to carry out community-based research. According to a Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW) document (1996), partnership means cooperation, collectivism, and joint action (p. 5). There also needs to be a series of discussions, networking, relationships, alliances, and meetings. A true partnership system requires a supportive community and adequate time to develop mutual trust. In fact, these different elements are anticipated in a successful partnership between the researcher and the community being studied. To compare these examples with my fieldwork, my initiatives from an academic to a community level enabled me to implement a collaborative and partnership-based inquiry.

In order to successfully implement a real community-based partnership project, some essential principles and conditions must be followed. These involve such topics as different understandings of partnerships, useful conditions, clarity at outset, and conception of policy and social change issues. Most importantly, if there is a power

imbalance and tactics of late message dissemination, a true partnership will be

handicapped. If the community partner mistrusts the academic partner and is frustrated by

a plethora of academic "jargon", mutual respect deteriorates and introduces a barrier for

open communication (Namaste, 2007). After reviewing these principles, I examined my

own fieldwork to see how many of these principles I followed; this I explain below.

Table 3.2

Principles of a partnership project which were applicable to my research

Principles and their examples	Application of the principles
Different understandings of partnerships. There are various types of partners in a partnership-based project, which are essential to clearly understand before starting a joint venture, such as a partnership among government, NGOs, academic, and private sectors.	In my case, Durjoy and Nari Mukti understood that a partnership had been set up among their local partner NGO, them, and me. We collaboratively conducted this project from an academic to a grassroots level.
Useful conditions. There is a need to address organizational matters, such as time, funding, training, and staff engagement to implement a partnership project. Similarly, the concerns related to human relations are important elements in a joint venture, such as expertise, personal conflicts, and priorities.	In my case, I communicated with the members of both Durjoy and Nari Mukti to schedule time to interview them. I provided informal training for my note-takers to make sure they understood the project. The staff of the partner NGOs, the SWOs, and the SWNOB assisted us with their expertise during field observations. There were no personal conflicts among the partners.
Clarity at outset. If organizational issues are clarified among all parties at the outset, there are fewer possibilities of personal conflicts. For example, the project goals, objectives, responsibilities, accountability, and policy issues are crucial to discuss and settle before launching a project.	I consulted members of the SWOs and clarified the risks and benefits of this project. Executive members and staff of the SWOs also inquired about pros and cons from their perspectives. Based on this two-way communication, there was mutual trust among us, rather than unexpected hurdles or ambiguities.
Conception of policy and social change issues. In order to create progressive social change, policy level agendas need to be discussed and followed.	Within the context of my study, there were questions about how policy could be modified so that sex workers' lives could be improved. For example, "What would be the best strategies to apply at the policy level to achieve your rights?" This type of question encouraged participants to express their ideas for changing policy agendas from the bottom up to the level of decision-making authorities. However, we were unable to communicate with the state decision making authorities to present sex workers' demands.

A community-based research model offers a researcher the opportunity to work with members of a community on a project of mutual interest. With this in mind, I situate my study in a partnership-based community project and recognize the community based research model as my primary model in conducting my field work. I understand that a partnership project must involve a series of discussions, a clear-cut description of the project, and strong networks among and beyond the partners in order to build a supportive and collaborative environment and to achieve success. I acknowledge that, although my community partners lacked my academic qualifications and experience, it was important that I respected their community knowledge and experience in order to create an open and friendly environment (Namaste, 2007).

3.17.7 Community-based research model. Various social researchers have illustrated the community-based research model. As Stringer (1999) states, "Community-based action research is a collaborative approach to inquiry on investigation that provides people with the means to take systematic actions to resolve specific problems" (p. 17). Stringer highlights different practical examples of how to apply community-based research. By reviewing his definition, I found links between my field research and his ideas. For example, my data collection processes involved collaboration between the partners and myself.

In addition, in a community-based project, it is important to keep the community's goals in mind throughout the entire cycle. As the following quote suggests: The goal is to develop culturally-appropriate and methodologically-sound research, analysis, and dissemination strategies that are beneficial and empowering for the participating communities and other stakeholders in their preparation and implementation

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of an effective response to HIV/AIDS. (Flyer of Aboriginal Community Based Research, as cited in Namaste, 2007, p. 51)

To ensure that my research was "culturally sound," I respected the culture of the Bangladeshi sex work community as I conducted my field work. I hope that I will be able to share my findings with the sex work community and that it will prove to be a beneficial and empowering tool for its members.

Additionally, Stringer (1999) describes four working topics in community-based action research. These are: relationships, communication, participation, and inclusion. These issues are important to keep research non-exploitative (p. 28). Community-based research requires these issues be a part of the research cycle in order to make research participatory. Analyzing these topics (p. 42), I have examined my data collection processes and identified which topics I followed in my field work that I present below.

Firstly, in addressing the relationship issues, I treated all participants equally and encouraged them to express their opinions during the data collection phase. I was always sensitive towards them. For instance, I respected both madams and their bonded sex workers' experiences of oppression, which differed depending on their perspective.

Secondly, in terms of communication, both my note-taker and I created an atmosphere in which the participants felt they could share their experiences openly. Interviews were in Bangla, which encouraged them to express their feelings easily. Interviews took place inside the brothel and the DiCs, which were also comfortable environments for the subjects.

Thirdly, in the issue of participation, the process was participatory for both my partners and me so that we could deal directly with the topics. I could not remain actively

involved to the end of the SWOs' various projects as Stringer advises (p. 42); after

finishing my data collection, I had to return to Montreal.

Fourthly, in addressing the topic of inclusion, as per the research design, I

purposely selected the participants from different strata. They were chosen based on their

available time and interests. However, during my ethnographic field observations, I tried

to incorporate as many people as possible so that I could record their experiences.

Stringer argues that one should include all affected groups, relevant actors, or agencies;

but this I was unable to do given my limited time and resources.

After analyzing different research models, I describe below how I recruited the

study subjects who told their stories.

3.18 The research participants

I selected the participants for my study after discussing my goals with their

affiliated partner organizations. After arriving in Bangladesh, I contacted Nari Mukti and

Durjoy and based on their availabilities and time I made my schedule to launch the social

inquiry. I provided them with consent forms and interview guides in order to familiarize

them with the project. At the same time, I arranged opportunities for informal sharing and

interviews with other stakeholders in the sex work community. The meetings include the

SWNOB (members and staff), BAPS, Durjoy, Nari Mukti, Light House, and Society for

Social Services (SSS). I also interviewed madams, sex workers' lovers, and clients.

3.18.1 Roles of partner NGOs. My engagement with partner NGOs working

with sex workers was necessary to launch my thesis because, without their assistance, it

would have been difficult to gain access to sex workers inside a brothel or in a DiC. In

fact, it was through the support of their NGOs that sex workers were able to organize in

fighting discrimination against them. Since I received assistance from the partner agency of the SWOs, I encountered minimal barriers or difficulties while conducting my fieldwork. For example, before I asked clients or *mastans* any questions during our interviews, the staff introduced us to people living in this community. Hence, participants were encouraged to share their experience, and people from the sex work community did not create any obstacles.

3.18.2 **Gender issues.** While conducting interviews, I considered questions of gender. For example, sex workers were not interviewed in front of their male lovers and colleagues during discussion of sexual issues such as the use of condoms. I asked participants if they minded having my male note-taker present during discussions on these issues. Generally, discussing sex or AIDS did not bring discomfort to respondents, since these issues were related to their daily life and profession. If, however, someone felt uneasy talking in front of my note-taker, I conducted the interviews alone and the note-taker was not present during these interviews.

3.18.3 **Potential risks attached to the study**. I also briefed participants about the risk that might be attached to the study. For example, while sharing their stigmatized experiences, the victims might have become upset. In such a case, I was aware of the extra precautions that needed to be taken to prevent any potential harm. However, in practice, none of the respondents had this kind of reaction when sharing their experiences.

3.18.4 **Potential benefits from the study.** Rather than any unwanted risks arising from the research design, there were several benefits. For example, the SWOs' organizing capacities to fight stigma would be explored and increased. I made it clear to

them that there were no monetary gains for the SWOs after the study was completed, except for the remunerations for the participants and the organizations (See consent forms for participants in Appendices 4, 5, &7). I let them know that, after the finalization of my MA thesis, I would disseminate the findings to the SWOs.

Besides the risks and benefits, I was concerned with ethical issues which I present in the next section.

3.19 Ethical issues

Before starting my data collection processes, I obtained a formal approval of a Summary Protocol Form from the applicable Human Research Ethics Committee at Concordia University to implement my research project using human participants. Obtaining this approval was a rigorous process from beginning to end.

All interviews were conducted with the signed consent of participants in Bangla. For those who were unable to read in Bangla, I read all consent forms for them to ensure that they understood the research, its objectives, and any potential risks and benefits for them. Moreover, to ensure informed consent, I carefully explained the nature and purpose of the research in a detailed manner, using simple and non-technical terms. I also specifically asked participants if they consented to have any interviews taped, carefully explaining the processes that I undertook to make sure that any identifying information would be removed if they so desired. I also provided the participants with an estimated duration of the interviews and sought their input as to location, timing, duration, and so forth. Finally, I advised all potential participants that they were free not to participate and could end their participation at any point during the interviews.

After concluding the focus group and the individual interviews, I provided time for de-briefing sessions. This provided the respondents with the opportunity to again raise any questions, issues, and concerns they had about the research. Sex workers were provided with my contact information as well as that of my note taker. They were also advised that they could contact me via the partner NGO's staff should they have any questions or concerns since they were unable to communicate via the Internet.

The note-takers also signed agreements of confidentiality with me to ensure that they do not share the information gathered in the research processes (See Appendix 6). All identifying information was stripped away during the transcription process. My supervisor and I are the only people with total access to the research data. Following completion of my research, I will keep all taped records, consent forms, and other products of the study in a secure filing cabinet in my home in Canada for four years. After four years, I will re-format the tapes (to erase data) and then destroy them manually. Since a sex worker's experience with AIDS and sex trade issues are sensitive topics, we were careful not to cross any ethical boundaries.

3.20 Research on culturally sensitive topics

As Lee states, "Field researchers have tended to study groups for whom they have some link or sympathy" (as cited in CAIN, 2006). Without my earlier working relationships with their affiliated organizations, I would never have been able to conduct my research on this sensitive topic. Similarly, the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (2006) suggests strategies for working in the HIV/AIDS field:

The goal is to develop culturally-appropriate and methodologically-

sound research, analysis, and dissemination strategies that are

beneficial and empowering for the participating communities and

other stakeholders in their participation and implementation of an

effective response to HIV/AIDS. (p. 42)

It is crucial to describe benefits and risks to a research group before implementing

any research that involves sensitive issues, which I did. Additionally, before collecting

data within a sensitive group, Shaver's (2005) recommendations and guidelines played

useful roles in the planning of my data collection processes. For example, the "gaining

entry" strategy to conduct sensitive work, such as research on sex work, is vital for data

collection. Through this strategy, researchers can create a friendly environment with the

respondent group in order to avoid conflict and interactions with gatekeepers or unknown

people, who are not trusted by the respondents (p. 301). During my data collection, I

created a fear-free environment with *sardernis* and sex workers so that the *sardernis*

allowed me to talk to their bonded sex workers. Indeed, they did not create obstacles

which might have been hampered my data collection if I could not gain easy access to the

brothel or to the DiCs. This access will be helpful when I disseminate the study results to

participants in order to ensure their ownership of the project.

3.21 Knowledge transfer

It is essential in the cycle of a research study that the gathered knowledge be

useful and meaningful to all stakeholders. It is also important to influence policy at the

governmental and organizational levels to take action based on the research findings after

their dissemination (Masching, Allard, & Prentice, 2006, p. 32). Hence, in the future, I

might retranslate the results of my thesis from English to Bangla in order to disseminate

the information to the SWOs and their partners. However, from Canada to Bangladesh, it

might not be possible for me to follow-up the results of this study. In this case, in the future, I may have to start some sort of organizing process to address sex workers' social problems. I could arrange a sharing workshop with the respondent sex workers and others in order to transfer the research findings for their community development.

Additionally, merely sharing is not likely to ensure a real community benefit from the research. Rather, both sharing and collaborative action are needed for the dissemination of knowledge (Masching et al., 2006, pp. 33-43). Most importantly, research cannot be completed unless it is disseminated. It might be possible to publish the study results in academic journals (Berg, 2007, pp. 48-49). I will disseminate the findings to the SWOs and their partners and, if possible, will publish the results.

Mutual respect and human relationships are core concerns in ensuring the proper transfer of data (Masching et al., 2006, p. 506). As a result, I focused on these elements in my research questionnaires and field observations in order to respect the study participants' opinions. Before implementing my fieldwork, I assumed there would be certain barriers in conducting the fieldwork but fortunately there were none. In the future, there might be other possible obstacles, which I describe in the next section.

3.22 The limitations and assumptions

Rossman (2002) points out that it is difficult to identify limitations and assumptions of a study before one actually begins it (p. 89). In my case, before going to Bangladesh, I assumed that as it is a Muslim dominated country, it would be taboo to discuss HIV/AIDS and sex issues and that easy access to the sex work community would be a problem. In reality, I did not have difficulty talking to sex workers or other people during my ethnographic field observations. However, there was a time constraint in

collecting data within my pre-developed schedule with the SWOs because of the unstable political situation. For instance, due to some transport strikes, I was unable to visit the brothel in Tangail from Dhaka, which hampered conducting my fieldwork as per the pre-determined schedule. In addition, the respondents expected their stories to be shared at the Bangladeshi policy level. This was not possible because I had not included a plan to do so in my research design.

While conducting the research in Bangladesh, most of the challenges, however, were met by developing a detailed activity plan. In this plan, I outlined the tasks, roles, and the ways to implement my research activities (see Appendix 8). In addition, it was possible to carry out my research with the financial support of *Fonds* québécois *de la recherche s*ur *la société et la* culture (*FQRSC*), a provincial government-funding agency in Quebec, which has supported my work by awarding me a scholarship to cover my research expenses.

A challenge could arise when the results are disseminated among the executive members of the SWOs and their partners. For instance, if the internal hierarchy of the SWOs is strong and sex workers are victimized by the management, the result could affect all the members. Finally, to share the findings with the SWOs would not be possible without proper funds and the opportunity for me to go to Bangladesh and do so.

3.23 Conclusion

In sum, throughout this chapter, I have described the processes of data collection and analysis as a core part of this work. I have followed the qualitative descriptive research method in order to collect and analyze data successfully. I have elaborated upon focus groups, face-to-face interviews, and ethnographic field observations as my specific

data collection methods. I have used the purposive sampling process for selecting my representative populations. I have found in many literature reviews that the recruitment processes of participants are not explained in detail. Consequently, I have tried to explain the recruitment process of this study as clearly as possible. I have presented the relevant ethical issues pertinent at all stages, from planning to implementation.

I explained the data analysis procedures. Preceding my actual study, I developed an activity plan to successfully implement my project. Moreover, I examined the advantages and disadvantages of different research models under the lens of social inquiry. Similarly, I focused on the content analysis approach as my selected method for data analysis. I used community and partnership-based models of research to conduct my empirical work. I described the feminist and participatory action-based research models, which provided inspiration for my own project.

Now, a knowledge dissemination process is required to ensure the ownership of the project by participants. However, there could be barriers in disseminating and following-up my research findings although I hope that, based on data collection and analysis processes, the overall recommendations will be useful for the SWOs in their fight against stigma. Personally, I found it best to remain neutral concerning the participants' sex work. It was vital for me to identify the social implications of the findings related to the SWOs' community development processes. Therefore, in Chapter 4, where I discuss my results, I present the research findings about the SWOs' organizing processes.

In general, clearly described research, methods and methodologies are pillars of a successful research project. Indeed, research methodologies guide readers to ensure their

understanding of research goals and objectives. In this sense, my research methods were useful in developing and presenting my results by describing real life stories and organizational development of the members of Durjoy and Nari Mukti. Moreover, my research methods could be useful in creating conceptual bases for further research.

Finally, I have analyzed respondents' answers through the content analysis approach in order to accurately display data to the audience. Hence, I have been able to elaborate upon my observations and reflections in the results and discussions chapter. I have presented most of the data of the results section based on this section of methodology. My write-ups in the results chapter create an opportunity to reflect on my thesis design and findings.

Chapter Four: Results and Discussions

In this chapter, I present the results and discussions of my study, in keeping with the thesis objectives that I set up before starting my field work. Based on my inquiries, my findings and reflections cover three categories or themes: stigma, sex workers' human rights, and community development issues. Along with reflections and analyses of these themes, I outline sex workers' knowledge and experience. I defined stigma in the introductory chapter from three points of view: my own perception, Goffman's (1963) view, and the research participants' perspective. In this chapter, I explain the sources, levels, and consequences of stigma in sex workers' lives. In the next section, I describe all participating sex workers' socio-demographic information as a means of presenting their overall position in Bangladesh.

After presenting the stigma issues, I explain how the participants of my project articulated the human rights issues and how these issues have affected their lives. Also, I highlight the case studies of two participants who experienced discrimination. With these cases, I present my informal interview findings with an HIV positive man in order to identify the marginalized position of PLWHAs in Bangladeshi society. Additionally, I present the power struggles in the brothel power structure. Since street-based prostitutes do not live and work in the same place as they would in a brothel, they do not encounter the power structure as do brothel-based prostitutes. I describe street-based prostitutes' stigmatized conditions in the section of stigma.

Finally, in the section of community development issues, I describe the services that prostitutes receive from drop-in-centres (DiCs). I also elaborate upon the roles of the SWNOB and the SWOs to address their members' social problems.

Basic socio-demographic information of sex workers

      I present two sets of summary tables in order to provide the basic socio-demographic information for all the sex workers who participated in my study. For the first set, I drew the data from three focus groups from the brothel and three from the streets. For the second set, I drew the data from the SWO focus groups: three from Nari Mukti and three from Durjoy (members, non-members, and executives). I chose the following variables from the data I collected from participating sex workers: age, marital status, number of children, education, income, expenditures, and years of involvement in this trade. Before presenting the socio-demographic picture of the members, non-members, and executive members of the SWOs, it is important to explain these terms clearly.

      According to the constitutions and by-laws of Durjoy and Nari Mukti, general members are sex workers who have the voting power to elect executive members for their organizations. General members pay monthly subscriptions—albeit irregularly. Their participation in the general meetings is also irregular. As members of the organizations, they have certain roles to carry out, such as approving organizational budgets. In contrast, non-members are sex workers who do not pay monthly subscriptions and do not have the voting power to elect the executive or participate as candidates. However, being sex workers, they can participate in the SWOs' programs, such as attending meetings or training projects. Finally, every two years, 11 executive board members are elected by the general members. These elected members are responsible for executing and regularly monitoring the programs of the SWOs and, in return, receive honorariums from the SWOs. They are also responsible for ensuring organizational accountability.

4.1 Information on prostitutes' socio-demography. Below I present the socio-

demographic data in order to provide these women's positions in society.

Table 4.1

Information on five street-based and three brothel-based sex workers

First name, working place, and date of interviews of sex workers	Age	Marital status	Number of children	Level of education	Years of involvement in sex work	Approximate monthly income/ expenditure (in CAD)
Tanni, street, 6th June, 2009.	18	Unmarried	Nil	Illiterate	5	$150/$120
Rehena, street, 6th June, 2009.	37	Separated	1 girl	Can sign her name	16	$100/$90
Fulon, street, 7th June, 2009.	30	Married	3 girls	Can read and write	8	$160/$120
Kohinoor, street, 7th June, 2009.	30	Married	2 boys	Can sign her name	15	$130/$120
Rashi, brothel, 3rd July, 2009.	22	Separated	1 girl	Passed grade 7	6	$160/$120
Shirin, brothel, 3rd July, 2009.	22	Unmarried	Nil	Passed grade 5	2.5	$150/$120
Shahnaz, brothel, 3rd July, 2009.	30	Married	1 girl	Can sign her name	15	$170/$140

4.1.1 Age and length of service. As seen in the above Table, out of the five

street-based prostitutes, Rehena, Kohinoor, and Fulon were over 30 years of age. Tanni

was 18 and Monwara was 25 years old. Among the brothel-based group, Rashi and Shirin

were both over 20 and Shahnaz was 30. The participants of this study told me that after

the age of 30, they are considered less desirable. However, none of them had birth

certificates and could only guess their own ages.

In comparing the length of service of these women, I found that the street-based

sex workers were involved in this business from five to 16 years. Most notably, Kohinoor

and Shahnaz were first involved when they were only 15 years of age. Similarly,

Monowara and Tanni began this work when they were only 13 years old. Out of eight

individuals, four of them were engaged in this trade for over 10 years. This indicated that many of them were involved in this business from childhood, which is a common phenomenon in this industry (Social Initiatives, 2003).

4.1.2 Income, expenditure, and savings. The participants' monthly income and expenditure were essential variables to understand their socio-economic conditions. I found that Fulon and Shahnaz, two outreach workers of the SWOs, had better income than the prostitutes who did not work for NGOs. Moreover, due to their affiliation with their organizations, they saved more money than non-NGO workers. The street-based prostitutes' highest monthly income was approximately $170 and the lowest was $90. Comparably, the brothel-based sex workers' highest income was $160 and the lowest was $110. The average monthly income of these women was $150. Rehena and Kohinoor's expenses were almost as great as their income and they could save only $10 monthly. All others could save about $30 monthly. Indeed, the participants' savings depended on their length of service, income, and their families' economic conditions. For example, the six women with children had expenditures higher than the two unmarried women without children. I also learned that sex workers who were affiliated with micro-credit groups were more motivated to save money than non-affiliated sex workers. Although many of them spent more than 10 years in this trade, they told me that generally they were unable to save at all because of the demands of their families or their lovers. Many of them thought that it was important to be involved in savings groups in order to secure their financial future, but usually they were unable to do so. Often the shame of their profession prevents them from finding a savings group that would serve them. Moreover, it was difficult to save because their lovers, who controlled them, took their savings.

4.1.3 Marital status. Although many sex workers were not legally married to their husbands or *babus*, most considered themselves married. Tanni and Shirin told me that they were not interested in marrying due to male domination and abusive behaviours. I found that by the time Monwara, Kohinoor, Fulon, and Shahnaz were 25 years old, they were either living with a *babu* or married to someone, generally without a registration certificate. Rehena and Rashi were separated, but neither was legally divorced.

4.1.4 Number of children. Half of the study participants had one or two children. Tanni and Shirin did not have any children, but they did not regret this because they were unmarried. In Bangladesh, without a husband or a *babu,* a prostitute does not want a child. The women with children told me that, despite problems of caring for their children, they wanted them in order to improve their social status. As Fulon told me, "A sex worker with a child is more respectable than one without one" (A member of Durjoy, Dhaka, June, 2009).

4.1.5 Educational status. Since the overall literacy rate is 54% in Bangladesh (Bangladesh UN data, 2008), it is not surprising that sex workers generally have received little education. Except for Fulon, the street-based participants were illiterate, although Rehena and Kohinoor could sign their names. As an outreach member, Fulon had attended an adult literacy school and could read and write. My data shows that the brothel-based sex workers' education level was better than that of street-based prostitutes'. Rashi passed grade seven and Shirin passed grade five. Since education plays a strong role in people's lives, a lack of education means prostitutes are even more dependent on their *babus,* who often exploit them.

4.2 Information on executive members of Durjoy and Nari Mukti. Below I describe the socio-economic situations of the executives of both brothel and street-based SWOs. In the street-based SWO, I was able to conduct the group discussions with two current members and one former member of Durjoy. It was hard to meet with the current Durjoy board members since they were occupied with various organizational activities. However, I had easy access to the current executive members of Nari Mukti at the brothel. The focus group discussions were held on 5th July, 2009 with Nari Mukti and 16th July, 2009 with Durjoy.

Table 4.2

Information on three Executive members of Durjoy and six Executive members of Nari Mukti

First name and working place of sex workers	Age	Marital status	Number of children	Level of education	Years of involvement in sex work	Approximate monthly income/ expenditure (in CAD)
Akhi, brothel	36	Divorced (lives with a *babu)*	1 boy	Can sign her name	20	$200/$150
Nilufa, brothel	33	Lives with a *babu*	2 girls	Can sign her name	15	$170/$120
Lipi, brothel	30	Lives with a *babu*	1 boy (adopted)	Can read and write	18	$170/$120
Jahanara, brothel	45	Married	1 boy and 1 girl	Passed grade eight	30	$200/$150
Shirin, brothel	38	Lives with a *babu*	1 girl	Can sign her name	15	$200/$150
Moyna, brothel	30	Lives with a *babu*	1 boy	Can sign her name	9	$170/$120
Hazera, street	36	Unmarried	Nil	Can read and write	25	$180/$170
Chumki, street	39	Married	1 boy and 1 girl	Passed grade five	27	$250/$130
Nazma, street	28	Married	1 boy and 1 girl	Passed grade five	12	$250/$130

4.2.1 Age. Among the street-based group, Hazera and Chumki were over 35 years of age and Nazma was 28 years of age. In the brothel, all six participants were over 30 years of age, and Jahanara was 45 years old. The women told me that generally they were able to become executive members only after they reached the age of 30.

4.2.2 Length of service. Regarding the participants' length of service, I found that the street-based executives were involved in this business for a long time: notably, Chumki was engaged for 27 years. Nazma had the lowest time of involvement in this business: 12 years. These three women were involved in this trade from between the ages of 11 and 16. In the brothel, the range of the service was from nine to 30 years. Jahanara was involved for 30 years and Moyna for nine years. There were a total of four executives (three from the street and one from brothel) who became engaged in this business from the age of 14 to 16 years. Only Nilufa and Shirin started after they were 18, the legal age for prostitution. My data indicates that a majority of the members began sex work before the legal age for prostitution. Unfortunately, many prostitutes were drawn into this profession before they were 18 years of age since young sex workers are almost always considered more desirable than older prostitutes. Several participants mentioned that at present they were not actively involved in this trade; rather they worked with NGOs or SWOs and some of them were madams or *sardernis*. The participants were not interested in declaring their status as *sardernis* to me since it was not considered a reputable profession in this community.

4.2.3 Income, expenditure, and savings. The participants' monthly income and expenditure data were essential variables to understand their socio-economic conditions. I found that Chumki and Nazma were not only executives but also were the outreach

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workers for Durjoy. They had better incomes than the prostitutes who did not work for NGOs. Both earned more than $250 a month; and, consequently, they were able to save a substantial amount from their earnings. Hazera said to me that her income was not high since currently she was not working with an organization. In contrast, the highest income for the brothel-based sex workers was $200 and the lowest was $170. In spite of family needs, many brothel-based sex workers were able to save from their income. The street-based executives' savings were on average $40 a month higher than those of the brothel-based executives' savings.

4.2.4 Marital status. Among the street-based group, Chumki and Nazma were married and Hazera was unmarried. None of the respondents were legally married, but Chumki and Nazma considered themselves married. Of the six executives of Nari Mukti, five lived with their *babus*; but only Jahanara declared that she was married.

4.2.5 Number of children. Chumki and Nazma each had a son and a daughter. Based on their income and family structure, they seemed to have a secure life compared to other participants in the study. Hazera did not have a child. Five of them had one child, and Nilufa had two children.

4.2.6 Educational status. I found that all three of the street-based executives—Chumki, Nazma, and Hazera—were able to read and write. All of them were well informed about the conditions under which prostitutes live. On the other hand, in the brothel-based SWO, out of six participants, four were illiterate and were only able to sign their names. Lipi could read and write and Jahanara had passed grade eight. The latter had a good income and was also a *sarderni.* Due to Jahanara's higher education, many illiterate sex workers asked her to help them in reading their important documents.

4.3 Information of the non-members of the SWOs

Below I provide the socio-economic conditions of nine (five from the street and four from the brothel) non-members of the SWOs. The focus group interviews were held on 10th June, 2009 with Durjoy and 3rd July, 2009 with Nari Mukti.

Table 4.3

Information on non-members of both Durjoy and Nari Mukti

First name and working place of sex workers	Age	Marital status	Number of children	Level of education	Years of involvement in sex work	Approximate monthly income/ expenditure (in CAD)
Joshna, brothel	35	Separated	Nil	Illiterate	3 months	$150/$130
Zarna, brothel	30	Separated	1 girl	Can sign her name	6 months	$180/$140
Sheeta, brothel	30	Unmarried	Nil	Illiterate	7	$200/$150
Rina, brothel	30	Married	Nil	Illiterate	5	$170/$120
Shampa, street	22	Separated	1 boy	Can sign her name	5	$180/$120
Ritu, street	20	Married	1 boy 1 girl	Can sign her name	6	$160/$130
Shathi, street	25	Unmarried	Nil	Can sign her name	7	$150/$130
Lima, street	20	Married	1 girl	Can sign her name	3	$120/$100
Sonia, street	20	Separated	1 girl	Can sign her name	3	$150/$140

4.3.1 Age. Among the street-based group, all five sex workers were over 20 years of age. They were not affiliated with Durjoy, but most of them were members of BAPS, a consortium member of Durjoy. Joshna was 35 years old and Morzina was 25. The remaining three (Zarna, Sheeta, and Rina) were 30 years of age.

4.3.2 Length of service. I found that the street-based non-members of Durjoy had been involved in this business for only a short time; for example, Lima and Sonia were

involved for three years. The highest number of years of service was Shathi's seven year engagement. Similarly, the brothel-based non-members had also been involved in this trade for a very short time. For instance, Joshna had been involved for three months and Zarna for six months. Like Shathi in the street prostitutes group, Sheeta held the most time of service among the brothel prostitutes: seven years.

4.3.3 Marital status. Among the street-based women, Ritu and Lima were married, Shampa and Sonia were separated, and Shathi was unmarried. Among the brothel-based sex workers, Morzina and Rina were married, Joshna and Zarna were separated, and Sheeta was unmarried.

4.3.4 Number of children. Those who were either married or separated had children. They told me that, working on the street or in hotels as they did, they found it difficult to look after their children. Zarna had a daughter. The four who did not have children told me that, since their length of service had been short, they wanted more time to settle into this trade before having children.

4.3.5 Educational status. All participants at the brothel were illiterate and only Zarna could sign her name. They explained this happened because of their non-affiliation with NGOs and lack of access to educational services. Similarly, all non-members of Durjoy were illiterate but could sign their names.

4.3.6 Income and expenditure. Among the street-based prostitutes, the participants' monthly income range was from $100 to $180. They all had little savings; however, they told me that, due to high living cost and the reduced number of clients, they found it difficult to save money. I think this happened probably because of the fear of HIV/AIDS and the worldwide economic recession. It would take time for them to

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settle into this occupation and establish a good balance between income and expenditures. Like the street-based non-members, the brothel-based non-members' income ranged from $120 to $180, and they also lacked good saving habits.

4.4 Information on members of the SWOs

Lastly, below I describe the members of the SWOs' situations. The group discussions were held on 7th June, 2009 with Nari Mukti and 10th June, 2009 with Durjoy.

Table 4.4

Information on seven members of Nari Mukti and five members of Durjoy

First name and working place of sex workers	Age	Marital status	Number of children	Level of education	Years of involvement in sex work	Approximate monthly income/ expenditure (in CAD)
Joyton, brothel	40	Separated	1 boy	Can sign	15	$150/$130
Shefali, brothel	30	Lives with a *babu*	1 girl	Illiterate	12	$170/$120
Shima, brothel	35	Married	1 girl	Illiterate	5	$180/$140
Rehena, brothel	26	Lives with a *babu*	Nil	Illiterate	17	$170/$120
Chobi, brothel	42	Married	Nil	Can sign her name	20	$170/$120
Runa, brothel	33	Lives with a *babu*	Nil	Can sign her name	8	$180/$140
Ruksana, brothel	40	Lives with a *babu*	1 boy 1 girl	Can sign her name	22	$170/$130
Parul, street	35	Separated	2 boys 1 girl	Can sign her name	15	$100/$100
Kohinoor, street	25	Separated	Nil	Can sign her name	4	$130/$120
Zosna, street	35	Unmarried	Nil	Can sign her name	20	$140/$130
Kazol, street	18	Unmarried	Nil	Illiterate	4 months	$100/$100
Morsheda, street	25	Separated	1 boy	Can sign her name	15	$150/$140

4.4.1 Age. The ages of the seven brothel-based members ranged from 26 to 40. The members of the street-based SWO tended to be younger: Kazol was 18; Morsheda

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and Kohinoor were 25. Only Parul and Zoshna were 35 years old.

4.4.2 Length of service. Among the street-based women, the time of service varied from four months to 20 years. Morsheda and Parul were involved in this trade for 15 years, and Kohinoor was in the business for four years. On the other hand, in the brothel-based sex work, service ranged from five to 22 years.

4.4.3 Marital status. In the brothel-based situation, out of seven participants, four (Shefali, Rehena, Runa, and Ruksana) lived with their lovers, Shima and Chobi were married and Joyton was separated. In contrast, out of five respondents of the street-based group, three (Parul, Kohinoor, and Morsheda) were separated. Zosna and Kazol were unmarried. This marital status indicated that street-based prostitutes were not living with *babus* and, despite their ages, they were not interested in marrying. They told me that because they feared exploitation, they were not thinking of living with their lovers.

4.4.4. Number of children. Parul and Morsheda had children, and Kohinoor had none. Four brothel-based prostitutes had one child each, and the remaining three did not have any.

4.4.5 Educational status. All street-based members were illiterate; and except for Kazol, all four could sign their names. Similarly, all brothel-based members were illiterate. Although these prostitutes were affiliated with the SWOs, they were not able to enhance their educational capacity. The street-based members told me that, due to the nature of their job, they were not able to go to the adult school managed by NGOs. Although brothel-based members lived in a confined area, they were not mobilized to attend adult literacy classes. They told me that they were busy with their jobs and other business. However, all opined that they ought to get an education to better their lives.

4.4.6 Income and expenditure. In the brothel-based situation, the income ranged from $120 to $180 a month. These women were all able to save. In contrast, the street-based income ranged from $100 to $140 a month. Kazol and Parul were unable to save and the others saved very little.

4.5 Reflections on the socio-demographic data of sex workers

As the above Tables indicate, most of the participants had been involved in this profession for a long time. Many of them started in this business illegally, before their eighteenth birthday. Many of them did not know exactly how old they were and were also unable to clearly define their income and expenditures, which made it difficult for me to draw a correlation based on their age and economic situations. Many of them lived with their *babus.* Interestingly, I found that the majority of the executives were eager to tell their stories and were able to read and write thanks to their networking and long term involvement in NGO activities. Unfortunately, the members of the SWOs in my study told me that they were unsure of what was expected of them, and some of them found their organizational by-laws unclear. Many of them were illiterate, but those who were literate had better communication skills and had attained a higher social status in the sex work community. All participants told me that they felt education was a crucial asset for their development. In my opinion, it is vital to involve sex workers with organizations that provide for their socio-economic development.

Since my sample population was small, I was unable to make a generalization of the Bangladeshi sex workers' socio-economic conditions. However, all 39 participants' data was useful in helping me critically analyze and understand their overall living conditions, both in the brothel and on the streets.

4.6 An historical overview of brothels

In this section, I describe the historical background of brothels, from their pre-colonial period to the independence of Bangladesh, in order to explore the evolution of brothels there. During my field observations at Tangail brothel, staff from the NGOs and the SWO explained the historical background of brothels and their evolution.

4.6.1 Prostitution in the pre colonial period. Before the British colonial period, women from different places in India (of which Bangladesh was then a part) provided sexual entertainment as *devadasis* in Hindu temples. *Devadasis* or female traditional dancers served as the source of recreation for landlords and feudal lords by dedicating themselves to *dev* or God. This was a Hindu religious practice in which girls were married and dedicated to temples. These *devadasis* were not permitted to live in society like other married women. People did not respect them. They earned money for their dedication and were called prostitutes (*Karmataka Gazette*, 1982).

This system was in place for a long time before it was abolished. During the 1920s and the early 1930s, a movement to abolish the *devadasi* system in India developed. The middle class reformists and the Women's Indian Association supported the abolition of this practice. After several social movements and protests against this system, the *devadasi* was banned in India in 1988 (Banerjee, 1989, p. 2).

4.6.2 Prostitution in the British period. In the British period, prostitutes worked in different houses for the British sailors and soldiers and both national and international businessmen. According to Ballhatchet, this sex trade was an accepted type of commercial entertainment for the clients (as cited in Tambe, 2006, p. 226). From the colonial period, due to discrimination towards prostitution, sex workers were oppressed

by the general public and were forced to live and work away from their families and communities (Rozario, 2000). These disrespected women lived near public and business places in the cities, especially at seaports and at railway stations. The East India Company allocated specific areas for prostitutes, and these became the brothels.

4.6.3 Prostitution in Bangladesh. When Bangladesh was part of Pakistan (1947-71), brothels were located in different districts (Data from informal discussions with the staff of the NGOs, Tangail, July, 2009). In Bangladesh, a brothel is an area that includes several houses of prostitution where prostitutes are available for sex work; thus, the brothel forms a community of sex workers. Through my field observations, I learned that brothel-based sex workers are shunned by the general public. One of the results of the stigma associated with them has been the campaigns to close the brothels in order to stop prostitution (Azim et al., 2002).

4.7 Brothel closure and sex workers' movement

Within the past decades, several brothels have been closed. Generally, brothels have been closed by groups with vested interests in order to take over lands. Along with brokers, landlords, and *sardernis,* these groups exploit sex workers. As Shirin told:

> When we are unemployed and homeless, we are vulnerable to
>
> exploitation from some political leaders. We are often instructed by
>
> those with power to charge less for sex. Otherwise, we face arrest by
>
> the police and are sent to shelter homes where we encounter the
>
> possibility of further abuse. (A member of Nari Mukti, Tangail,
>
> July, 2009)

In 1999, after the closure of two big brothels near Dhaka (Tanbazar and Nimtoli), about 5,000 sex workers lost their homes and were forced to scatter throughout the country to find work. They began working on the streets, in hotels, and in residential areas. This diaspora made people think that the risk of HIV/AIDS transmission had increased (Jenkins & Rahman, 2002). The state proclaimed that all brothels would be shut-down and all brothel-based sex workers would be rehabilitated in six government operated shelters by 2000 (Jenkins & Rahman, 2002, p. 3). According to Hossain, after this announcement, 62 NGOs (comprised of human rights and women organizations) formed a coalition with several sex workers to challenge this proclamation (as cited in Jenkins & Rahman, 2002, p. 3). After this huge sex work community protest against the state order, in March 2000, the High Court of Bangladesh stated that brothel-based sex work was not illegal (Jenkins & Rahman, 2002, p. 3). From that time, in Bangladesh, brothel-based sex work has been legal; however, street-based prostitution is still illegal.

Figure 4.1

Protest against the Taanbazr brothel raid in 1999. Source: BBC News, 14 March, 2000.

4.8 The background and context of the Tangail brothel

Any woman 18 years or older who wants to register as a prostitute in a brothel can do so at the First Class Magistrate Court. She must sign an affidavit stating that she is

willingly entering this profession and that she is of legal age (Jenkins & Rahman, 2002, p. 98). However, the participants of my study stated that many sex workers had to pay extra money to the police and *mastans* to legally enter this trade even though they were over 18 years of age. Moreover, I found from my study that the local community and the local administration reluctantly endorsed the Tangail brothel. Although the brothel was over-crowded, the local administration and the religious leaders would not permit its expansion. Sex workers were not even allowed to buy a piece of land in order to extend a brothel area or to make a home. More alarmingly, sanitation was extremely poor, the drainage system was appalling, and there was a lack of drinking water. Overall delivery of services was abysmal. This brothel was viewed by the police and society as a source of HIV/AIDS contamination and as a centre for criminal activity.

4.8.1 Sex workers' reasons for moving into this brothel. The participants in my study reported that sex workers entered this trade mainly due to poverty, hope of employment, family conflicts, or pre-marital pregnancy. Many of them also entered because they had been raped and, as a result, might not be able to find husbands. They said that none of them came willingly to this trade. Rather, they believed from their childhood, as their parents had told them that prostitution was the worst profession in the world. Prostitutes not only felt guilty about their work, but also underwent mental stress because they worried about their children's future.

4.8.2 Children at the brothel. Many children in the brothel were made to work as vendors, tea boys, and garbage collectors. Some children attended mainstream schools and some attended schools managed by NGOs. However, there was a high dropout rate and the children's education was stunted. Without a solid education, boys became local

mastans and got involved in crimes and girls became prostitutes. I learnt that although Bangladeshi parents preferred sons for the sake of their security in old age, in the brothel environment, daughters were welcomed as sources for future income as prostitutes. However, not all mothers wanted to see their daughters followed them into this profession. As Shirin told me, "We worry that our boys might become *mastans* and girls might become prostitutes" (A member of Nari Mukti, Tangail, July, 2009).

4.8.3 The source of income. I learned from my field study that earning from sex work was the main source of income in this brothel. Activities also included selling video cassettes and alcohol (which is prohibited in a Muslim culture), gambling, and running beauty parlours, laundries, and restaurants. Through these services, many people in this neighbourhood—including the police, local leaders, and *mastans*— earned money.

4.8.4 Prostitutes' relations with the neighbourhood. The participants told me that the neighbours of their brothel community tried to avoid them. The prostitutes were often subjected to insulting language whenever they encountered local residents. Women from the mainstream community especially resented the sex workers because they felt the prostitutes threatened the concord of their homes.

4.8.5 Religion in the brothel. The participants of my study felt hurt because religious leaders taught them that they were doing things against God's will and they believed that their lives were sinful. They felt guilty about their work, and for this reason they prayed and donated money to mosques for their absolution. Sadly, due to traditional views about sex workers, their donations were sometimes rejected by religious leaders. As Shima complained, "I saved my earnings to donate to the mosque, but the Imam refused to take my money and told me that it would pollute the mosque" (A member of

Nari Mukti, Tangail, July, 2009). Because of these negative views, several prostitutes said they turned to drugs or alcohol to free them from depression. However, the situation was gradually improving. I gathered information through my ethnographic field observations that religious leaders were accepting donations from prostitutes more than previously. I think that since many religious leaders are receiving training from NGOs and GOs about human rights issues, they are becoming more sensitized. I learned that these leaders were powerful and had important roles in the brothel power structure that I explain in my next section.

4.9 The power structure of the Tangail brothel

In order to show how the sex workers' human rights are violated by forces both from within and from outside the Tangail brothel, I describe the power struggles that characterise this environment. My interviews with the sex workers helped me identify the hierarchy that dictated the day to day happenings at Tangail. Figure 4.2 shows how this hierarchy exerted its power, both from within and from outside the brothel. This power involves both internal and external conflicts among different people in the sex work community. These conflicts arise because of differences in income, sexual attractions, and power (the powerful *sardernis* versus the powerless bonded prostitutes) and because of problems related to networking and affiliations between various agencies and sex workers. These power dynamics are expressed in three distinct layers: power relations among sex workers, power relations between sex workers and others within the brothel, and power relations between the sex work community and external actors.

The centre circle shows the power struggles among sex workers; I place this struggle in the centre circle because the sex workers provide the main source of income

for the brothel. For various socio-demographic reasons, they compete among themselves even though they also help each other. Through my field observations and the socio-demographic data from the sex workers, I learnt that they live and work with conflict.

Power is also exerted on prostitutes at the second level from internal sources within the brothel. Besides the internal conflict among themselves, sex workers frequently face domination by other inhabitants, such as the *mastans* and the landlords of the brothel. These inhabitants frequently abuse the prostitutes. Such abuse seems to be a constant in sex workers' daily lives.

The last circle indicates the power exerted from outside the brothel. At this level, sex workers are subject to powerful stakeholders who have financial, political, and religious interests in either maintaining or closing the brothel.

Figure 4.2 The power exerted on inside and outside of the Tangail brothel
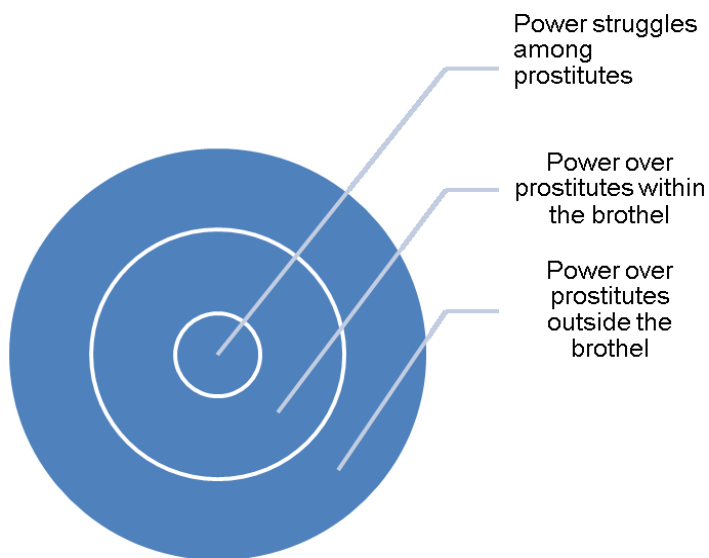
These three layers are linked to each other and reflect the power dynamics affecting the sex work community.

4.9.1 Power struggles among prostitutes

Below I explain the power dynamics surrounding sex workers. These struggles

are common in the sex work community among coworkers for various reasons, such as income, age and so on.

4.9.1.1 Young versus old. Young sex workers are almost always welcomed by their clients. However, sometimes they are abused by older sex workers and other people. For instance, by virtue of their being new to the brothel, *mastans* and the police exploit them. I also learnt that if a sex worker is born and brought-up in a brothel, she has a better understanding of the brothel power relations. Consequentially, she has more power than a newcomer from outside the brothel. On the other hand, many poor but old sex workers act as maid servants (called *mashi)* for young and rich sex workers. They have very little power due to their economic condition as well as their age.

4.9.1.2 Beautiful versus less beautiful. The respondents told me that beauty is a vital element in the power struggle in this trade although many beautiful and young sex workers are bonded and not powerful. However, beautiful sex workers get more clients and income. Once they gain their independence from their *sardernis,* they often become rich and powerful and are in higher positions than their less beautiful coworkers.

4.9.1.3 Educated versus non-educated. The sex workers who are educated often have links outside the brothel and generally are affiliated with NGOs. Consequently, they are more powerful than less educated sex workers. They help other sex workers read and write letters or documents, which gives them some sort of power within their community.

4.9.1.4 Members versus non-members. Members of NGOs or SWOs are more powerful than non-members. Members have opportunities to participate in special activities, such as travelling abroad, which enhances their organizational development. On the other hand, non-members are more often excluded from developmental activities

in comparison to the members of organizations. Non-members are unclear about their human rights and the resources available for their development; such information is more accessible to members of organizations. For instance, Mukta stated, "I don't understand what Nari Mukti does. I see the office but don't know what my other friends are doing here" (A brothel-based sex worker, Tangail, July, 2009).

4.9.2 Power struggles between prostitutes and other residents within the brothel

Inside the brothel, in addition to the power struggles among themselves, sex workers face other conflicts. There are other parties who are involved in these power struggles, including *sarderni, babu, mastan*, and Nari Mukti.

4.9.2.1 Power struggles between *sardernis* and sex workers. Madams or s*ardernis* are retired female sex workers. They are leaders of the brothel and make critical decisions about their bonded sex workers' lives. Invariably, besides their main trade of sex work, they manage other businesses, such as renting houses, selling and buying girls, and managing drug businesses. They often have strong connections with the local authorities, the police, and *mastans*.

All bondage sex workers' earnings must go to these powerful madams**.** They buy sex workers from brokers inside or outside the brothel. They control the lives of these young *chukris* (bonded sex workers), who have to give all their money to the *sardernis* for at least two years. I learnt from my field observations that after passing at least two years—sometimes more than five years—*chukris* could be freed through the support of the NGOs. *Sardernis* ensure the *chukris'* basic needs are taken care of, including food, clothing, room rent, and health care. Consequently, bonded sex workers lack the ability to make decisions of their own. Most importantly, during this bondage time, *chukris* are

seldom allowed to leave the brothel (Jenkins & Rahman, 2002, p. 2). Rina told me, "I don't know when I will be free from my *sarderni*; she takes all my earnings since I am under her control" (A bonded sex worker, Tangail, July, 2009).

4.9.2.2 Power struggles between *babus* and sex workers. A *babu* is a male who lives with a sex worker as her husband, but they do not have a legal marriage status. A *babu* comes from outside the brothel area and is usually legally married to someone else. His wife lives in his home in a village or town. He comes to the brothel to enjoy sex and often forces the sex worker to give him her earnings. If a sex worker wants to buy land or a house, her *babu* facilitates the registration process on her behalf. Generally, he abuses the sex worker under his control. Despite the sex worker's abusive situation, she still likes to live with her *babu,* who gives her mental support. A *babu* generally is not allowed by his lover to have sex with any other sex worker. He might not like his lover to have sex with clients, but in order to earn money his lover does so.

4.9.2.3 Power struggles between *mastans* and sex workers. *Mastans* or hooligans often exploit sex workers. They have the strength to snatch prostitutes' money, force them to have sex without payment, destroy their personal property, beat them, and address them in insulting or abusive language. These hooligans often have strong connections with political leaders and receive financial assistance from them.

4.9.2.4 Power struggles between Nari Mukti and sex workers. The study participants saw Nari Mukti as the most powerful agent in the brothel. It has a secure place inside the brothel to implement its projects. Nari Mukti has a strong connection with the police stations, local administrations, influential political leaders, and various NGOs. Hence, executive members feel empowered to deal with sex workers' problems.

However, I observed that Nari Mukti is unable to address the stigma related to sex work and HIV/AIDS since this issue is not included in the proposal of the SWO's various projects. Although this SWO brings many changes for prostitutes, still more needed to be done for the brothel sex workers to create positive change in all of their lives.

4.9.3 Power struggles between prostitutes and those outside the brothel

The power influence from outside the brothel differs from the influences inside the brothel. These parties include the police, political and religious leaders, the local administration, house owners, and NGOs. These power struggles could be positive as well as negative.

4.9.3.1 Power struggles between the police and sex workers. The police play a central role in brothel affairs regarding licenses, affidavits and brothel closures (Social Initiatives, 2003). The police impose their power over sex workers illegally in order to fulfill their own interests and gain monetary benefits. For example, the police demand money before verifying sex workers' affidavit status. I learnt from my informal discussions with the staff of the NGOs connected to the Tangail brothel and from the prostitutes themselves that sometimes the police use hooligans to collect information about sex workers. For instance, the *mastans* learn personal information about sex workers and if the *mastans* know that a newcomer to the brothel is under 18, they pass it on to the police. This information allows the police to threaten to report the young prostitute and her *sarderni* if they do not pay a bribe. As a result, the *sarderni* bribes the police in order to keep the underage sex workers in the trade. The sex workers I interviewed told me that although *mastans* frequently abuse sex workers, the police refuse to intervene when the sex workers complain. As Fulon stated, "When I complained

to the police about the local hooligans, a police officer beat me and told me that, being a prostitute, I did not have any right to complain against people" (A member of Durjoy, Dhaka, June, 2009).

4.9.3.2 Power struggles among landlords, political leaders, and sex workers. I learnt from my study that many political leaders indirectly control the brothel and earn money from it by using hooligans to create panic and bully the prostitutes or clients. After raids, sometimes political leaders take over vacant lands and hooligans snatch prostitutes' valuable belongings. Landlords are powerful since they earn money from the houses they rent within the brothel. Some of them are even political leaders as well. Like other landlords, these political leaders often abuse their position by charging high rents and coercing the *sardernis* into illegal activities such as providing young girls for sex.

4.9.3.3 Power struggles between religious leaders and sex workers. Some of the sex workers involved in my study explained that they were discriminated against by religious leaders. In fact, some brothel closures were instigated by fundamentalist Muslim religious groups who wanted to prohibit sex work. For example, powerful religious groups instigated the raid on the Magura brothel (HRW, 2006). Many sex workers were physically and verbally assaulted by these religious leaders.

However, Akhi stated and other participants of this study agreed, "After the religious leaders participated in several educational projects, some of them gradually became more sensitized and less resentful towards us" (Tangail, July, 2009). Participants believed that these educational programs should be continued in order to make religious leaders more aware about sex work issues. Sex workers felt that they had an unequal power relationship with these leaders.

4.9.3.4 Power struggles between brokers and sex workers. Brokers are a group of people who collect girls from different public gathering places and sell them to s*ardarnis*. The brokers are more powerful than the naive sex workers. Many brokers rape innocent girls as a way of introducing them to the sex trade (Banerjee, 1989, p.1).

4.9.3.5 Power struggles between the local administrations and sex workers. The participants in my study complained that the local administration which provides services like gas and electricity does not give them good service. The madams maintain good contacts with these service providers, but generally sex workers have limited access to these powerful people. Consequently, sex workers are ignored when they try to deal directly with these authorities.

4.9.3.6 Power struggles between NGOs and sex workers. Some NGOs, such as Society for Social Service (SSS) or CARE, work with the brothel-based prostitutes. These organizations work to enhance the organizational activities and fight for sex workers' human rights. In these relations, the active and vocal sex workers are mainly affiliated with these organizational activities and can attend different workshops or meetings. However, the average prostitute has little dealings with GOs and NGOs. With their limited networking and access to different services, prostitutes frequently encounter stigma from different people.

4.10 The ways the stigmas lead to discrimination against sex workers

In this section, I explain how the stigma of sex work and the HIV/AIDS virus have serious consequences in the lives of prostitutes. The sex workers I interviewed saw stigmatizing as a culturally negative attitude directed at them. For instance, Josna said, "When the public realizes that I am a prostitute, they treat me spitefully, and I feel

ostracised" (A member of Durjoy, Dhaka, July, 2009). During my field observations and interviews, I found that the stigmatization of sex workers means that they are unable to participate in social gatherings, such as religious festivals, marriages, or funerals. Additionally, prostitutes have limited access to public toilets and recreation centres, like parks. As Lipi remarked, "When the general public creates barriers against sex workers using public toilets, I feel stigmatized" (A member of BAPS, Dhaka, July, 2009).

4.10.1 Restrictions for wearing of shoes. Many cultural norms are imposed by society in order to make sex workers distinct from others and to limit their social and legal rights (Crago, 2008). There are various socio-cultural barriers for sex workers which have a great impact on their lives. Some participants whom I interviewed complained that when they left the brothel, they were forbidden to wear shoes in public because of the local custom. As Shirin declared, "We didn't buy shoes because we were not permitted to wear them and we felt discriminated against" (A member of Nari Mukti, Tangail, July, 2009). These brothel-based prostitutes had to go bare-foot. These cultural values were imposed so that the police could easily recognize them. After several social movements and protests by SWOs and some NGOs, prostitutes are now allowed to wear shoes outside their brothels.

4.10.2 Restrictions for wearing of cloths. When the sex workers go outside the brothel, they are required to wear the *burkha* (a black robe covering the entire body and face, often leaving only the eyes exposed), a symbol of the religious fundamentalists. However, in Bangladesh, the average woman wears the *salwar kameeze* (long tunics over trousers) or the sari and do not generally wear the *burkha*. Therefore, forcing sex workers to wear a specific type of clothing constitutes a violation of their social rights. My study

participants told me that some prostitutes intentionally wear these clothes to hide themselves from their relatives. I also learnt from my research that a sex worker was also restricted from entering open markets. As Tanni said, "I have to wear a *burkha* when I go outside in order to hide my face, not only from the police, but also from my relatives" (A member of Durjoy, Dhaka, August, 2009).

4.10.3 Prostitutes' burial rights. Sex workers' burial rights are restricted by custom. As such, they are not permitted to be buried in public graveyards, a restriction described by all of the participants. They told me that generally, sex workers' dead bodies are thrown into rivers rather than given religious ritual burial. In June 2002, the SWNOB, along with other NGOs and SWOs, demanded burial rights for prostitutes (HRW, 2006). This demand was successful in establishing the burial right for sex workers in many places. The Tangail brothel-based prostitutes received a piece of land from the local administration for a graveyard of their own. Sex workers also contributed financially towards purchasing this place. Nevertheless, like street-based prostitutes, brothel-based sex workers are still banned from being buried in public graveyards. Jahanara mused, "I have a dream that my lifeless corpse will be buried in my family graveyard following the proper ritual" (A member of Nari Mukti, Tangail, July, 2010).

4.10.4 Sex workers' children's rights. Unfortunately, prostitutes' children's basic rights are violated in many ways. Sex workers often do not know the identity of their children's fathers, and thus many of them are unable to register the births of their children since children must be registered under their fathers' names (Durjoy, 2009). As Zorna complained, "I couldn't enter my daughter in a public school not only because she is a prostitute's daughter but also because I didn't know who her father is and I didn't

have her birth certificate" (A brothel-based prostitute, Tangail, July, 2009). Therefore,

many sex workers use false names for the father in order to obtain the birth certificate.

Fortunately, the June 2004 Declaration changed this policy of birth registration so that the

fathers' names would no longer be required to register the children's births (National

Plan of Action for Children-Bangladesh, 2005).

4.10.5 Sex workers' political rights. Although prostitutes practise their voting

power in national elections, sex workers' political rights are controlled. Sex workers are

not allowed to compete as political candidates with the reserved seats for women

candidates. Since sex workers cannot run in local elections, they are effectively excluded

from governmental decision making and from networking at the local political level. This

means they cannot have someone on the inside to lobby on their behalf.

4.10.6 Access to the governmental safety net programs. The sex workers whom

I interviewed said that the different programs sponsored from the local to the national

level were not accessible to them. Indeed, they had few opportunities to be involved in

the various government safety net programs. The government implements many social

programs in order to facilitate community-based social rehabilitation projects, designed

to help those affected by poverty and natural disasters. These development strategies

have been set up to alleviate poverty, to develop skills, and to generate employment.

Unfortunately, sex workers have little access to these state programs (The Five Year

Plan, 1997-2002). Only brothel-based sex workers are permitted to receive some social

welfare funding and skill-based training, such as dress making. However, without a

strong market opportunity to sell their products and without cultural acceptance, the

state's rehabilitation programs do not bring positive change in these women's lives.

4.10.7 Abuse at shelters. Sex workers are often abused at government-facilitated shelters. Vagabond centres are government operated shelters for female beggars and sex workers who do not belong to brothels but who have been arrested by the police. These homes provide skill-based training to rehabilitate these women into mainstream society (HRW, 2006). However, sex workers who spent time in these centres complained that when they were sent to vagabond centres, they often were sexually and physically assaulted by the staff. Actually, these centres are viewed as prisons by sex workers. Tanni, a Durjoy member, told me, "Vagrancy homes are companies to make prostitutes because if children from the streets go there, they are raped by the staff and become prostitutes" (Dhaka, July, 2009).

The participants also claimed that the food and living environments were extremely bad and if they complained, the staff beat them. Consequently, they were afraid to inform the higher authorities of these internal problems for fear of further abuse. After a certain time, the directors informed the arrested prostitutes' relatives of the sex workers' present working condition in order to return them to their home districts. Unfortunately, when relatives learnt of their profession, they often refused to take them back. Their activities were seen as shameful by their families. As a result, social stigma forced these women to go back to the sex industry. In fact, instead of rehabilitation, sex workers suffered new social obstacles.

4.10.8 Access to health services. The sex workers involved in my study told me that often their access to governmental or non-governmental health services is limited. Most alarmingly, medical professionals at some clinics and hospitals refused to provide health care to these women. Some medical authorities charged prostitutes double for

treatment costs. Participants in this study complained that due to a lack of health care services, they suffered from different untreated STDs and often were scared they might become infected with the HIV virus. As Mukta stated, "We suffer from various female diseases and infections. Now we are threatened by the possibility of becoming infected with the HIV virus through unprotected sex" (A brothel-based prostitute, July, 2009).

The situation is gradually improving through the assistance of various NGOs and other organizations, sex workers are facing less abusive attitudes than they used to. As Rashi said, "Now we can place our complaints with our own organization when the police and *mastans* harass us" (A member of Nari Mukti, focus groups discussions in Tangail, July, 2009). Chowdhury (2004) also states that, when the members of SWOs developed their institutions, their primary focus was to protect prostitutes' human rights.

4.11 Consequences of stigma due to sex work

4.11.1 Underlying social conditions. In Bangladesh, women turn to or are forced into prostitution under various circumstances related to social stigma, poverty and oppression. For example, when poor parents are unable to pay a dowry, their daughters have to marry without a dowry and often become victims of domestic violence. Sometimes these girls are later rejected by their husbands and forced into prostitution by their in-laws (Social Initiatives, 2003). Women who become separated or divorced are often left with few resources or no source of income other than prostitution.

Additionally, illegal marriages and false promises of employment have often resulted in rural girls moving to the cities and becoming sex trade workers (Khan & Arefeen, 1998). One of the study participants explained how she became a prostitute due to a false job offer: "One of my relatives offered me a garment job in Dhaka and I came

with him for this reason. However, he deceived me about the job and raped me. After this I didn't have any choice other than to become a prostitute in order to survive" (A member of Durjoy, Dhaka, June, 2009). Gang rape or sexual exploitation by relatives or garment co-workers sometimes forces women into prostitution. In Bangladeshi society, a woman who is known to have been raped is stigmatized and may have to choose prostitution as a means of earning a living. Rural to urban migration has left many women little recourse but sex work as they are often taken advantage of sexually in this drastic transition phase. This is strongly linked with poverty as well.

4.11.2 Stigma, prostitution, and poverty. Unfortunately, prostitution can inflict stigma on a family for generation after generation. Economic setbacks and the threat of HIV/AIDS mean fewer clients and an increase in competition among sex workers. This, in turn, results in decreased income and prostitutes find it hard to pay for living expenses. Thus, some borrow money at a high interest rate for the sake of their families' survival. When poor families are unable to ensure the basic rights of their children and many poor girls become prostitutes, the community at large suffers as well (Khan & Arefeen, 1998). The Diagram below shows the causal relationships between poverty, prostitution, stigma and the way that sex workers are discriminated against.

Figure 4.3 The causal relationship among poverty, prostitution, and stigma
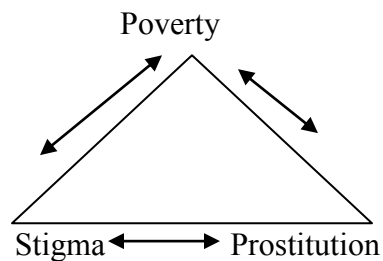
The Diagram above indicates stigmatization is interlinked with poverty and prostitution. Participants in my study certainly felt that poverty is the central reason

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young girls from rural areas become prostitutes and are shunned by their communities. If a poor girl wants to free herself from poverty, she might become a prostitute; but in spite of her improved economic condition, she cannot rid herself of the stigma that is so strongly connected to poverty and prostitution that also creates difficulties for her in finding socially acceptable jobs (Azim, Mahmood, & Shelly, 2002).

4.11.3 Access to jobs. All the participants in my study told me that they had a hard time finding socially acceptable employment. Some of them managed to find work in garment factories when they temporarily gave up the sex trade. The remuneration was far lower compared to their earnings from the sex trade. Since most prostitutes had to send money to their relatives, they tended to continue with sex work rather than work in garment factories. The sex workers I interviewed argued that the working conditions in garment factories was no better than in the sex trade. Many garment factory owners and male co-workers sexually and verbally abused these garment workers. As a result, sex workers often found that it was better for them to continue sex work as prostitutes for a wage rather than being sexually exploited for nothing in a garment factory. Lima, an ex-garment worker who had such an experience, told me, "My boss forced me to have sex with him without any benefit, I agreed because I was afraid of him" (A member of BAPS, Dhaka, August, 2009). However, when fewer demands are made for sex workers' services, due to age or fear of transmission of STDs or AIDS, many of them have to work at garment factories to supplement their income.

4.11.4 Sex workers' identity crisis. Sex workers' identity cards are not accepted as legitimate, especially by the police, who sometimes ignore their cards and damage them deliberately and maliciously. Some of the participants complained, "When we show

our identity cards to factory owners or to the police, they often neglect them and abuse us. Indeed, the factory owners believe we are still involved in sinful work and the police think we are involved in crime" (Focus group discussions with members of Durjoy, Dhaka, June, 2009).

4.11.5 Renting homes. I learnt from my study that sex workers face numerous problems when trying to rent apartments. They are restricted from renting homes in mainstream communities if they intend to continue sex business in their apartments because apartment-based prostitution is illegal in Bangladesh. However, even if street-based sex workers do not want to perform the sex trade at their apartments, they are prevented from living among non-sex work communities if landlords or neighbours are aware of their work. Even if sex workers manage to rent apartments, when their identities are disclosed, they often have to pay bribes to local *mastans* (who work on behalf of landlords) or landlords in order to retain their dwellings.

4.11.6 Purchasing land. If prostitutes want to purchase land in their home districts with their savings, it is not easy to do so without help from relatives or *babus*. *Babus* and relatives frequently exploit them, which make it hard to maintain their financial independence, as evidenced by Sonia, who complained, "I gave my savings to my *babu* to buy land in my village. He neither bought it nor returned my money" (A BAPS member, Dhaka, June, 2009).

4.11.7 Bank accounts. In general, there are various types of formalities involved in opening a bank account. In this context, sex workers encounter difficulties because of the necessity to disclose their sources of income, a step that is often greeted with hostility and rejection. Financial institutions also require documents which are not easily

accessible to sex workers. Fortunately, with the help of Nari Mukti, Durjoy, and other

NGOs, many prostitutes are able to open bank accounts for their future security.

There are various problems and consequences surrounding the issue of HIV/AIDS

which I elaborate upon below.

4.12 Stigma and HIV/AIDS issues

4.12.1 Knowledge of HIV/AIDS. Most of my study respondents were able to

answer my question about what HIV/AIDS is. They said that they gained this knowledge

from TV programs, billboards, and HIV/AIDS training carried out by NGOs. Most of

them correctly answered questions about the mode of transmission of this epidemic and

ways to protect themselves from the HIV virus. However, some of them were unaware of

the symptoms and sources of this disease and of the costs of treatment. Although

prostitutes know quite a bit about HIV/AIDS, their knowledge is not always valued by

the public, especially by governmental officials. As Nilufa remarked, "When we try to

participate in any discussion with our knowledge, we are often ignored by government

officials and the general public" (A member of Nari Mukti, Tangail, July, 2009).

4.12.2 Attitude of the general public. The prostitutes who participated in this

research said that they faced social stigma because the general public had no respect for

them and treated them with contempt. The public addressed them with abusive language,

beat them, and forcefully shaved their heads, a source of significant shame in

Bangladesh. Similarly, when sex workers participate in public meetings or processions,

other people often criticize them as vectors of disease, blaming them for HIV/AIDS. The

participants also told me that when they attended a rally to fight for their human rights,

other rally-goers accused them of being the main carriers of the virus; such accusations

made them feel worthless. For example, Shathi stated that, during her participation in a

public HIV/AIDS awareness campaign, a man asked her, "Why are you there

participating with us when you are the main source of this disease?" (A member of

BAPS, Dhaka, June, 2009). Such unkind remarks make sex workers reluctant to attend

public gatherings. I learned from my interview with the PLWHAs that they as well as the

sex workers suffer from the stigma of HIV/AIDS. Consequently, many of these

marginalized individuals wish to end their lives to avoid stigma related to HIV/AIDS.

 4.12.3 HIV/AIDS and suicide. Participants in my research (especially the

interview with a PLWHA) told me that PLWHAs sometimes thought about committing

suicide because of the discrimination they experienced. Similar to this information, I also

found that a research survey which was held in 2009 (organized by UNAIDS, Bangladesh

rural advancement committee, the NGO Asar Alo, and the Family Planning Association

in Bangladesh) reported that, of the 238 PLWHAs surveyed, 21% wished to commit

suicide because of the socially negative views they met with (*Prothom Alo*, 2009). It is

my opinion that unless the general public is educated about the plight PLWHAs, this

trend of marginalized people opting for suicide will rise.

 4.12.4 Stigma and gender discrimination. Female sex workers are more likely

to be stigmatized than male sex workers, as is apparent from the results of my study.

People blame female sex workers for the introduction of HIV/AIDS into Bangladesh not

because of their trade with multiple local male clients but for their involvement with

foreign clients. By comparison, people do not blame male drug users as much. Here, the

negative views towards female sex workers are an outcome of gender discrimination.

Besides discrimination, it is also hard for sex workers to prevent themselves from getting

infected with the HIV/AIDS virus due to the ignorance of their clients on ways to prevent the transmission of the HIV virus.

4.12.5 Preventing HIV/AIDS. Participants in my study reported that even though some of the sex workers' clients believe that the women in sex work are the root cause of AIDS and many clients are scared to come to brothels, they are still unwilling to use condoms. Fulon claimed, "Some police officers told me that condoms were unsafe and responsible for spreading the HIV virus" (A member and outreach worker of Durjoy, Dhaka, June, 2009). Prostitutes fear that they might pick up the HIV virus from clients who refuse to use condoms but myths like the police officers' story makes it difficult for sex workers to promote condom use to protect both themselves and their clients from the HIV virus and STDs.

4.12.6 Condom selling as a preventive tool for HIV/AIDS. Nari Mukti and Durjoy give their members specific condom selling targets in order to reach a goal of marketing condoms to sex workers and their clients. The SWOs' members found it difficult to meet these targets; as some participants in my study asked, "How can we fulfill these targets when most of our clients are reluctant to buy and use condoms?" (Focus groups discussions with the members of Durjoy and Nari Mukti, July, 2009). Irritated by the complaints of sex workers, Ratna (A staff of BAPS) claimed that BAPS provided the condoms at a lower cost to its members compared to other organizations. However, the sex workers I interviewed complained that they suffered greatly trying to sell their quota of condoms. Sometimes they have to meet their targets by providing money from their own pockets. As Kohinoor complained:

I receive $80 monthly as an outreach worker and I have to spend

$20 a month to buy condoms from my organization. Thus, I have to

wait for the whole month—sometimes more— to recover this $20

from other sex workers and my own clients. It is really hard to

recuperate the full amount in a month and for this reason, I am

doubly pressed to sell $20 worth of condoms every month and

maintain my family expenditure. (An outreach worker of Durjoy,

June 7, 2009)

My study participants argued that if their agencies provide free condoms, they

would be able to motivate their clients to use them. However, the executive and staff

members of Durjoy and Nari Mukti explained that condoms are not free of cost; donors

do not provide free condoms. Most notably, Fulon pointed out, "Many clients offer half

price for the sex service if they have sex with condoms. As a result, many prostitutes

prefer to have sex without condoms to get double the money—$1.50 without a condom

and 75 cents with one" (An outreach worker of Durjoy, Dhaka, June, 2009).

4.13 The consequences of stigma due to HIV/AIDS

The stigmatization related to HIV/AIDS that affects the sex workers' lives also

affects their families and their communities, a problem that I elaborate upon below.

4.13.1 Prostitutes' family structure. On the street, "family" refers to the people

in a sex worker's circle and might include their children, parents, husbands, lovers,

friends, and co-workers. Except for children, the street workers' families might not

include anyone with whom they are actually related. Street-based prostitutes live on the

streets, in parks or in railway stations, or even in rented apartments with the same

leaseholders. Often prostitutes themselves might not be the leaseholders; some other

family member might be. The members of such families behave as any family members

behave: cooking, and sharing household costs (Data from the ethnographic field

observations, Dhaka, June, 2009). The family structure in a brothel differs from that at

the street-based level. For example, the majority of sex workers live with their lovers, on

whom they are dependent for shelter. They have children, mothers, and brothers who live

in the brothel with them.

4.13.2 Stigma at the family level. Both street and brothel-based sex workers

often face stigma within their own families. While it is not in a family's interest to accuse

their breadwinner of being an HIV carrier, a newcomer to the brothel might be suspected

as a carrier of the virus. Consequently, it is hard for the newly arrived prostitute to find

work (Data from the ethnographic field observations, Tangail, July, 2009).

4.13.3 Stigma at the working places. Some of the participants of my study said

that they had been forced to leave brothels because they were accused of transmitting the

virus; as a result, they had to go to work in residential areas. However, their new clients

accused them of being bearers of STDs and the HIV virus. Clients often believe that

home-based sex work is safer than brothel-based sex work since fewer men come for sex

in private homes than in brothels. My study data also indicates that when street-based sex

workers rent hotel rooms for sex work, hotel authorities charge them extra because they

suspect that prostitutes are bearers of the HIV virus. However, hotel authorities do not

charge clients extra. As Shathi mentioned:

> I went to a hotel with my client and the hotel management charged
>
> me more than the regular hotel rate. The management told me that I

have sexual relationships with multiple customers and for this

reason there is a high risk of transmission of the HIV virus. Being a

high risk for the transmission of the HIV virus, I must pay additional

money. (A BAPS member, Dhaka, June, 2009)

4.13.4 Stigma at the community level. Sex workers face stigma at the

community level. In parks or public places where prostitutes wait to attract clients, the

general public, suspecting them of carrying the HIV virus, sometimes ask them not to

solicit there. In addition, sex workers are prohibited by the caretakers from using public

toilets as some people believe that AIDS is a water-borne disease and if prostitutes use

public toilets, citizens could be contaminated. For instance, Ritu said, "When I went to a

public toilet, the caretaker wouldn't let me use it and told me that by using this public

space I will contaminate all" (A member of BAPS, Dhaka, July, 2009).

4.13.5 Raids on brothels. The brothel closure is an example of the direct

outcomes of stigma due to HIV/AIDS. Such closures present a threat for sex workers'

lives (Azim et al., 2002). After a brothel closes, sex workers continue their business on

the streets, in hotels, and in residential areas. This reinforces the blame the public places

on these prostitutes for spreading the HIV virus throughout the country. As Shirin said:

After the Tanbazar brothel eviction, we became homeless and spread

out on the streets. Then we were told by the public that we were

dangerous because we might not be identified with a specific place

and our new trends of working mobility might increase the risk of

transmitting the HIV virus in various places rather than in a confined

area. (A brothel-based prostitute, Tangail, July, 2009)

4.13.6 Myths about HIV/AIDS. Participants in my study described their

experiences regarding misconceptions surrounding HIV/AIDS. They told me that when

HIV/AIDS first surfaced in Bangladesh, there were various advertising campaigns to

make people aware of it. However, many of these advertisements, like the posters of

black cats (a symbol of disaster), made people panic. These posters were hung in front of

brothels. A myth built up about black cats because of this newly created association of

the animals with HIV/AIDS. Horrified that black cats were spreading the disease, people

began killing them. Also, human skeletons were hung in front of brothels as a symbol of

the result of HIV/AIDS. These demonstrations played vital roles in reducing prostitutes'

income and encouraging the public to believe that if anyone came into a brothel they

could be infected by the HIV virus and would soon die. Such myths made sex workers

more vulnerable to abuse.

4.14 Reflections on stigma issues

In the following section, I discuss my analysis regarding the issues of stigma

based on the field data and the literature review.

4.14.1 Negative attitude towards prostitutes. I found in my study that the

general attitude towards sex work is more negative than the attitude towards HIV/AIDS.

The general public believe that HIV/AIDS is strongly linked to sex work. In brothels,

clients, hooligans, and madams sometimes blame prostitutes for being the main carriers

of the HIV virus and other STDs. On the streets, the police treat the outreach workers of

SWOs with suspicion, viewing them also as likely carriers of the HIV virus. The police

sometimes search for condoms inside NGO outreach workers and sex workers' bags; and

if the police find condoms inside their bags, the police often assume that the workers

have AIDS. As Fulon told me:

> When I was working, a police officer stopped me and searched for
>
> condoms inside my bag. When he found them, he told me that we,
>
> prostitutes are carrying condoms because we are the main carriers of
>
> the HIV virus, not in order to practice safer sex. He said that we are
>
> simply hiding our status by offering condoms to customers. (An
>
> outreach worker of Durjoy, Dhaka, July, 2009)

This behaviour on the part of the police represents the negative views that the police have always had about prostitutes and NGO workers. It is important to study how law enforcement agencies are trained to deal with the sex work community. Such a study is vital because the police play a negative role in the lives of sex workers, even though they might otherwise be expected to help and protect them from abuse.

4.14.2 Poverty and gender issues. In Bangladesh, girls are not valued as much as boys. In Bangladesh, most parents want sons rather than daughters not just because of their cultural value but also for the economic security boys offer their parents. According to Sultana:

> In rural areas, it is a strong belief that a son should be educated
>
> because, unlike a daughter who after her marriage serves another
>
> family, a son will need to support his aged parents. For such beliefs,
>
> most families prepared girls for marriage and girls are taught to be
>
> obedient and quiet, to respect the leading roles played by males and
>
> to take on the responsibility for bearing and rearing children, and
>
> this responsibility not only hinders them in attending school but also

precludes them from external jobs. (Sultana, 2010, p. 32)

Additionally, the World Fertility Survey conducted an extensive survey in 1983 that included 40 countries in order to explore the wish on the part of parents for a boy child rather than a girl. The study indicates that, of all these countries, the desire for a boy child is the highest in Bangladesh (Hossain, 1990, p. 3). Unfortunately, still in Bangladesh, from their birth, girls are socially discriminated against. For instance, in Muslim rural families, when a boy is born, he is greeted by *azan* (call for prayer), whereas a girl does not receive *azan* when she is born because she is not welcomed by her family (Sultana, 2010, p. 32).

In this patriarchal society, girls are considered a burden for their families due to the dowry system and their inability to earn an income for their families (Sultana, 2010, p. 33). Many parents prefer to marry their daughters before the legal age for marriage in order to relieve themselves of the financial burden of raising girls. Also, it is difficult for parents to find a matching bridegroom for a mature bride, who is expected to have a larger dowry than a younger girl would need. This social setting encourages families to invest less money in girls than in boys. Often poor families cannot afford to pay the educational costs of all their children, so they prefer to spend money on boys, who ensure their future security (Data from the ethnographic field observations, Tangail, July, 2009).

4.14.3 Concerning sex workers' children. As I mentioned in my introductory chapter and as reports from the Human Rights Watch and other institutions bear out, the rights of sex workers' children are frequently violated. I wondered why sex workers would want to have children when they encounter so many difficulties in trying to raise them. The women who participated in my study told me that their pregnancies were

usually unplanned. Besides being reluctant to have an abortion and fearing that the health care workers—like so many others—might also abuse them, sex workers prefer to have children in order to ensure their future security.

4.14.4 Family planning issues. Participants in my study told me that because of the side effects of birth control pills, sex workers do not feel comfortable using them and their clients and *babus* do not like to use condoms. In addition, once a woman becomes pregnant, she finds it difficult to get an abortion. In Bangladesh, the cost for an abortion is high, and post abortion complications, such as vaginal infections, mean a prostitute has to give up sex work for a while (Data from the ethnographic field observations, Tangail, July, 2009). As Tanni stated, "I had an abortion, and after that I had a huge amount of bleeding. I became weak, suffered from vaginal infection, and I had to stop my work. I was not only losing money but was also physically incapacitated for more than two weeks" (A member of Durjoy, June, 2009).

4.14.5 HIV/AIDS testing system. Prostitutes generally do not have access to health care except health services offered through DiCs. However, HIV testing is not possible in the DiCs, and prostitutes are not motivated to determine their AIDS or STD status. For example, Rehena stated, "The HIV testing creates problems in two ways: I have shared my negative test result with my clients so that they won't suspect me of being a carrier, some of them don't believe me and still suspect me of being an HIV carrier" (A member of Durjoy, July, 2009). Although the cost of testing is not high (CAD 1 to 7), due to the lack of information about testing centres and clients' misunderstanding of how the disease is transmitted, sex workers neglect to go to clinics for testing. However, when NGOs or GOs initiate programs to test prostitutes, they participate.

4.14.6 Attitude of the health care professionals. Many health care professionals are not sympathetic towards sex workers and show their feelings in the way they treat the sex workers who come to them for help. Additionally, in public or private hospitals, if sex workers disclose their identities as sex workers, they have to pay extra money for health services. Shahnaz said, " I heard that the general public believes that when clinics work with PLHWAs or sex workers, their equipment is not properly sterilized, leaving the public vulnerable to this virus"(An outreach worker of Durjoy, Dhaka, June, 2009). In support of Shanaz's statement, other participants in my study said that due to stigma of serving PLWHAs, many clinics lost their customers.

4.15 Human Rights issues

Based on my ethnographic field observations and interviews, I developed the Figure below, showing the ways sex workers and PLWHAs are victimized at different levels and how their human rights are violated.

Figure 4.4 Different levels at which sex workers experience stigma

Levels	How and by whom sex workers are stigmatized
Individual	A bonded sex worker is abused by *sardernis,* co-workers, *babu*s, and clients.
Group	Due to discrimination, sex workers have limited access to group level activities with other women folk, such as involvement with a micro-credit group.
Community	A sex worker is blamed by the police and the local community for her trade and considered the main carrier of the HIV virus.
Society in general	Religious and social views are negative towards sex work and HIV/AIDS and these perceptions encourage the general public to hate prostitutes and PLWHAs.

The above Figure lists the ways sex workers and PLWHAs are victimized from an individual to a societal level. Hence, understanding sex workers' relationships with other people is important for this analysis. Opponents and allies of sex workers play significant roles in their lives. Opponents are more powerful than sex workers and often ruin their lives by behaving aggressively and negatively towards them. On the other hand, allies

help sex workers organize to address their social problems. For instance, SWOs have evolved by receiving direct support from NGOs to fight HIV/AIDS and guarantee prostitutes' social rights (Chowdhury, 2004).

4.16 Case study to describe stigmatization

In this section, I introduce two case studies that are typical of the abusive attitudes towards sex workers that lead to the violation of their human rights: one sex worker was abused because of suspicion about the HIV virus and another was abused because of her sex work. Along with these cases, I describe a PLWHA man's life experience after he was identified as HIV positive.

4.16.1 Why I used case studies to describe the violation of human rights. A case study is based on information learned from a case or incident. As Stake states, "A case study is both a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry" (Stake, 2003, p. 136). Moreover, Berg argues that a case study is useful for researchers to explore various incidents and a case study draws generalizations in order to develop other cases (Berg, 2007, p. 285). In my research, Rashi, Fulon, and Hashems' life experiences provide the generalized pictures of stigmatization due to sex work and HIV/AIDS.

4.16.2 The case study of Fulon. Fulon (her first name, which I use with her permission) was a 30-year-old outreach worker for Durjoy and a former sex worker. She was married and had three daughters. Fulon could sign her name and read Bangla. She had been involved in the sex profession for eight years. How did she become a prostitute? She told me that, as a child, she did not know the address of her parents. As a *tokai* (street child), she lived on the streets and collected waste paper and sold it to shopkeepers. She slept at night in markets, rail stations, and bus terminals in Dhaka. A street vagabond first

raped Fulon when she was 11 years old. After being raped several times by *mastans* and

the police, she started sex work as her profession. As she said, "There was no one to help

me, and it was hard to solicit on the streets or in parks due to the fear of arrest by the

police." She had to wait in the public gathering places, in front of cinema halls, bus

stands, and market places to find clients. Her daily income was TK 200 (less than $4).

Eventually, Fulon joined Durjoy as a member and received some training. After

some time, she accepted a job as an outreach worker for Durjoy. She also visited India for

a conference on learning and sharing with other SWOs. Fulon told me that she was happy

that, with Durjoy's assistance, her children were admitted to a school. She was able to

save some money from her earnings to give herself and her family a better future. Fulon

described her bitter experience of stigma associated with her profession:

> Five years ago, a client gave me TK 500 ($8) and took me to another
>
> place for having sex. He told me that there were four people who
>
> would want sex and would pay me. However, when I arrived there, I
>
> found that there were about 10 people waiting for me. Thus, one by
>
> one, at least six people raped me without any payment. I became
>
> sick and escaped from them. I jumped into a river and, after three
>
> hours, managed to reach the other side.

On the other side of the river, she saw a religious leader. She thought that he

would help her. However, the man attacked her to have sex and said to Fulon that he

would call a dog to bite her if Fulon rejected him. Fulon told me, "I agreed to have sex

with him as I was so scared and became severely sick."

Fulon walked along the river to Abdullapur (a nearby market place). After arriving at Abdullapur, she met a taxi driver, and the driver raped her. In the same way, her suffering continued the following night and day at different spots. According to Fulon, "When the public knows that I am a prostitute, they treat me like a dog (i.e., outward displays of disrespect and hatred) and sexually abuse me. People think that we deserve this treatment because of our occupation."

Being an outreach worker, Fulon was able to explain HIV/AIDS issues clearly. She believed that by motivating people through open discussions and education, a safety net could be developed to protect prostitutes from this disease. Fulon said, "If we are organized and support each other, we may promote social justice for ourselves." More training about AIDS and a better understanding of their human rights seemed to her useful tools in promoting justice for sex workers. Finally, she thought that members of Durjoy need a greater share in organizing activities, which should be planned by the advisory committee and executive members of Durjoy rather than by the donors from outside the sex work community (Interviewed at Durjoy DiC, Dhaka, June 7, 2009).

4.16.3 The case study of Rashi. Rashi (her first name, which I use with her permission) was a 22-two-year old brothel-based sex worker. She received her grade seven education before entering this profession. She had been a sex worker for six years. Rashi had a 7-year-old daughter who lived with her in the brothel.

How did Rashi become a sex worker? Rashi said to me that she was a Muslim, but she married a Hindu man before her eighteenth birthday; however, the marriage was not legally registered. This bi-religious marriage was not accepted in her conservative family. Unfortunately, her husband was involved in criminal activities, was arrested by

the police and was sent to a prison. When he was in the jail, Rashi gave birth to a daughter. Being alone, Rashi was economically and socially vulnerable and in order to survive, she moved to the Tangail brothel and started sex work.

After 17 months, her husband was released from the jail and came to the brothel. He could not accept his wife's occupation and physically abused her. He lived outside the brothel and came there to demand money from Rashi. If Rashi was unable to give him money, he beat her and cut her body. He suspected that Rashi was carrying the HIV virus. His physical abuse was cruel. Rashi said, "In 2003, one day, he slashed me with a sharp axe and cut my hands, legs, and fingers. I was admitted to a hospital and still I have these injuries, which are painful." According to Rashi, "He tortured me because he was jealous of my profession and was scared of catching the HIV virus."

Day by day, his abusive behaviour increased, and at last Rashi severed their relationship. She tried to protect herself from the physical brutality of this man. However, she was not capable of doing so without help from someone at the personal or organizational level. After her separation, she became a member of Nari Mukti. She received training in IGA, leadership, and HIV/AIDS issues. She felt proud to be a part of this SWO and enhanced her knowledge on different issues. She was also able to save money for her daughter's education and her own future. After a certain period, she started a new life with one of her regular clients, who soon became her *babu*.

Rashi told me that the *babu* also accused her of being a carrier of the HIV virus. He did not like that she had sex with her clients. He aggressively spread a rumour that Rashi was carrying and spreading the HIV virus through practicing her trade. As a result, some clients accused her of being a carrier of the HIV virus and refused her service; and

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thus, her income was reduced. After describing the frequent incidence of physical and mental abuse on the part of her lover, she claimed that, "We are always treated as bad women. When we go to markets, the shop owners demand extra money and have no respect for us and we are considered untouchable by many people."

After continuous abuse, Rashi left her lover. She changed her *babu* two times without any change in the brutality that she received from them. However, she was happy to receive information and training from the partner organizations of Nari Mukti. She learned about the mode of transmission of the HIV virus and about safer sex practices. However, her clients were not interested in using condoms. Rashi thought that such behaviour increased the risk of transmitting this virus. She argued that more education would be the best strategy to encourage people to use condoms. Rashi urged that NGOs and GOs should disseminate accurate information to reduce misconceptions surrounding HIV/AIDS issues.

Finally, Rashi expressed the concern that brothel-based sex workers are not safe when they wait for a client at the main gates of the brothel since the police and *mastans* often beat them and demand money for waiting there. She thought that this kind of abuse is a violation of sex workers' rights (Interviewed on 3rd July, 2009, Tangail brothel**).**

4.16.4 Experience of an HIV positive man. I interviewed Hashem (In order to respect confidentiality I use a pseudonym), an HIV positive man. Hashem said that when a PLWHA declares his or her HIV status, he or she often faces social ignorance and difficulties. Hashem highlighted that he kept his HIV status a secret from his community due to the fear of discrimination. However, he declared his situation to his family and did not face discrimination from them. It is my belief that as Hashem earned money from

abroad, his position was better than other PLWHAs, especially than that of female

PLWHAs. In Bangladeshi society, female PLWHAs are more oppressed than males and;

if a woman is identified as HIV positive, her social status goes down dramatically. People

blame her regardless of the source of her infection (*Prothom Alo,* August 2009).

Hashem told me that as many PLWHAs are made to suffer by their communities

and families, more discussions and wider information sharing by the media could create

changes. He also mentioned that when an HIV positive person is diagnosed, he or she

needs nutritious foods, treatment, and care. It is important that families should be well

informed about the costs, and treatment of this disease through counselling. Additionally,

Hashem stated:

> When the foreign company (where he worked) found out that I was
>
> HIV positive, they informed me that I had one type of virus in my
>
> body and I must go to Bangladesh immediately. I was unaware of
>
> this virus. The authority cancelled my visa to stay there and did not
>
> inform me about this cancellation, which was inhumane behaviour.

Generally, PLWHAs with jobs have access to health information and services. At

the same time, due to NGOs' efforts, their lives are smoother than non-working

PLWHAs. As Hashem pointed out, "My recent work gives not only financial support but

also social status and human security." In addition, Hashem advised that, the health care

professionals should not express their overly cautious attitudes during testing anyone

suspected of being HIV positive, as such actions make PLWHAs panic.

Finally, Hashem argued that there are many organizations which receive

donations to work with the PLWHA group. However, some of these organizations use

their funds for other purposes, neglecting those who need it. Similar to his opinion, some sex workers also said to me that organizations receiving donations to work with marginalized groups must focus on the best needs for them and budget their funds accordingly (Interviewed on 11th June, 2009, Dhaka).

4.17 Roles of the SWOs in addressing human rights issues

Participants in my study described the roles of the SWOs in addressing the human rights of its members. They shared both their positive and negative experiences, which I explain below.

4.17.1 Positive experience. In response to questions about their human rights, the executive members of Durjoy said that many of their human rights are assured through the organizational support and voices of sex workers. From the participants' perspectives, Durjoy has improved sex workers' lives in the following ways:

- Sex workers have achieved voter status;

- Durjoy members have participated in different projects that help them understand political issues;

- Members have received awards for skits presented at police meetings to help the police understand their concerns;

- Many members have obtained their children's birth registrations and enrolments at public schools;

- Many of them have opened bank accounts, life insurance policies, and saving plans;

- Executives and some other members have obtained passports so that they could visit other countries—such as India, USA, and Canada—for learning and sharing;

- Some of the better educated members have learned to use the Internet to gain access to information;

- Some of them have worked as outreach workers in mainstream society (Focus group discussions with the executive members of Durjoy, Dhaka, June, 2009).

Reflecting on the progress Durjoy has made, Shahnaz stated, "Due to our active involvement in different activities, we sex workers are becoming more knowledgeable about various socio-political matters which were unclear to us before establishing our own organization" (The President of Durjoy, Dhaka, June, 2009). However, the majority of the street-based sex workers felt that their rights continue to be violated. Unfortunately, like Nari Mukti, Durjoy is not in a position to deal with all the problems that sex workers encounter.

4.17.2 Negative experience. In contrast to the positive experiences of Durjoy, some of the brothel-based participants complained bitterly that Nari Mukti seemed unable to help them with their problems. The following are some of their complaints:

- Many of the members of Nari Mukti have difficulty in obtaining passports; they are reluctant to mention their work because passport brokers charge them extra to make these travel documents;

- They have received inadequate municipal services, such as water and sanitation;

- They have been afraid of brothel closure;

- Illiterate sex workers cannot read notices, so they often do not hear about activities until it is too late to participate;

- Those sex workers who have better networking skills get higher job positions and payments;

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- They lack rehabilitation for the aged and for those who are unwilling to continue in the sex trade;

- Many sex workers felt they do not receive respect from others in the organization (Focus group discussions and individual interviews with the members of Nari Mukti, Tangail, July, 2009)

I can see similarities and differences between the complaints of the brothel and the street-based prostitutes. Sex workers from both groups who are illiterate and lack networking experience are not strongly affiliated with their organizations and are often excluded from their organizational development processes. Notably, in terms of the human rights issues, the members of Durjoy have received more assistance from their organization than the Nari Mukti's members have. However, both organizations' general members have bitter experiences with their organizational support, a subject I will discuss in the community organizing section.

Additionally, I interviewed Matin (not his real name), a member and staff of Durjoy. Matin pointed out:

> My entire view towards prostitutes has changed from a stereo-
> typical image to a positive one. There are still misconceptions
> regarding sex work issues in the Bangladeshi culture which might be
> reduced if we facilitate more dialogue through the media.

Matin felt that the SWOs are not autonomous. They are not empowered to take decisions by themselves in addressing their challenges. As he argued, "There is a middle-man group who controls the decision making system. Neither the executive committee nor the members are capable of working independently. The advisory committee plays an

influential role in all of Durjoy's activities" (Interviewed on June 20, 2009, Dhaka). The members who hold minimal power are unable to address this domination. I concur with the idea Smith puts forward that the oppressed should start to share their experiences with the media and others in order to challenge those dominating them (Smith, 1981).

4.18 Reflections on human rights issues

The existing policy and law is not effective in protecting and promoting prostitutes' social rights. An improved or healthier socio-political environment is needed to ensure their needs are met (Ara, 2005). One of the participants in my ethnographic field observations said, "The government of Bangladesh is unable to prepare a policy to ensure the rights of women, especially for sex workers, due to the influence of fundamentalist groups" (Matin, a staff of Durjoy, Dhaka, June, 2009). In my opinion, unless the state overhauls its approach to marginalized groups and listens to the advice of NGOs, the plight of sex workers and PLWHAs will not be alleviated. The participants in my study stated that the lack of strategies to reduce poverty for poor women and their limited access to governmental services contribute to violations of their human rights.

Additionally, participants in my study suggested that sex workers will be empowered when they are afforded their own decision-making power. As Shragge (2003) mentioned, organizations should benefit their members and remove external influences that threaten them. It is important to monitor and evaluate organizational activities in order to ensure the proper utilization of resources for their members' welfare.

Matin, also suggested that in order to ensure grassroots level development, it is essential to identify the available resources, make a plan for their effective utilization, implement project activities, conduct regular monitoring, evaluate challenges, and then,

explore strategies for change. I agree with Shragge and Smith when they point out that communities have their own natural capacity to organize and struggle for their own development. However, when they are dominated by internal or external ruling groups their progress is impeded (Shragge, 2003 & Smith, 1981).

Importantly, in 2002, several NGOs organized a national conference of Bangladeshi sex workers. At this conference, the sex trade workers along with several NGOs presented a 15 point agenda for the recognition of sex workers' basic human rights. The sex workers also formed their first network: the SWNOB. CARE supported this newly formed network's goal of pursuing a policy to fight for the human rights of sex-workers (CARE Bangladesh, 2002).

4.18.1 Social issues surrounding the brothel and street-based prostitutes.
Below in the Table 4.5, I describe the brothel and street-based sex workers' lives and different types of social issues that create barriers to achieving their human rights.

Table 4.5

Social issues attached to brothel and street-based sex workers

Social issues	*Street-based sex workers*	*Brothel-based sex workers*
Place for sex work	Street-based sex workers have no legitimate place to perform their business. They do their work in apartments, hotels, or parks that are prohibited for such use.	Sex workers have a specific place to do their job since brothel-based sex work is not illegal. However, there is often fear of brothel closure.
Financial issues	Due to various problems, especially the fear of transmission of the HIV virus, street-based sex workers' income has decreased over the last five years. Most prostitutes send money to their families and face financial difficulties in trying to survive within their means.	Brothel-based sex workers have fewer clients than street-based sex workers. Also, bondage prostitutes do not have the financial freedom to use their earnings when they need to do so. Their *sardernis* take their earnings, which leaves them financially insecure.
Connection with the wider community	These prostitutes are involved with the residence or hotel-based sex trade and are detached from mainstream society. However, those affiliated with Durjoy and the SWNOB attend human rights based activities and make links with NGOs.	Generally, brothel-based sex workers do not go outside of their brothels due to discrimination and stigma. They stay inside these areas. However, many of them are actively involved with NGO activities inside the brothel.
Child care	Street-based prostitute mothers are unable to care for their children. Most of the children suffer from malnutrition and various health problems. Most of them do not have access to public schools, but are enrolled in NGO-operated schools. Without a good base of education and with multiple social problems, many of them become street children.	Compared to children on the street, brothel-based sex workers' children get better care from their mothers as well as their mothers' coworkers. Comparatively, these children are better positioned than street children. Many of them also go to NGO-operated schools for education.
Looking to the future	Many sex workers would like to go back to their home districts when they are no longer considered desirable by clients. They hope that if they can save about 200 to 400 CAD, they can build homes in their native villages. Many of them do not want to marry because of male domination and exploitation.	They often seek help from *babus* for purchasing land and building houses outside of the brothel. However, they are frequently uninterested in returning to their homes, due to fear of stigma from villagers. They visit their home places with their *babus* posing as their husbands, and they pretend that they work at garment factories in order to avoid the disrespect of their friends and relatives.

As Table 4.5 shows, the daily activities of the street and brothel-based prostitutes

have similarities and differences depending on their work places and their jobs. For

instance, sex workers from both environments face social problems in earning money and

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saving for their future security. Both the brothel and street-based sex workers are not well established in society because they lack clout or power. All have dreams and hopes of creating a life free of discrimination for themselves and their children. In order to establish the human rights of sex workers, the SWNOB and its member organizations need to strengthen their capacity to develop linkages and open dialogue with the government. The SWOs also have to unite in order to create a common voice for establishing sex workers' rights. Developing liaisons with women activists and social groups at home and abroad and developing a more effective policy on the part of GOs and NGOs could reduce discrimination against sex workers. Similarly, sex workers' active involvement with their organizations could help them in addressing their social problems. By actively participating in their organizational activities, sex workers can pave the way for a better position for themselves in society. As Shirin pointed out, "Nari Mukti serves as a godfather for us by implementing its activities and addressing our social problems" (A member of Nari Mukti, Tangail, July, 2009). In fact, the best community development initiatives of the SWOs can create safety nets for their members in their fight against stigmatization.

My next discussion will be about the community development issues that involve these SWOs as they struggle to protect their members' social rights.

4.19 Community development issues

The participants in my study told me what they knew of their organizations' existing community development processes and future plans. These findings cover my second and third research focus questions, which are: In response to stigmatization, what

are the SWOs doing? What would be the best strategies to ensure that sex workers' human rights are met?

4.19.1 What a community is. In order to define a community, I described three elements of community: areas, ties, and social interaction, based on Hillary's (1955) definitions in the introductory chapter. Here, along with Hillary's definition, Zimmerman's (1938) four characteristics of a community are useful to understanding the community I focus on in my research: social fact, specification, association, and limited area. Social facts are the external values, cultural norms and social structures that affect an individual (Alamgren, 1992, p. 244). In my project, the social fact is that sex workers are vulnerable members of society whose rights are neglected or trampled. A specification in my research can be identified as the service that prostitutes provide for their clients' satisfaction. The association is sex workers' organizations, and the limited area is where they live or work. These two sociologists' definitions, basic elements, and characteristics are important to me in defining sex workers and their organizations as a community. Based on the above characteristics, I see community as an area where people live, have social interactions, and share communal feelings with each other.

In general, the core requirements for community development are cooperation and networking among members. Here, I would like to quote from Lyon, "You cannot save the world, but you can improve a community" (Lyon. 1987, p. Preface). In my opinion, the vital goal of a community is to act jointly to improve living conditions regardless of geographic boundaries, race, sex, or age. A community can be viewed through the wider, more global lens of human security, rather than through a specific group's interest.

Now, it is important to know about the Bangladeshi sex work community that I describe below.

4.19.2 The Bangladeshi sex work community. In Bangladesh, people who interact with sex workers include the police, clients, *mastans*, pimps, religious and political leaders, and *babus*. Also, municipalities, NGOs, and women's groups are involved with these communities (Social Initiatives, 2003). In particular, the prostitutes themselves are a vital part of this community. The SWOs are also important elements in this community. They organize various activities and supply important services with the goal of improving sex workers' lives.

4.20 Community organizing processes of Durjoy and Nari Mukti

Having analyzed the organizational activities of Durjoy and Nari Mukti, I present my findings below.

4.20.1 Activities and organizing processes of Durjoy. Durjoy assists sex workers to gain their release from vagabond centres without informing their relatives. Durjoy works with other NGOs in developing skills like driving, using computers, sewing and so forth. It helps to arrange the funeral services of deceased sex workers. This agency organizes press conferences on the topic of violence against sex workers. It organizes life-skills training and awareness-building for female sex workers who are also drug users. Durjoy refers these addicts to other organizations for treatment and rehabilitation. It also advocates for access to public schools for prostitutes' children. As Rehena mentioned, "Durjoy helped me secure my daughter's admission to school, otherwise I might have faced several problems since I am a prostitute" (A member of Durjoy, Dhaka, June, 2009).

Additionally, the executive members explained that Durjoy organizes advocacy meetings with the police department in order to motivate the local governmental officials to address sex workers' legal issues. Through these meetings, executive members are organized and enhanced their access to different services. Although the general members said that they were generally not welcomed at these meetings, they felt that all members should attend advocacy meetings in order to enhance their leadership and networking skills. As Monowara complained, "We are not invited to attend these meetings. Also, there is a lack of coordination between the executive members and us; we don't understand what some of the organizational activities are all about" (A member of Durjoy, Dhaka, June, 2009). In addition, Durjoy is trying to explore alternative sources of income for older sex workers and for the organization itself.

4.20.2 Durjoy's interaction with the consortium. I interviewed Matin and according to him, Durjoy is a key member of a consortium. The consortium was created in 2008 with eight like-minded organizations. Main activities of this consortium are to promote condom selling for safer sex practice, educate and organize sex workers to demand their rights, and conduct advocacy meetings with different GOs and NGOs to ensure prostitutes' human rights (Personal interview, Dhaka, June 9, 2009).

4.20.3 Durjoy's interaction with BAPS. The non-members of Durjoy explained that to avoid harassment when they are arrested by the police, they contacted Bangladesh AIDS Prevention Society (BAPS), another partner organization of Durjoy. Although BAPS and Durjoy are members of the same consortium, the members of BAPS were unable to tell me about the support system provided by Durjoy. This group discussion made it clear that non-members are not receiving as much cooperation from Durjoy as

they receive from BAPS of which they are members. As Shathi, a member of BAPS pointed out, "We just know that BAPS and Durjoy belong to the same consortium, which is working to ensure sex workers' human rights. However, members of Durjoy are not interested in sharing their organizing activities with us, and we are not clear about this group at all" (Personal interview, Dhaka, August, 2009).

4.20.4 Organizational challenges of Durjoy. Durjoy faces several obstacles in implementing its organizational activities. The executive members of Durjoy stated that the frequent transfer of police officers is an obstacle to maintaining a regular network with this department. They explained that as an SWO, Durjoy finds it difficult to participate in any policy level initiatives that work for prostitutes' social justice. Non-members argued that illiteracy among its members and a lack of funding are the main barriers that prevent Durjoy from implementing its programs. Durjoy also faces difficulties in coordinating street-based sex workers in order to collect their subscriptions.

Additionally, whenever one of Durjoy's donor-based projects ended, there was no transitional phase (or, as the SWO referred to it, no exit strategy) that allowed the SWO to plan for a new project. Without an exit strategy, all the organization and training that went into setting up the donor-based project simply collapsed. In expressing her concern, Shahanaz told me, "Without an exit strategy and a follow-up plan for project implementation, we lose the long-term benefits for our members" (The President of Durjoy, Dhaka, August, 2009).

4.20.5 Future Plans of Durjoy. Based on these difficulties, Durjoy has developed its own future plans in order to address sex workers' problems. The executive members of Durjoy explained that Durjoy tries to establish good governance and seek

members' active involvement in its operations. Durjoy also tries to be transparent in its organizational activities. For instance, Durjoy presents its budget at the general meetings so that all members can see it. This agency intends to strengthen market opportunities to ensure its wider social economy. It also seeks assistance from other NGOs to gain access to open markets in order to sell their handmade products and enhance their earnings. Also, Durjoy has set the following goals in order to achieve its organizational mission:

- To continue with its child care centres;

- To continue HIV/AIDS prevention programs;

- To arrange national level advocacy for sex workers;

- To start co-operative projects for financial sustainability;

- To develop a five-year strategic plan;

- To continue its DiC-based activities.

4.21 Drop-in-centers (DiC)

After finishing their work, street-based prostitutes have the opportunity to rest at NGO operated DiCs, which I explain below.

4.21.1 Background of DiCs. In response to the many problems encountered by street-based sex workers during the day, DiCs were established. The DiC concept was adopted in Bangladesh by the Global Funds to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (GFATM) program under HIV/AIDS project partners (CARE Bangladesh, 2002). The DiCs receive funds from the GFATM and the Bangladeshi government to work as information centres and shelters for sex workers. Some respondents explained that CARE SHAKTI and HIV projects first opened as satellite clinics for the sex work community.

4.21.2 Goals of DiCs. The purpose of opening these centres is to reach out to the high-risk HIV population, especially the female sex workers, in order to empower them through educational and support services. DiCs are set-up in the mainstream communities to deliver necessary services to sex workers. These clinics let the general public know that the DiC is an office and it is giving health services to poor sex workers and their children. DiCs received registration from the social service department as a community-based organization.

4.21.3 Activities at DiCs. DiCs provide space where sex workers can rest, sleep, and bathe from 9 am to 5 pm. The following services are also provided:

- Arrangements for IGAs and basic literacy training;

- Counselling, advocacy, and psychological support;

- Facilities for the sex worker, such as computer, cooking, and telephone services;

- Advocacy when dealing with the police to reduce the harassment of sex workers;

- Observance of different "days" by organizing rallies, meetings, and seminars;

- Facilitation of elections for Durjoy's executive committee;

- Medical treatment at a minimal cost and referral to International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research Bangladesh (ICDDRB) for tests for HIV and STDs.

4.21.4 Problems of DiCs. DiCs face the following difficulties:

- DiCs need more funding;

- DiCs often lack medical support;

- DiCs frequently change their locations due to local pressure;

- Rents are almost double the usual rate of renting houses in a community;

- Sex workers need better support than the DiCs can provide when dealing with

the police and *mastan* harassment;

- Sex workers need more services than the DiCs can provide, such as arranging meals, allowing sick persons to stay in guest rooms, and opening on weekends.

After analyzing the DiC-based organizational strategies of Durjoy, I analyzed Nari Mukti, in order to identify the ability of this SWO to fight stigma.

4.22 Community development processes of Nari Mukti

Below, I describe the community development activities, challenges, and the future plans of Nari Mukti for its brothel-based members.

4.22.1 Activities and organizing processes of Nari Mukti. This SWO works with about 750 households in the Tangail brothel. Through individual contact and small group discussions, the executive members try to address social problems. Nari Mukti arranges training for IGAs for sex workers. It has developed a strong link with the Social Welfare Department and received 20 sewing machines in order to enhance the members' IGAs.

4.22.2. Specific project activities. Besides its regular activities, Nari Mukti works directly with 350 families in order to implement a donor-funded project, *Protirodh* (in Bangla, *Protirodh* means protect). This project has been designed to advocate sex workers' human rights and create awareness of sex work issues among prostitutes and society. The *Prothirodh* project office is located outside the brothel. Staff and members of this project can go to its office outside the brothel, which provides a link between the brothel and mainstream society. This project has 10 staff members to implement its main activities: facilitating training and conducting advocacy meetings with the police department and local administration. The project has identified eight minors (girls who

were being sold) and sent them to their parents or to rehabilitation centres as per their wishes since they were being victimized by brokers (Information from my ethnographic field observations and informal discussions with members of Nari Mukti, Tangail, July, 2009).

4.22.3 Advocacy with the police department. The executive members complained that before establishing this agency, the police demanded money from sex workers who sold condoms. As Akhi said, "Sex workers were afraid of selling condoms, because they had to give a share to the police, and then they could not account for the money earned in selling condoms and had difficulty saving for themselves" (The President of Nari Mukti, Tangail, July, 2009). After the establishment of Nari Mukti, the executive members started advocacy meetings with the police authority, and the police stopped their extortion of sex workers' condom sales.

4.22.4 Awareness building programs. The general members of Nari Mukti who participated in my study explained to me that this organization implements different programs promoting awareness, such as a training seminar for sex workers to inform them about their basic rights. Nari Mukti has also sponsored some of the members' attendance at the national conference of sex workers. Nari Mukti has a cultural folk song group which is an organizing process to address sex workers' problems. This group performs cultural programs for different organizations, especially for the police department, to tell sex workers' life stories. By inviting the police to attend a dramatic presentation in which the sex workers enact a skit that represents alternative behaviours of the police (first the bad behaviour and then the more acceptable behaviour), Nari Mukti is mobilizing the police department to become more sensitized and respectful

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towards sex workers. Interestingly, some sex workers have received calls from neighbourhood women who were seeking rescue from domestic violence.

4.22.5 Organizational challenges of Nari Mukti. This SWO identifies various problems as barriers in addressing members' human rights concerns. Finding a suitable literacy program for its members is a major problem as they need education for their betterment. There is a lack of leadership skills to ensure Nari Mukti's institutional development. Leadership tends to be limited to the wealthier sex workers, who become elected as executive members. This means that other sex workers lack practice in leadership and democratic roles. For instance, Rina complained, "The powerful executive body is like a *sarderni*: it controls all organizational activities." We, who are not educated, are always dependent on our *babus* or the educated prostitutes." (A member of Nari Mukti, Tangail, July, 2009). However, the executive members explained that there is a lack of solidarity among many brothel-based sex workers.

Additionally, the study participants stated that organizational activities are aid dependent, and this donor-driven characteristic makes this organization less autonomous in addressing stigma. Because exit strategies for the donor-based projects are not worked out in advance, these projects are susceptible to sudden collapse. As Akhi explained:

> When the *Prothirodh* project was approved by the donor, we were
> unable to make a comprehensive proposal along with a well-planned
> exit strategy and follow-up from the project. Without an exit
> strategy for this project, we are afraid that continuing with the
> activities jeopardizes the sustainability of Nari Mukti. (Conversation
> with Akhi, the President of Nari Mukti, Tangail, July, 2009)

4.22.6 Future Plans of Nari Mukti. In order to address its problems, Nari Mukti has developed plans to improve the way it organizes its activities. It hopes to develop a concrete action plan to fight discrimination. Nari Mukti also tries to ensure organizational accountability and transparency of its financial matters. This agency wants to begin literacy programs in order to make certain that all of its members are capable of understanding different organizational issues. Nari Mukti plans to arrange more alternative income and rehabilitation options for elderly sex workers. It also wants to participate in any national level advocacy concerning sex workers' human rights.

Having presented the SWOs' activities, challenges, and future plans, below I explain the community development approaches of these agencies.

4.23 The community development approaches of the SWOs

These organizations follow specific community development approaches in order to achieve their organizational goals, such as peer-to-peer support, social networking, community empowerment, and social action.

4.23.1 Peer-to-peer approach. The SWOs use a peer-to-peer approach to deliver their organizational services. In general, "peer education" refers to the process of sharing information among members of a specific community for various purposes such as working to achieve positive health outcomes. According to Bleeker (2001), peer education's success lies in the passing on of information among individuals who identify with a particular culture. Peer educators can influence cultural norms within a specific group, like sex workers who are also drug users.

According to UNAIDS, there are positive arguments for a peer-based approach. It is cost-effective and accessible to peer educators of sensitive groups. This process helps a

community to reduce the transmission of the HIV virus by encouraging the members of the community to adopt safer practices. This approach creates an enabling environment to ensure behavioural change and encourages sex workers to make use of appropriate services that lessen the impact of AIDS (Sethi & Jana, 2003, pp. 47-50).

Besides advantages, there are also limitations to the peer education approach. The peer-to-peer approach is mainly designed to promote and protect the right to health services and enhance peers' knowledge; but in terms of achieving human rights, peer educators are not able to be catalysts for social change if SWOs lack strong support networks. These services have a high "social cost" in terms of revealing one's profession and exposing oneself or one's loved ones to stigma and arrest. To compensate for this reluctance, communities may need to offer services where sex workers live and work. Street-based sex workers can then learn about condom use while they are waiting for a client instead of going to clinics for education (Sethi & Jana, 2003, pp. 50-53).

4.23.2 Social networking approach. Social networking refers to building social capital or alliances between social organizations for achieving human rights. The executive members of Durjoy and Nari Mukti explained that they try to create social networking in order to guarantee their members receive social justice. However, since they are not welcomed by the mainstream community in their initiatives for community development, they are unable to create strong connections with other like-minded organizations. It is crucial for the SWOs to assist their members' empowerment by implementing their community development strategies.

4.23.3 Community empowerment approach. Both Durjoy and Nari Mukti try their best to follow a community empowerment approach for their development. By

implementing this approach, SWOs are able to enhance their organizational capacities to address the social problems of their members**.** This approach enables individuals and groups to act independently in their own interest and in the interest of the community by overcoming barriers (Ghose, Swendeman, George, & Chowdhury, 2008, p. 312). This could include, for instance, operating a DiC in a mainstream community that does not welcome them. This empowering process enables the building of a sense of self-worth among individuals and the community. It also improves individual self-perception and control over one's own life and actions.

Through networking with other organizations, members of the SWOs try to address various social issues involving their members. For instance, advocacy with the police department helps the SWOs to address the harassment faced by sex workers from *mastans.* However, not all sex workers are empowered equally. Rather, the executive committee members have greater decision-making power over their organizational activities than the general sex workers have, a trend that I identified in my field research.

Although sex workers are not always able to raise their voices, they try their best to empower themselves in order to improve their local well-being. Given that most of the sex workers are abused by the powerful and unable to challenge the ruling power, SWOs find it difficult to organize their members so that they can improve their living conditions. It is true that, to achieve democratic capacity building and social power, "learning, social action, and social participation" (Shragge, 2003, p. 42) are key elements.

By applying different approaches, I analyze sex workers' organizing processes for promoting social justice. In doing so, I consider the context and overall condition of the SWOs and their organizational issues.

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4.24 The meaning of organization and the SWOs

According to Mooney, Knox, and Schacht (2007), in general, an organization or an institution is a social structure made up of sociological elements like people. The authors suggest that, "An institution is an established and enduring pattern of social relationships" (p.5). SWOs are social organizations, relying on these social relationships. An organization is also defined by its elements. An organization's means of communication, sense of autonomy, and rules of action are important elements which can allow an organization to act collectively (Bendix, R., 1962).

In analyzing the SWOs' organizing structures, I found that their organizations are forms of solidarity and symbols of actions for the sex workers. Their organizational goals can be achieved through a coordinated division of labour. I observed that, in the SWOs, the organizational tasks are divided between executive and general members. When SWOs work through a collective plan of action with like-minded organizations, they are able to address social issues and effect changes. For example, if the SWOs work jointly with the SWNOB and protest in support of sex workers' rights they stand a better chance of achieving their common goals.

4.25 The SWNOB

I collected information about the SWNOB through my ethnographic field observations, informal discussions with the NGO and SWO staff, and my review of documents from the SWNOB. This data is vital for my study because, as I concluded from these informal discussions, a supportive relationship between this network and its member SWOs would go far in resolving many social issues.

4.25.1 Background of the SWNOB. The SWNOB was established in 2002 as a national network for sex workers in Bangladesh. Presently, there are 29 SWOs that belong to the SWNOB. The idea of the SWNOB was initiated as a result of donors' interest in forming an umbrella organization to negotiate with the government to protect sex workers' human rights. About 5,000 sex workers are affiliated with the SWNOB.

4.25.2 Goals of the SWNOB. The main goal of the SWNOB is to strengthen SWOs in order to eventually improve their members' capabilities and, thus, protect their basic rights. The coordinators support members of the SWNOB through organizational activities, such as planning projects and preparing budgets. Other goals of the SWNOB are to establish unity among SWOs in order to make sure sex workers' and their children's human rights are respected and to create a discrimination-free society where sex workers live with dignity.

4.25.3 Activities of the SWNOB. The SWNOB refers STD-infected people to clinics, hospitals, or ICDDRB to receive testing and treatment. Because of its limited power to deal with health services and HIV/AIDS, the SWNOB always seeks assistance before referring STD-infected people to different places. It has developed working relationships with some private TV channels in Bangladesh in order to increase the awareness of sex workers' rights, and it has worked on improving SWOs' organizational capacity for lobbying, negotiating, and organizing different training programs and seminars. The SWNOB does not have specific programs to address the HIV/AIDS issues, but in their different advocacy meetings, they discuss the impact of this disease on prostitutes' lives. Additionally, the SWNOB performs the activities listed below:

- The network facilitates elections within its member SWOs;

- It collects case studies of stigmatized sex workers and publishes these in the periodical journal *AMEDER KHATA*;

- The SWNOB has created a committee to initiate cultural awareness campaigns;

- The SWNOB has had some women released from vagabond centres, and it has arranged meetings with the authorities of vagabond centres to make the staff aware of prostitutes' rights so that sex workers would not be abused by the staff (Interviews with the staff of the SWNOB, Dhaka, August, 2009). However, the sex workers whom I interviewed did not feel that the aggressive behaviours by the staff of vagabond centres have changed for the better. As Lima said, "Although the SWNOB tries to make them aware of our issues, the staff seem to use their power as though they are the police and treat us as though we are criminals" (A BAPS member, Dhaka, June, 2009).

In my opinion, the management of shelters is more powerful than that of the SWNOB, and it is not an easy task for them to alter their behaviour and treat the women with respect. However, the SWNOB continues to arrange advocacy meetings with those in charge of the shelters to encourage them to treat prostitutes more humanely.

4.25.4 The SWNOB's relations with the SWOs. The SWNOB's relations with the SWOs are not strong, which creates great difficulties for the sex work community. For instance, a staff member of the SWNOB complained, "We are often not on the same page. When we try to share issues related to the sex work community, the executives of the SWOs underestimate our capacity to contribute towards helping them resolve problems" (A staff member of the SWNOB, Dhaka, August, 2009).

4.25.5 Problems of the SWNOB. Besides its lack of strong interaction with the SWOs and the vagabond shelters, the SWNOB identifies other difficulties in achieving its goals, which are as follows:

- There are funding constraints;

- The network needs stronger leadership within its member organizations;

- It requires help in writing proposals for funding opportunities;

- The SWNOB is not yet registered with the government;

- There is also a shortage of staff to deal with the policy issues at governmental levels in order to promote sex workers' social justice.

4.25.6 Future plans of the SWNOB. In order to address its various problems, the SWNOB has developed some future initiatives which include the following:

- It hopes to establish a legal registration status as an apex organization;

- It is trying to increase participation with parallel organizations;

- It is working on identifying the financial needs of SWOs and their members in order to strengthen their capacity for building alternative IGAs and finding sustainable income sources to avoid financial stress for SWOs and their members.

4.26 Reflections on community development issues

Based on the community organizing systems of Durjoy, Nari Mukti, and the SWNOB, I describe below my reflections on community development issues.

4.26.1 Membership issues. The interviews, group discussions, and field observations show that there is a lack of coordination among the consortium members of Durjoy, the SWNOB, and others; this situation urgently needs to be improved. The research participants stated that Durjoy organizes monthly coordination meetings and

distributes the minutes of the meetings to all consortium members. However, I realized

that neither the members nor the non-members were able to share in coordinating

activities of Durjoy and Nari Mukti that address sex workers' problems. For instance,

Monowara remarked, "If the executive members could share organizational matters with

all sex workers, we would be more aware of the issues involving our community. As it is,

many of us are in the dark" (A member of Durjoy, Dhaka, June, 2009). Moreover, I

learned through my interviews with the general members of Durjoy that they are not

satisfied with the executive body. General members thought that the executive committee

is the centre of the organizational power, but the constitution clearly states that general

members are the main source of power of Durjoy. General members told me that some

executive members are specifically benefiting from being employees and executives at

the same time. As Monowara argued:

> Executive members of Durjoy are receiving double the benefits that
>
> we receive. Being executives, they are getting honorariums and they
>
> are the ones who get to go abroad or participate in various advocacy
>
> meetings. Consequently, their power is increasing and we, the
>
> members, are losing out. (A member of Durjoy, August, 2009)

In my opinion, it is important for the SWOs to critically review the dissatisfaction

expressed by their members, since the main goal of community development is an

improved quality of life for the people. According to Frank & Smith, "Effective

community development results in mutual benefits and responsibility among community

members" (as cited in Shragge, 2003, p. 109). When executive and advisory board

members of the SWOs are unable to resolve members' problems, they are actually

incapable of organizing for real community development.

4.26.2 Roles of the advisory committee. There is dissatisfaction among staff and members of Durjoy on the role of the advisory committee. Some participants think that the advisory committee dominates Durjoy, and members are not able to make decisions without the approval of this committee. As a member of Durjoy pointed out, "The committee works as a patron and we are not able to challenge their decisions" (A member of Durjoy, Dhaka, August, 2009). However, my interviews did not confirm that Nari Mukti and the SWNOB have the same problems with their advisory committees.

4.26.3 Leadership and lack of knowledge on organizational issues. The executive members of Nari Mukti shared with me many of the SWO's successes; for example, Nari Mukti has established a liaison with the social welfare department and NGOs in order to challenge brothel closures. Unfortunately, neither the general members nor the non-members could describe the organizational activities of Nari Mukti. Since members and non-members of Nari Mukti live inside the brothel (where the office of Nari Mukti is situated), I thought they might be more aware of their group than the street-based sex workers are; however, this was not the case. Their lack of knowledge might be because most of the prostitutes are illiterate and lack leadership skills. As Shima complained, "We can't make ourselves leaders because we lack money, networking, and education" (A member of Nari Mukti, Tangail, July, 2009).

4.26.4 Issues of donor-based projects. It seems to me that both Durjoy and Nari Mukti focus on the targets set by their foreign donors rather than on targets that they set themselves. In general, the short-term projects are designed to achieve the donors' organizational goals or targets within a specific time frame. For instance, an HIV

prevention project offers a certain number of training sessions to sex workers and this project-focused activity becomes a primary object for the SWO staff. Hence, neither the staff nor the project participants have the ability to work beyond these specific activities. As Nilufa pointed out, "How can we address stigma surrounding sex work and AIDS when the *Prothirodh* project activities do not allow us to do so? The project will be finished soon, but fighting stigma is a long term initiative" (A member of Nari Mukti, Tangail, July, 2009). As a result, in their short-term projects, neither Durjoy nor Nari Mukti is able to organize its members to address long-standing issues, such as stigma.

4.26.5 Funding issues. Both of the SWOs look for funds to run their activities. They need more networking with NGOs and GOs. It is not possible for these SWOs alone to raise funds to work on a problem like stigma. Rather, it is the mutual responsibility of the state and NGOs to help them explore funding opportunities for their sustainable organizational development. More communication between the executive committees and the members would make it easier to disseminate organizational information and other issues such as HIV/AIDS-related programs. Shragge (2003) points to the fundraising issue as a fundamental problem for organizational development. It is a salient issue for the Bangladeshi SWOs since they acutely lack funds to meet their goals. Similarly, without funding, the SWNOB is unable to build strong networks among all SWOs in Bangladesh, and their goal to further social change is derailed. To achieve their organizational goals, they seek different kinds of capacity building assistance from different institutions.

4.26.6 The organizational capacity building processes. It is important to critically analyze the process of organizational capacity building processes to achieve

social change. The organizational capacity building system is different from the political democratic process. This capacity building system has an influential role in organizing a community group. For example, when SWOs are able to analyze their social status, they can explore the resources available to them and decide which best meet their needs. These participatory efforts can lead to their democratic development.

Additionally, community members must participate in a democratic system in order to establish three vital elements of the decision making process: "education, alliances, and mobilization" (Shragge, 2003, pp. 133-137). These are the core values of a democratic capacity building process. In relation to my field study, I found that the majority of sex workers lack the necessary mobility, alliances, and education to improve their status from its present terrible place in society to a respected position. Therefore, I agree with Shragge that these core values are essential to create positive social change.

4.26.7 The collective organizing process. SWOs' collective organizing processes can lead to immense improvement their members' lives. According to Rubin and Rubin, "Community organizing means bringing people together to combat shared problems and to increase their say in decisions that affect their lives" (as cited in Shragge, 2003, p. 41). This definition suggests that the SWOs might act collectively to thwart the common enemy, be it HIV/AIDS, human rights abuse. For example, the SWOs conduct advocacy meetings with the police department to address sex workers' human rights issues. However, according to my field observations, most of the members do not have access to these advocacy meetings. Although executive members of Durjoy and Nari Mukti participate in these meetings, the empowerment of sex workers is not happening uniformly. Consequently, most of the sex workers are not benefiting equally from their

organizations' activities. When participants are involved in community development, the strategy of advocacy will be implemented more effectively. In my opinion, it is important that members of SWOs organize and act jointly to claim their social rights as Shragge (2003) states, "In general, I believe that the process that leads to social change begins when large numbers of people act collectively in their own self-interest to promote economic and social justice" (p. 10).

     4.26.8 The feminist issues. Shragge discusses feminist movements and the way they fight oppression. He opines that feminist movements are strong tools in fighting patriarchal domination and fostering social justice (Shragge, 2003, p. 64). Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that organizational power does not depend only on a few women participating in the development process. More need to be active in the local and national decision making system to impact the struggle for social change. Although women are chairs of Nari Mukti and Durjoy, their limited organizational networking makes it difficult to challenge the negative perception the culture has of their members.

     Despite their limitations, sex workers still organize to challenge the government. As Chowdhury (2004) suggests, through SWOs' social action and organizing processes, sex workers can challenge the internal power structures in brothels and in street-based sex work (pp.10-14). To draw attention to their needs, sex workers attend meetings and demonstrations, tell their stories to the media, and organize rallies. These actions—the resistance on the part of their organization against the dominating powers— can be viewed as their social assets in order to achieve their organizational goals.

4.27 The major community development issues of the SWOs

     In the Table below, I have identified the main community development issues

and roles of Durjoy and Nari Mukti in addressing these issues.

Table 4.6

Community development issues and roles of the SWOs

Issues	*Roles of Durjoy and Nari Mukti*
Focusing on short-term activities, instead of long-term initiatives.	Both Durjoy and Nari Mukti lack of ability to implement long-term programs rather than short-term projects, which are designed by internal and external donors. Also, members are less aware or less motivated to work for organizations' long-term institutional development. Organizations are bound to focus on short term project activities. Their donors, on a short-term basis, have approved most of the projects of the SWOs. Hence, long-term development processes are hampered.
Lack of knowledge among members and non-members about organizations.	It is important to share the organizational mandates, visions, missions, and activities with all sex workers in order to strengthen organizational capacities. I found that neither Durjoy and Nari Mukti's advisory committees nor executive members have specific strategies to ensure that their organizational issues are being regularly discussed and understood by their members.
Peer-to-peer-approach	Peer-to-peer approach is good for addressing health issues. However, along with this approach, SWOs need to focus on capacity building and empowerment approaches to ensure members' social justice.
Lack of integration and coordination among the SWNOB and other SWOs/NGOs.	My ethnographic field observations indicate that the executive members of Durjoy do not have a good relationship with the SWNOB. Similarly, I observed that Nari Mukti's internal problems and its low position on in the hierarchy of SWOs means that it does not have a strong link with the SSS and with the SWNOB.
Governance and leadership issues	General members of Durjoy complained that there is a lack of coordination among general members and the executive members. The executive committee members play most of the vital roles in the organizational decision-making processes. General members argued that there is a lack of solidarity and trust among all members because of a lack of transparency and accountability over financial matters, such as the member subscriptions. Also, since sex workers are always on the move and do not come to the Durjoy office regularly, they are isolated from many organizational matters. General members felt that the executive members enjoy most of the organizational power for example, they decide when, where, and how organizational meetings would be held. In this case, general members are only informed about general proceedings, but they could not decide when these meetings should be held. However, executive members denied most of the members' complaints in the validation workshop that I organized after collecting data. They thought that the funding and illiteracy are the main obstacles to include all members in the organizational decision-making processes. They told me that many members are not educated enough to represent their project activities, and due to a shortage of funding it is difficult to trained them.

Compared to Durjoy, the general and executive members of Nari Mukti are well integrated. This is because they live within the same boundaries and talk to each other frequently. Moreover, the office is situated inside the brothel, where sex workers come regularly to share their problems. |
| The role of the state | The state ignores sex workers' basic rights. As a result, the SWOs face difficulties to implement programs in order to address their members' social issues. |

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Training	Both the SWOs identify the training needs of its members, such as the need for income generating activities (IGA). However, general members were not well-informed or confident about participating in training programs without ensuring market opportunities and networking to sell the products they learn to make.
Exploration of stable funds	Neither SWO has stable funding sources. They needed more funds to operate their organizational activities.
Revision of constitutions	Both organizations' constitutions needed to be reviewed and updated for the betterment and need of all sex workers. For instance, the tenure of the executive committee is for a 2-year-term, which is not sufficient to develop leadership skills.

In Table 4.6, I describe different types of organizational issues surrounding

Durjoy and Nari Mukti. Since the members of Nari Mukti live together in a brothel, they

are able to communicate more among themselves than the members of Durjoy can. I

present their organizational issues that hamper the smoothly implementation of their daily

activities, such as the lack of knowledge about issues that trouble its members. I also

discuss the issue of the way the state that ignores sex workers' several problems. Notably,

there are two legal differences between the prostitutes' status and the SWOs' status: first,

brothel-based sex work is legal but Nari Mukti has not yet received the legal status to

receive foreign donations. On the other hand, Durjoy has the legal status to receive

donations from abroad but has not obtained the legal recognition for street-based

prostitution. These two issues affect the SWOs' overall community development

initiatives. Therefore, both SWOs must continue to provide community organizing

strategies that strive to ensure their members' human rights.

In the following conclusion, I summarize the results of my research and the

discussion related to those results.

4.28 Conclusion

In sum, after following my research objectives, I have presented my study

findings and my reflections in three sections: stigma, human rights, and community

organizing processes. In some cases, the participant's experiences differ. For example, the executive members of Durjoy told me that they suffered less from stigmatization than the other members did. However, all have encountered some form of stigma for their profession, which is more intense because of or bound up with HIV/AIDS-related stigma as well.

In this chapter, I have described the participants' existing knowledge, practices, and perceptions of stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS and sex work. I also elaborated upon the reasons for and consequences of stigma in sex workers' lives. The sex workers I interviewed identified stigma as a culturally negative attitude towards them. Additionally, I have found that the negative attitudes of religious leaders, government officials, and health care professionals towards prostitutes add to their vulnerability in this environment. I learned that both sex workers and their children are deprived of basic rights, such as access to public schools or burial spaces. Unfortunately, sex workers are abused at many levels, from their families as well as the mainstream communities and even within the sex work community itself. For instance, when a new sex worker begins her profession as a street or brothel-based prostitute, sometimes her colleagues or her clients harbour suspicions about her HIV status and make life difficult for her. However, due to the social action by different human rights organizations, sex workers as well as their SWOs and affiliated NGOs are encountering less and less negativity in their society.

In this study, I have explored participants' knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS issues. I found that sex workers have access to training, discussions, meetings, and workshops related to HIV/AIDS and its prevention in order to enhance their knowledge on it. However, due to the negative views on sex work and HIV/AIDS, the participants'

knowledge is not appreciated by the public, especially by governmental officials, who often underestimate prostitutes. Most of the respondents correctly answered my questions about the mode of transmission of this disease, its preventive measures, and its consequences. However, many of them were unable to explain clearly the sources for treatment and its cost. The SWOs have proven to be an effective communication tool in disseminating AIDS related information to clients and to the police. More study is needed to explore the role of the Bangladeshi media in disseminating HIV/AIDS information.

The executive members of both Durjoy and Nari Mukti told me that they were working to ensure that sex workers attained human rights. For example, they argued that sex workers' children now have greater access to public schools than before. However, the general members and non-members thought that their human rights are still violated because they lack access to services that should be available to them. Participants in my study believed that all prostitutes need to be organized by receiving support from the government, NGOs, and the SWNOB.

Additionally, I have explained the background, activities, challenges, and the future plans of Durjoy and Nari Mukti. I have described the background of drop-in-centers (DiC) and the brothel in order to make their roles understood. At the same time, I have explained the power exerted inside and outside the brothel. However, I did not describe the power relations in DiCs since street-based sex workers do not live in DiCs and they do not have the same hierarchy that the brothel has. I have elaborated on the basic socio-demographic information of individual and focus group participants.

I also have described the different community organizing approaches of Durjoy and Nari Mukti. These approaches include peer education, community empowerment,

and social networking. The SWOs use these approaches in order to address sex workers problems and make them empowered. Also, I have analyzed the evolution, actions, and roles of the SWNOB in assisting the SWOs to fight injustice towards their members.

Finally, after presenting the findings of each section, I have presented my reflections and critical analysis. I have explained diagrams, figures, and tables to help readers understand different aspects related to stigma and human rights. However, in this chapter, I did not present recommendations to enhance the SWOs organizational capacity to fight stigma. In my last chapter, I will present my recommendations in order to address my third research focus question: what would be the best strategies to ensure sex workers' human rights are met? I hope these recommendations will be useful in developing effective organizational strategies for Durjoy and Nari Mukti to address stigma and ensure their members receive social justice.

Conclusion

This conclusion is divided into two parts: a summary of the first four chapters of my thesis, and recommendations that I gathered from research participants as well as some of my own. I also describe possible implementation strategies for these recommendations for the two SWOs, their partner NGOs, and the government of Bangladesh.

Networking with the governmental and non-governmental organizations is a milestone in sex workers' struggle against the violation of their human rights. At the same time, different policy level agendas of the state, NGOs, and donors are essential to address marginalized groups' social problems. Indeed, without a policy-level initiative to address sex work and HIV/AIDS issues, it will be difficult to create progressive social change. In the future, I may work intensively with the SWOs and their local partners in order to develop a concrete plan of action from the results of this study. However, I mentioned earlier in my first chapter that if I am able to obtain funding, I will translate all of the suggestions into Bangla and then share them with the appropriate governmental agencies, NGOs, and the SWOs so that they can use these suggestions to further their organizational development.

Since I have conducted my fieldwork with street and brothel-based sex workers, their vulnerable situations are important to me. However, before I continue, it is essential to keep in mind that Bangladesh is a Muslim country, where religion plays an important role in people's lives. In this context, analyzing sex work from only a western or pro-feminist perspective might not work. It might be more appropriate to examine the traditional Bangladeshi culture through the wider lens of universal human rights. Because

of the present socio-economic conditions of Bangladeshi sex workers and their stigmatized situations, exploring the best possible community organizing strategies to address their unique social problems should be an urgent priority of the authorities.

The summary of the first four chapters

The first chapter of this research consists of the introduction and the problem statement. In this section, I describe the context in which the social stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS and sex work occurs in Bangladesh. I examine how sex workers' human rights are violated and how Durjoy and Nari Mukti are organizing to address their members' problems. I also explain what women's positions are and poverty issues in general. Moreover, I elaborate upon the roles of the NGOs that act as allies of the SWOs. In addition, I describe the multifarious roles of the SWNOB as an organization that includes many SWOS, including Durjoy and Nari Mukti.

The literature review is the second chapter of this thesis. In this part, I review the scholarly works related to my topics of interest: stigma, sex work, HIV/AIDS, human rights, and community development issues. I also analyze, criticize, and synthesize different scholars' views and research work. Furthermore, I identify the similarities between the human rights organizations' reports regarding abusive behaviours by the Indian and Bangladeshi police towards sex workers. I review a book by Shragge (2003), in order to understand and compare the community organizing processes of the SWOs and his suggested development strategies for the improvement of grassroots organizations.

Advocates for sex workers' human rights address the issues of stigmatization. They argue that sex work and HIV/AIDS issues are viewed negatively, and thus, the

social activists, community organizations, and all other relevant individuals need to be united to fight stigma. Many scholars opine that although in Bangladesh the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is low, there is still a gap in knowledge among the populace. This reflects the urgent need to analyse these topics in order to fill in these gaps (Azim et al., 2006).

In the methodology chapter, I describe the research data collection and analysis procedures. I explain the differences between methods and methodology. I used the qualitative data analysis and content analysis methods in order to collect and analyze the field data. In this chapter, I explain various research approaches and their usefulness for my thesis. For instance, I describe why and how I used the participatory action research model and some aspects of the feminist approach. I describe the methods of my data collection through focus groups, individual interviews, and ethnographic field observations.

Finally, in the results and discussions chapter, I add my reflections on each of the findings. Here, I presented participants' basic socio-demographic information in order to describe their living conditions. I also describe the stigmatized experiences of PLWHAs. In addition, I discuss the overall organizational status and activities of the SWNOB and its interaction with the SWOs. Similarly, I describe the ways that Durjoy, Nari Mukti, and the SWNOB are organized and the various challenges that they face in implementing their organizational activities. Furthermore, I describe the sources, consequences, and demonstrations of stigma attached to the sex trade and HIV/AIDS. Finally, I examine how the SWOs act to address discrimination against their members.

In this conclusion, I outline two different categories of recommendations: first, the participants' wishes or expectations from this research and second, my own

recommendations. I critically review sex workers' expectations from this research and ponder whether they are feasible or not. I must be critical and practical, examining all recommendations in order to offer possible further directions for their implementation. I avoid presenting duplicate opinions from group or individual interviews. Below I describe recommendations derived from different individual and group interviews and my own, as well as possible implementation strategies.

5.1 Recommendations about HIV/AIDS issues arising from DiC group discussions

The street-based prostitutes provided their suggestions for addressing the HIV/AIDS issues for their own organizations, NGOs, and GOs.

5.1.1 Awareness-building campaigns. NGOs, GOs, SWOs, and the SWNOB need to develop awareness-building campaigns and social movements in order to motivate clients to use condoms, to promote safer sex, and to prevent the spread of AIDS. They argued that the local health care professionals should be involved in these activities by increasing their services for marginalized groups.

5.1.2 Roles of the media. Participants thought that the media should take an active and positive role in disseminating accurate information on HIV/AIDS.

5.1.3 Dialogues and advocacy. They thought that it is vital to continue discussion, advocacy, and dialogue between the sex work community and the public through seminars, workshops, and a peer-educational approach organized by NGOs.

5.2 Reflections and possible ways to implement recommendations

I think that in order to motivate people, especially the media and local health care professionals, the SWOs and their partners should increase their advocacy meetings with the public, the media, and the police department. The SWOs also need to critically

evaluate their professional relationship with the SWNOB in order to work together to motivate people. I found the alliance between these two groups to be weak.

Since the SWNOB is not yet registered, it is a priority for the sex work community to strive harder to obtain legal status. I gathered from my field observations that the name of this network creates a cultural barrier to receiving legal status. For this reason, the SWNOB should consider changing its current name. For example, instead of using sex work-related names, it could identify itself as a network for the vulnerable (without changing its mandate) in order to avoid complications in obtaining legal status.

5.3 Recommendations about HIV/AIDS issues arising from the brothel focus group discussions

Like the street-based sex workers, the brothel-based prostitutes offered their recommendations to address the HIV/AIDS issues:

5.3.1 Dissemination of the HIV/AIDS information. The brothel-based participants argued that Nari Mukti should create more education and counselling groups, as was done with the *Prothrirodh* project, in order to motivate *babus* (sex workers' lovers), *sardernis* (madams) and others to change their behaviour by treating sex workers with more respect. The SWO should also disseminate information related to HIV/AIDS awareness in all of its group meetings.

5.3.2 Inclusion of the non-members. The participants thought that Nari Mukti should include non-members in its organizational activities in order to provide more training and information sharing on HIV/AIDS issues.

5.3.3 Evaluation of the advertizing strategies. The group participants told me that donors and NGOs should evaluate advertising strategies on AIDS in order to remove

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misconceptions surrounding the disease. This includes the view that AIDS necessarily brings death and that the brothel is the place for transmission of the HIV virus.

5.3.4 Roles of the cultural team. Focus group participants thought that the life-skits and folk songs by the cultural team of Nari Mukti might play an important role in fighting stigma.

5.4 Reflections and possible ways to implement recommendations

In terms of the recommendations of 5.3.1 and 5.3.2, Nari Mukti cannot include non-members in its *Prothirodh* project activities. However, according to its constitution, Nari Mukti accepts any sex worker as a member. Importantly, executive members can increase their organizational sharing strategies with all brothel-based sex workers. For instance, they can invite all brothel-based sex workers to participate in Nari Mukti's comprehensive type of organizational activities, such as large group discussions on violence against prostitutes. Moreover, by welcoming non-members to attend meetings that deal with sex workers' issues, the executives can develop a closer relationship with them and encourage them to join the SWOs.

Additionally, in order to evaluate public education strategies regarding HIV/AIDS (recommendation 5.3.3), the Ministry of Health and Information could take initiatives to organize round table discussions, seminars, and information sessions to gather ideas or suggestions from different groups. Armed with knowledge, it could then make these messages more culturally acceptable and free from misconceptions. For example, instead of focusing on both the sex and HIV issues together, it might be a better idea to educate the public on other modes of HIV/AIDS transmission, such as the use of used needles. This might be more beneficial than always linking the transmission of the HIV/AIDS

virus with sex work. However, participants told me that the HIV/AIDS-related message is clearer because those NGOs that work in partnership with the SWOs have focused on these issues more than before the creation of these organizations. The group needs to recognize sex workers' need for health services and do what they can to ensure that they have access to them.

5.5 Recommendations about HIV/AIDS issues arising from individuals at DiCs

5.5.1 Need for more advertising. The individual interviewees suggested that there be more banners, posters, signboards, billboards, and leaflets bearing HIV/AIDS messages and pictures on roads, buses, and launch terminals.

5.5.2 Inclusion of more information recipients. They also recommended that in order to widely disseminate information to promote community awareness, couples, rural and urban communities, and so forth should be targeted as information recipients.

5.5.3 Cost of condoms. Participants also argued that condoms should be free or sold at very low prices to all sex workers so they can offer them to their clients.

5.6 Reflections and possible ways to implement recommendations

Various socio-cultural programs such as life-skits, folk songs, and traditional dances can be used as tools to make people aware of the stigma issues. However, since Bangladesh is a predominantly Muslim country, before launching any campaign dealing with a sensitive topic, it is essential to establish strong links with religious leaders and educate them in order to obtain their support. Also, since the SWOs have a shortage of funds, they should appeal to the NGOs for help in covering these advertizing costs.

In addition, the SWOs cannot afford to supply free or low cost condoms to clients. Rather, a partnership should be developed between NGOs and other organizations to share resources. Then condoms can be obtained at a low cost, and the collaboration between NGOs and GOs can create a supportive environment for these groups.

5.7 Recommendations about taking actions against stigma related to HIV/AIDS arising from group discussions at DiCs

5.7.1 Strengthen networking. The executive members of Durjoy felt that this organization needs to strengthen its network through attending different advocacy meetings, forums, and special events in order to fight stigma.

5.7.2 Counselling for government officials and police. The non-members pointed out that there should be a law against the police having sex without paying for it, which they now do frequently. The participants argued that it was not right for the police to demand free sex from prostitutes. They also told me that the state should take the initiative in changing behaviour by mandating counselling for government officials and for the police so that they can treat prostitutes properly. The participants told me that these social issues need to be critically evaluated by the proper authority of the state.

5.7.3 Safe rehabilitation programs. Some members opined that they were not interested in continuing sex work if they have to deal with various social problems, such as the power relations between sex workers and other parties. Rather, some prostitutes wanted alternative employment, which would redeem them in the eyes of mainstream society. They complained that, although several people showed interest in working to rehabilitate them, there was a lack of harmony among different groups in implementing

their projects. They felt that GOs and NGOs should work together to ensure the proper implementation of prostitutes' rehabilitation programs.

5.7.4 Need for more support from Durjoy. Some of the members and non-members of Durjoy complained that sometimes they did not receive support from their organization when the police and *mastans* abused them. As Monwara stated, "It is normal that we are beaten frequently. Police rape us and consider us as carriers of the HIV virus because we are not organized to fight powerful people, the police feel they can abuse us with impunity" (A member of Durjoy, Dhaka, June, 2009). The participants in my research emphasized their conviction that Durjoy must be more active in addressing its members' harassment by the police and the *mastans*.

5.8 Reflections and possible ways to implement recommendations

The executive and the advisory members should be more critical in evaluating organizational activities and should explore further possibilities to help Durjoy's members when the police and *mastans* assault them. However, the organization's open dialogue with the police department and all members' participation is a useful strategy to address stigma, but all members must be allowed to participate. I found from this study that not all members are welcomed to attend these meetings in order to familiarize themselves with the police department. With the participation of all members, the police will be more respectful towards them. The sex workers' leadership skills will be increased because of dealing with these powerful authorities without fear.

In terms of governmental initiatives to change the negative attitudes of the police and the public, it is not easy for the government to provide legal recognition for this profession. In fact, I found from my study that many NGO workers and the public lack

sympathy towards sex trade workers. People, especially women, are resentful of female prostitutes because they are afraid that their male partners or relatives go to sex workers. More research is needed to identify these psychosocial behavioural problems in order to reduce social injustice towards prostitutes at different levels.

I found from my research that some sex workers need to find alternative work in order to get rid of various social problems, such as abuse by *mastans*. However, my project indicates that rehabilitation and obtaining other work is not easy for them. Therefore, it is the duty of the government to create safe rehabilitation programs for these women, like its programs for other under-privileged groups. When sex workers go to public places, they are often treated with distain or snubbed when they are recognised. If the state, along with human rights organizations, starts to discuss these sensitive topics more, the situation might be improved. In this context, education will be the best tool to change people's minds. In the future, as Bangladesh's literacy rate rises (currently, it is around 50%), the situation should improve (Bangladesh UN data, 2009).

5.9 Recommendation about taking actions against stigma-related to sex work arising from group discussions at the brothel

5.9.1 Legality of sex work. Participants recommended that the government should recognize sex work as a legal profession. They believed that there is a strong need for building linkages between the SWNOB and its member organizations in order to motivate the government to develop pro-active policies. These initiatives would give prostitutes' access to public services, stop any brothel eviction, and ensure sex workers' security.

5.10 Reflections and possible ways to implement the recommendation

I already mentioned that it would take time to give legal recognition for the street-based prostitution because of the social system in Bangladesh. However, many sex workers explained that since they provide services, many males have the option to have sex with them. Prostitutes strongly believed that, if there were no sex workers, social insecurity and violence towards women in general would be doubled.

5.11 Recommendations about the best strategies to achieve sex workers' human rights arising from group discussions at DiCs and the brothel

5.11.1 Building networks. Participants pointed out that there is a need to build strong networks with policy makers, local government representatives, and the Members of Parliament in order to inform them about sex workers' vulnerable conditions.

5.11.2 Project visits by the government officials. Respondents expressed a desire that Durjoy invite government officials to visit their different projects. By observing sex workers' organizing systems and their positions, the government officials might become sympathetic to prostitutes. In addition, these officials might show greater respect for sex workers at community workshops or meetings when sex workers attempt to participate in talks.

5.11.3 Building partnerships. Durjoy and BAPS members argued that there should be strong links among the SWNOB, NGOs, the local government, and health departments. Through this partnership, powerful authorities might provide more health services to marginalized groups. Thus, prostitutes' health rights would be achieved.

5.11.4 More campaigns. All participants suggested that organizational activities, such as campaigns related to social justice for sex workers, could help in establishing prostitutes' rights.

5.11.5 More support for girls' education. Participants thought that the government should provide more support for girls' education in order to ensure employment opportunities for women. They believed that their children's access to public schools and a strong educational base for their daughters could reduce social problems.

5.11.6 Children's birth registration certificate. Respondents argued that their children should have birth registration rights. They felt insulted by the law that denies birth registration rights to children whose fathers' names are unknown. Without a birth certificate, sex workers face problems when trying to register their children at the public schools.

5.11.7 Right to attend social gatherings. Sex workers claimed that they should have the right to go to open markets and attend social gatherings. They feel that their rights are trampled upon when they are not allowed access to these kinds of social gatherings and public places.

5.12 Reflections and possible ways to implement recommendations

Neither the SWNOB nor the SWOs have access to policy makers who can advocate for social justice for sex workers. Foreign donors could address these issues before providing funds to NGOs or GOs for projects that fight for human rights. Donors should insist that there be periodical meetings between the government and SWOs before and during the implementation of human rights projects. Indeed, I found that GOs and NGOs value foreign donors since they receive funds from them. Therefore, donors can

recommend regular meetings among sex workers (project participants), NGOs, and GOs. As a result, coordination among project stakeholders might be improved. By sitting with these decision makers, sex workers increase accessibility at the policy level and are able to discuss their problems. This strategy can be helpful in developing a closer relationship between SWOs and the state. Similarly, if the donors suggest that the government work closely with these marginalized groups, government strategies for monitoring projects involving the vulnerable will be enhanced.

Additionally, in order to launch campaigns advocating sex workers' basic rights, there is a need for strong partnership and coordination between organizations working for the same cause. Partner organizations should have mutually agreed-upon terms and conditions. This will help ensure their success and avoid duplication which in turn maximises the aid being given to the sex workers.

Since the female literacy rate is less than that of males in Bangladesh, the government should focus on this issue more critically and enhance female access to education (The female literacy rate is 43%, compared to 54% for men according to UNESCO report, 2008). If sex workers' children have access to public schools, this group's social status and future prospects will be improved. However, when sex workers' mobility is restricted, they are ultimately excluded from initiatives for development.

Although brothel-based sex work is legal in Bangladesh, when political leaders have financially invested in brothels, conflicting parties may instigate raids on an opponent's brothel, often leading to violations of sex workers' rights (Social Initiatives, 2003). Participants in my study pointed out that, some powerful political leaders have invested financially in brothels and use the income to cover their election campaign costs.

They use their power to thwart the eviction of the brothels under their control. Sometimes, though, a political leader instigates a raid on an opponent's brothel, disrupting the residents' lives and violating their rights (Social Initiatives, 2003). The state should investigate the matter and find a solution to the opposing groups with vested interests that disrupt the lives of those in the brothels.

5.13 Recommendations about the best strategies for dealing with organizational challenges arising from group discussions at DiCs

5.13.1 Strengthening the organizational capacity. The executive members contended that continuing advocacy, dialogue between different stakeholders, and exchange with other grass root organizations are vital tools in strengthening the organizational capacity of the SWOs.

5.13.2 Meetings on Fridays. The non-members of the SWOs told me that meetings with sex workers should be switched to Fridays so that more sex workers would be able to attend them.

5.13.3 Opening DiCs at night. Participants argued that DiCs should be open at night to lessen the dangers they face at night. This would allow them to drop in if they have emergencies or if any problems should arise while they are working, which they do primarily at night.

5.13.4 Obtaining new IDs. Some participants claimed that their national ID cards did not work or were lost. In this case, the SWOs must help their members obtain new identity documents.

5.13.5 Ensuring good governance. Many participants contended that in order to enhance the organizational capacity of the SWOs, good governance, transparency, and accountability, especially at the executive level, are pre-requisites.

5.13.6 Implementing more literacy programs. Participants claimed that literacy programs should be promoted, and that the SWOs' constitutions should be updated in order to address their organizational problems.

5.14 Reflections and possible ways to implement recommendations

Since Fridays are counted as part of the weekend, it would not be feasible for the SWOs to work on this day and address sex workers' problems. Similarly, DiCs are not in a position to be open at night, since the SWOs have limited organizational capacity, and already invest considerable effort in implementing their project activities.

In terms of good governance of these organizations, the SWOs have already taken some initiatives, like sharing their budget in the annual general meetings. Their donors should critically review issues concerning good governance in order to assist them in making organizational plans of action to address their difficulties. Unfortunately, the sex workers' low literacy rates challenges their ability to monitor their organizations and ensure accountability. Consequently, it behoves the organization to monitor itself.

In addition, their partners and stakeholders should review SWOs' financial records to see if they are maintaining complete and accurate accounting. Similarly, both SWOs need to decentralize their activities. For example, they require flexible organizational strategies in order to provide equal opportunity for all members to enhance their leadership skills. The executive members of the SWOs, especially Durjoy, need to have stronger relationships with their members. Finally, I found from my data that there

is tension between staff and members of the SWOs because of their different socio-economic status. It would be helpful for the SWOs to hire an institutional development specialist, who could explore the roots of the tension and resolve the internal conflicts.

5.15 Recommendation about the best strategies for dealing with organizational challenges arising from group discussions at the brothel

5.15.1 Long-term project. The executive members of Durjoy and Nari Mukti thought that the SWOs need to reduce their dependency on short-term aid-based projects. These projects are not effective foundation for long-term sustainable development of the SWOs. Consequently, they think they should explore diverse options. For example, one of the sex workers suggested the SWOs should think about feasible market opportunities for income generation, such as the sale of goods made by sex workers. An increase in income might encourage more members to establish savings plans. The participants proposed the development of a cooperative savings plan to which all sex workers could contribute. They could develop secured income-generating investment funds.

5.16 Reflections and possible ways to implement recommendations

I agree with the above suggestions. I found from my fieldwork that the SWOs need to formulate long-term plans for sustainable organizational development. Otherwise, they will be dependent on short-term donor-based projects and will not be capable of addressing various organizational challenges. In addition, the SWOs need to be able to seek out new sources of funding or new means of generating income so that as one project finishes, another can be ready to start. Then the training and gains that resulted from the first project are not lost, and the participants are not abandoned before they can reap the benefits of their efforts.

Additionally, without ensuring market accessibility or critically assessing the supply and demand of market products, many forms of training will not be useful for prostitutes. It is also important to consider setting up rehabilitative programs that allow sex workers to learn traditional skills like sewing. However, the SWOs must also keep in mind that sometimes stigma is associated with certain traditional crafts done at the hands of sex workers. For example, in Bangladesh, many women sell traditionally sewn products; given the option, most members of the public would not choose to buy these from sex workers. By contrast, training in baking traditional cakes has been more successful, and several sex workers have suggested that this craft should be supported as a rehabilitation tool. Hence, a special effort is needed to ensure links to the market and to support small entrepreneurship efforts before offering training to these groups.

5.17 Recommendations about the best strategies for dealing with organizational challenges arising from individual interviews

5.17.1 Roles of Durjoy. Individual participants contended that the SWOs need to increase their initiatives to individually contact street-based members of Durjoy in order to collect their subscriptions and savings.

5.17.2 Group management strategies. Participants believed that small group meetings with members would be more effective than large group meetings, and would help to improve their communication skills and awareness of different issues.

5.17.3 The child care centre. Durjoy's individual participants felt strongly about continuing the child care centre. They thought that this day care facility is essential for street-based sex workers so they can do their work without worrying about their children's safety.

5.18 Reflections and possible ways to implement recommendations

Sex workers can use DiCs as an effective forum for learning more about human rights issues and collaborating in their common fight. DiCs for sex workers could be renamed; for instance, "Clinics for disadvantaged women and children," which would produce a more positive image amongst the wider community.

It is difficult for DiCs to provide extra support as the sex workers asked because both funding and networking are inadequate. Because these centres work for sex workers, they should try to work with the local community health service centres to receive better access to community services. For instance, if the DiCs paid rent as low as the rent paid by community housing, they would be able to budget their funds more efficiently and increase their support for other services.

5.19 Recommendations to address HIV/AIDS-related stigma made for the governmental and non-governmental organizations

Below I explain some of my own suggestions to address sex workers' problems. These recommendations are related to prostitutes' marginalized positions in Bangladesh and are presented for the consideration of the state, the affiliated NGOs, and the SWOs.

5.20 Recommendations to address HIV/AIDS-related stigma made for the governmental organizations

5.20.1 Policy for HIV/AIDS testing. When people immigrate to Bangladesh they are not required to take an HIV test (UNGASS, 2008, p. 35). The lack of this procedure can increase the rate of transmission in the country. For this reason, the Ministries of Health and Foreign Affairs should consider developing a policy that mandates testing for new arrivals entering Bangladesh.

5.20.2 Policy for dealing with the migration issues. When Bangladeshi migrant workers go abroad, they often lack HIV/AIDS-related information. Consequently, many workers do not practice safe sex and thereby make themselves susceptible to infection (Ethnographic interview with a PLWHA at HASAB, Dhaka, August, 2009). It should be the responsibility of the Ministries of Health and Labour to arrange information sessions in order to raise the workers' awareness before migration.

Additionally, when a Bangladeshi is identified as HIV positive while working in another country, he or she is often humiliated by the host country and deported (Interview with a PLWHA at HASAB, Dhaka, August, 2009). This approach creates further barriers for this person to smoothly reintegrate into Bangladeshi society. Since people often do not understand the mode of transmission of the HIV virus, they sometimes ostracize the person who has been returned to Bangladesh. Thus, various problems arise relevant to his or her social position.

The government can take steps to protect migrant workers while they work abroad if it establishes a memorandum of understanding with foreign countries who seek to hire workers from Bangladesh. Such an understanding could mean that foreign governments agree that, should Bangladeshi citizens develop HIV/AIDS while working in their countries, they will be treated humanely and given the time they need to prepare for their return to Bangladesh. An international policy is urgently required so that deportation cases due to HIV are handled without violating people's human rights.

In addition, Bangladesh needs to develop a policy to protect and promote PLWHAs' human rights at home as well as abroad. Unfortunately, there is no law to protect the rights of PLWHAs in Bangladesh, whereas India already has developed

legislation to protect them (*Prothom Alo*, 2009). If Bangladesh had a policy of non-discrimination, deported individuals could return with dignity and be treated respectfully by the public. Also, the affiliated organizations that deal with migrant workers should properly inform migrant workers about HIV/AIDS before their departure.

While conducting my ethnographic field observations at the brothel and DiCs, I found that in Bangladeshi society, people are not open about discussing sex and AIDS issues. In order to enhance people's knowledge, AIDS education material should be posted in prominent places and discussed in cinemas and on different TV programs. Also, information related to HIV/AIDS and sex work should be published through the national nutrition campaigns and through sanitation and immunization programs. Generally, a large number of people attend these activities and would be a great platform to educate the public, especially marginalized women.

5.20.3 Policy for school curricula. In Bangladesh, school curricula include HIV/AIDS-related topics. However, schools' resources are insufficient to educate rural people about these sensitive topics. Therefore, it is necessary that the state take action to include and fund the exploration of culturally sensitive mediums for these topics in the schools in order to increase its citizens' awareness. The government's Ministries of Health, Education, and Information need to increase their budget allocations for an effective widespread campaign and there should be a concerted commitment to implement these measures.

5.20.4 Capacity enhancing for field level workers. In Bangladeshi rural areas, many village women inquire about different health issues when they visit health clinics or when health workers visit their homes. If the health workers are properly trained, they

can share information about HIV/AIDS with the village women. Through this sharing, rural women can enhance their knowledge on HIV/AIDS and other topics considered taboo. Therefore, the state should take the initiative to train field workers, such as health and social workers, to teach village women about the HIV/AIDS virus.

5.20.5 Capacity enhancing for village defence party and infrastructure maintenance group. Bangladeshi villages have local security forces or defence parties, as well as an arm of the local government that is responsible for infrastructure maintenance. The latter group employs more than 64,000 women throughout the country (The Bangladesh local government initiatives, 2008). These human resources can be strong vehicles for increasing awareness about HIV/AIDS issues if all the women are informed about them as a part of their general training. They could, in turn, share this information with their families, resulting in a large-scale increase in awareness.

5.21 Recommendations to address human rights of sex workers made for the governmental organizations

5.21.1 Training for the law enforcement agency. Since the police frequently abuse sex workers, the state needs to vigorously address this issue. The government should mandate training, for new police recruits, on the respect of human rights for all citizens, especially for the marginalized groups. If the police become sympathetic towards sex workers, *mastans* and other offenders might reduce their abusive behaviour.

5.21.2 Training for the staff of government-run shelters. Sex workers are frequently abused in government operated shelters (Human Rights Watch, 2006). As with the police department, the state should investigate these allegations and take action against abusers in order to ensure sex workers' security. The government should also

initiate training regarding human rights of marginalized people in order to sensitize its staff.

5.21.3 Accessing government-run safety net programs. Article 10 of the Bangladeshi constitution states that all citizens should have equal rights irrespective of colour, race, caste, and sex (The Constitution of Bangladesh). However, in reality this article is not enforced when it comes to sex workers' human rights. For example, sex workers lack access to government safety net programs. When the state refuses to include prostitutes in these services, their basic rights are violated and the above article is ignored. When safety net programs are created for disadvantaged groups, a special quota system for sex workers to get these services could be implemented.

5.21.4 Sensitizing religious leaders. Religious leaders are usually against the sex trade and encourage the public to abuse prostitutes. The state should organize more training in conjunction with the Islamic Foundation (a Bangladeshi organization) to sensitize leaders. When leaders become aware of the human rights of sex workers, they are more likely to encourage the people to respect prostitutes as citizens. Sensitizing religious leaders would minimize many threats of brothel closures.

5.21.5 Ensuring the burial rights of sex workers. Even though prostitutes have the right to be buried when they die, this right is often ignored. The state should deal with this issue and ensure they have proper burials. Some NGOs and the SWNOB have already addressed this issue and have received some land for prostitutes' burial. There is still a need by the state for further action to widely implement this right.

5.21.6 Ensuring children's rights. It is crucial for the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs to ensure that the children of sex workers are given birth registration

services, in keeping with the laws enshrined in the Convention of the Rights of the Child, 1979 (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

5.22 Recommendations to address community development issues made for the governmental organizations

The government needs to ensure sex workers' human rights in order to reduce the stigma related to HIV/AIDS; it needs to establish policies that help the SWOs implement community development processes.

5.23 Recommendations to address the HIV/AIDS issues made for the non-governmental organizations

5.23.1 Facilitating group discussions. Generally, village women in Bangladesh have few opportunities to congregate in the absence of men and feel free to discuss taboo issues. However, there are many religious or educational women's groups that discuss different social and religious issues. Among such groups, NGO staff can facilitate discussions on sensitive topics related to sex or AIDS in order to enhance women's knowledge.

5.23.2 Facilitating group discussions by Grameen Bank. A large number of women receive micro-credit support from NGOs, especially from the Grameen Bank. Through its micro-credit programs, the Grameen Bank has a large number of borrowers (8.32 million) of whom 97% are women (Grameen Bank, 2010). Grameen Bank can develop a special module on HIV/AIDS in order to enhance their members' knowledge on this topic. This could be an opportunity for the institute to include discussions on HIV/AIDS issues as a part of the general educational aspect of their regular loan programs.

5.23.3 Condom selling as a preventive tool for HIV/AIDS. Nari Mukti and
Durjoy give their members specific condom selling targets in order to reach one of their
goals of marketing condoms to sex workers and their clients. The SWO members found it
difficult to meet these targets. In my opinion, the SWOs need to critically review this
condom selling issue and suggest their donors provide low cost condoms in order to make
them accessible to low income clients. Free condoms might be better than low cost ones
because sex workers felt burdened by these targets.

5.24 Recommendations to address human rights of sex workers made for the non-governmental organizations

     5.24.1 Initiating discussions with different stakeholders. In order to ensure sex
workers' equal positions within the community, the partner NGOs of the SWOs should
organize regular discussions between sex workers and members of the local community;
these could include journalists, lawyers, government officers, and so forth. Through such
discussions could serve to build a bridge between sex workers and the rest of society and
could gain them access to different services.

     5.24.2 Advocating for the political rights of sex workers. Sex workers do not
have the political right to contest the national or local governmental elections. There must
be at least a provision for former sex workers to run in local and national elections in
order to work as public representatives who can address sex workers' problems.

     5.24.3 Ensuring that prostitutes can rent housing or purchase land. Sex
workers face difficulties when attempting to rent homes and purchase land. In this
situation, NGOs and the SWOs need to enhance their advocacy with the local public
authorities to afford prostitutes the same rights as other citizens in this regard.

5.24.4 Opening bank accounts. While sex workers now have less difficulty in opening bank accounts due to the assistance of partner organizations of the SWOs, they still encounter problems. In this context, the SWOs' partner organizations could expand their services to further alleviate all problems related to opening bank accounts.

5.25 Recommendations to address the community development issues made for the non-governmental organizations

5.25.1 Ensuring fair rent for DiCs. DiCs having to pay double the rent for their office premises in order to work with sex workers adds to the financial burden SWOs face. Therefore, NGOs that partner with the SWOs and the SWNOB need to negotiate with property owners in order to reduce DiC's rental costs. This can happen if the NGOs draw attention to this unfair practice by using billboards, life skits, and talk shows in order to mobilize and sensitize the wider community about this unfair treatment.

5.25.2 Strengthening leadership skills. Sex workers' leadership skills can be strengthened through training programs and opportunities to talk in different developmental forums. As a result, their leadership skills would be developed not only for their personal good but also for the betterment of their organizations. Additionally, all members of Durjoy should have the opportunity to participate in the various meetings their executives attend as a means to enhance their networking skills. When there is limited scope for sex workers to participate in training programs or meetings, it is difficult for the SWOs to encourage all members to become active participants in the organizations. The executive committee and the advisory board need to critically evaluate their system for selecting people who attend meetings or participate in training programs in order to ensure that all members have opportunities to develop their leadership skills.

Also, executives and the advisory committee members need to ensure that the SWOs are free to make decisions independently of any outside influence.

5.25.3 Roles of the advisory committee. There is dissatisfaction among staff and members of Durjoy on the role of the advisory committee. Some participants think that the advisory committee dominates Durjoy, and members are not able to make decisions without the approval of this committee. I think it is important to do further research regarding the roles of the advisory board of Durjoy. This team should not be stronger than the executive and the general members of the organization. The advisory committees of the SWOs should be a holistic group, made up of representatives from different levels of involvement with sex work.

5.25.4 Coordinating among organizations. The SWOs and like-minded organizations working at the same locations need to collaborate in order to fully benefit from each other. For example, during my ethnographic field observations at the brothel, I found that Nari Mukti and the Society for Social Service (SSS) work in the same locality, but they lack organizational sharing or interaction. SSS is a large organization, compared to Nari Mukti, but it seems to me that this NGO avoids working with the SWO. In this context, other partners of these agencies or the SWNOB should act to facilitate a collaborative relationship between these organizations. Similarly, I found from my field data that the members of Durjoy and other similar groups failed to communicate among themselves when dealing with sex worker issues. As a consortium member, Durjoy could invite members of BAPS to its meetings in order to make all its members and non-members understand its organizational activities.

5.25.5 Increasing networking. The community empowerment and social action approaches can be useful for organizational processes in order to enhance sex workers' decision making abilities to address their problems by themselves. Both of the SWOs look for sustainable sources of funds to run their organizational activities. They need to strive for more collaboration, advocacy, networking through the SWNOB and other NGOs in order to manage their financial problems. It seems to me that the SWNOB needs to analyze its organizational development to explore more effective ways to interact with GOs, NGOs, and its member SWOs.

5.25.6 Conducting research on the brothel power structure. The oppressive power exerted inside and outside of the Tangail brothel is a great impediment for sex workers hoping to establish their rights. The power struggles within the brothel are based on several underlying causes, such as money. It is extremely difficult for Nari Mukti and its partners to address these issues. Rather, there is a need for further research conducted by NGOs to identify the causes of different social problems and to find the best solutions.

5.25.7 The peer-to-peer approach. The partners of both Durjoy and Nari Mukti need to critically analyze their peer-to-peer approach for addressing sex workers' human rights. Generally, this approach is used to address the health problems of outreach groups, but it is not useful for addressing sex workers' social problems, especially those related to violations of their human rights (Sethi & Jana, 2003, pp. 50-53). Ultimately, if SWOs have strong support networks, they might be more effective in fighting stigma and ensuring justice for prostitutes. In order to ensure this, the state and community organizations have to take important roles in addressing social problems surrounding AIDS and sex work.

5.26 Roles of the state in implementing the recommendations

In order to address the social problems of the marginalized people, especially sex workers and PLWHAs, the state must take a leading role in improving these people's lives. I have described various recommendations in Chapter 5 that could be implemented. Below, I emphasize some of the more crucial ones.

5.26.1 Policy Level Initiatives. The state should take the initiative to develop and implement policies in order to address HIV and sex work issues. For example, as I mentioned in recommendation 5.20.1 about the policy for HIV/AIDS testing, the Ministries of Health and Foreign Affairs should consider formulating a policy that mandates testing for new arrivals entering Bangladesh. This test might take place before the immigrants are granted visas and, thus, they would be tested in their own countries. However, before formulating such a policy the government must explores the feasibility of setting up such an initiative.

Moreover, the Bangladeshi government might start dialogues at the international level to develop a treaty for South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to fight the stigma surrounding AIDS. Although SAARC has several programs to address regional problems, they do not appear to have a common approach to fight stigma collaborately.Yet such an approach would benefit both sex workers and PLWHAs.

Further, since there is a lack of information regarding AIDS issues for the Bangladeshi migrant workers who go abroad, the Ministries of Health and Labour should create a specific policy in arranging information sessions with labour organizations in order to raise workers' awareness before they migrate to other countries.

Finally, the school curricula provide very little information about HIV/AIDS issues. The government's Ministries of Health, Education, and Information need to redesign programs so that students will be well informed about AIDS- related issues.

5.26.2 Strengthen Networking. The state should strengthen its networking at different levels (local, national, regional, global), in order to create an integrated approach for addressing various social problems. The stakeholders might come from local to international levels; for example, a community institute like Grameen Bank could be involved in networking with the state or the state might collaborate with the WHO.

5.26.3 Implement Training Workshops or Seminars. The state should provide training for its different departmental staffs, such as the police, in order to sensitize them towards marginalized segments of the community. Additionally, the government should initiate different seminars and talk shows in order to create an open environment for discussing sensitive issues, like AIDS, for all of its citizens.

5.26.4 Legalize the SWNOB. The government should recognize the SWNOB as a legal entity. This organization would then be able to work legally with its member organizations in order to ensure that the sex workers' human rights are met and protected.

5. 27 Roles of Community Organizations in implementing the recommendations

Having presented the roles of the state in the preceding section, in this section, I focus on the roles of community organizations in addressing the recommendations that I referred to earlier in this chapter. In Bangladesh, community organizations are formed by groups, associations, religious institutions, civil societies, NGOs, the media, and human rights and grass roots organizations (Data from ethnographic field observation, Dhaka,

2009). These community organizations can play catalytic roles in addressing sex work and AIDS issues through their community organizing activities.

5.27.1 Promote Awareness Building Programs. In Bangladesh, different community-based organizations, such as the cultural team of Nari Mukti, have their groups to implement activities. Using popular educational tools such as musical events or dramatic skits, organizations disseminate knowledge about the stigmatization that disadvantaged groups suffer. Such programs motivate people to be more understanding of these groups' needs. Those organizations that are skilled in using such educational tools could share their expertise with other groups or go into less developed communities, such as rural or remote areas and teach their skills to community leaders there.

5.27.2 Linkage between Public and Private Service Providers. Community institutions can enhance linkage between public and private sectors in order to utilize resources for addressing social issues. For example, local governments and workers from NGOs can create a joint team in addressing villagers' social problems.

5.27.3 Document Best Practices. Different organizations can document their best practices regarding human rights issues. These lessons can be then shared between different organizations to strengthen their staffs' capacities.

5.27.4 Conduct Research on Stigma. Community organizations might approach different donors and the state to get assistance for conducting research on stigma related issues. Such research can establish a knowledge-sharing platform and can be used to address various social problems. For example, if Nari Mukti gathers data about the number of its members who are actually HIV positive, this data could be used by the state to help the general public understand that sex workers are not the main carriers of HIV.

5.28 Conclusion

Collective action and strong networking support for street and brothel-based organizations are essential for enhancing their capacities. However, when conflict and competition are common elements in brothels and when power is based on money, it is difficult for grassroots organizations to organize well enough to protect themselves. Not only the state but all of those involved need to work together in order to establish a safety net to protect these vulnerable groups.

In my literature review chapter, I argue that while we need education, treatment, and so forth in response to HIV/AIDS, all sorts of discrimination and stigmatization create obstacles for vulnerable people. A growing number of scholars argue that a worldwide movement to ensure human rights and security for PLWHAs is not enough (Parker et al., 2002). Furthermore, the authors claim that the context, forms, and strategies surrounding this pandemic vary from one place to another, due to cultural and social differences. For this reason, it is fundamental that the state and other organizations explore the situation at a local level, and then act jointly from a wider human security approach in order to ensure social rights for marginalized groups.

Some authors describe the numerous constraints and human rights violations faced by female sex workers (HRW, 2002 & 2006). Most unfortunately, police and hooligans abuse them frequently. This creates a situation where female prostitutes have few options. Protection of their rights can enable them to have more options and break the intergenerational cycle of prostitution. Some scholars also feel that influential people in society can help bring about changes by recognizing, protecting, and promoting the human rights of sex workers. Similarly, understanding the forms and context of

stigmatization is essential to fighting it. Therefore, a well-designed, targeted advocacy program geared toward community organizing and mass media is essential for sex workers to change attitudes of the community towards them.

In order to reduce stigma towards them, members of the SWOs need to understand the cultural difficulties of implementing recommendations as well as the existing policy issues and organizational barriers. I can send my suggestions to the government bodies, SWOs and their partner NGOs for their future reference and organizational actions.

Finally, to organize people, SWOs must work through community programs in order to address socio-economic problems including the problems related to HIV/AIDS. Social policies are needed for achieving social change in favour of sex workers, but the appropriate tools and strategies of community organizing systems are also crucial to ensure sex workers' rights. Community participation at all levels is vital for social justice and human rights, both of which could be achieved through a real community organizing process. For instance, when sex worker organizations create strong support networks and work together with other human rights organizations, their goals to fight stigma might be achieved. This approach may be termed the network perspective. It is not possible to address the attitudes of policy-makers and programmers in isolation. There has to be a change in the overall social perceptions and attitudes. This can be achieved through a massive community organizing process, involving the participation of the public as well as sex workers, to ensure respect for their human rights.

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Figure 1.1 The map of Bangladesh. Source: The Google image.

Appendix: 1

Guideline for individual interview (who has personal experience on stigma related to HIV/AIDS and sex work)

Id /code number:
Interview date __/__/__
Reschedule interview time: __/__/__

Section 1: Background / demographic Information:
1   Name of the Respondent (optional):
2   Address :
3   Affiliation with the sex worker organization:
4   Age of the Respondent …………………….. Years
5   Marital status :
     a) Never Married ..….. b) Married…… c) Divorced/Separated….. .... d) Widow……
6   Number of children:
     a) None….. b) One…… c) two….. .... d) three……e) four…….f) more….
7   Education status:
     a) Illiterate …… b) Literate (can read & write) ………c) Primary (1-5 class)… …d) Secondary (6-10 class)……..e)Secondary school pass…….f) Higher secondary…….g) Bachelor……h) Masters………i) Other (specify)……
8   Number of years in the sex work………..
9   Daily/monthly income and expenditure:
     a)………b)…...c)……..d)………e)………f)……...g)………h)……….
10.   Savings
     a)………b)…...c)……..d)………e)………f)……...g)………h)……….

Section 2: Knowledge on HIV/AIDS:
11   Did you receive any health education about HIV/AIDS? Yes…No…..
12   If yes, from where did you get this education?
13   If no, do you think there is a need of health education program for you? Yes….no….
14   Do you know what HIV is and how HIV can be transmitted? Yes….no…
15   If yes, how it can be transmitted?
16   Do you know how one can protect oneself from HIV/AIDS?
17   Do you have any other comments about HIV/AIDS and sex work?

Section 3: Experience on stigma related to HIV/AIDS and sex work:
18   Do you know what stigma is? Yes…No…
19   If yes, have you ever been a victim of stigma?
20   Is this experience related to HIV/AIDS?
21   Could you share your experience on this subject?
     When? How? Where? Why? By whom?

22   What kind of problems you faced for this stigma?

23   Have you individually or organizationally taken action against this stigma? Yes…No...

24   If yes, what was that?

25   If no, why?

26   Have you any recommendations for sex worker organizations, general people, and policy makers to fight against stigma or discrimination?

Section 4: Experience on Human Rights and Social Justice:

27   Do you know about your human rights? Yes…No…

28   If yes, what are they?

29   Are you getting your rights? Yes…No…

30   If yes, could you describe how are you enjoying these?

31   If no, how your rights are violated?

32.   Have you ever been abused by any powerful person from inside or outside your work place? If so, how?

33   What would be the best strategies to apply at the policy level to achieve your rights?

Appendix: 2

Guideline for focus group discussions

Id /code number:
FGD date __/__/__
Reschedule FGD time: __/__/__

Section 1: Background / demographic Information:

First name of the Respondents (optional)
1 a)…………………b)…………………..c)………………….

d)…………………e)………………………f)……………………g)…………………
2 Address :
3 Affiliation with sex worker organization a)………..b)………..c)………..d)………
e)…………..f)……………g)……………….h)…………………….
4 Age of the Respondents a) ……………b)………..c)………….d)………..e)………..
f)……….g)………..h)…………
5 Marital status :
a) Never Married ...….. b) Married…… c) Divorced/Separated….. .... d)
Widow……
6 Number of children:
a) None….. b) One…… c) two….. .... d) three……e) four…….f) more….
7 Education status:
a) Illiterate …… b) Literate (can read & write) ………c) Primary (1-5 class)… …d)
Secondary (6-10 class)……..e)Secondary school pass……f) Higher
secondary…….g)
8 Number of years in the sex work: a)………b)…...c)……..d)………e)………f)……...
g)………h)……….
9 Daily/monthly income and expenditure (in TK/$) b
a)……….)…...c)……..d)………e)………f)……...g)………h)……….
10. Savings a)………b)…...c)……..d)………e)………f)……...g)………h)……….

Section 2: Knowledge on HIV/AIDS:
11 Did you receive any health education about HIV/AIDS? Yes…No…..
12 If yes, from where did you get this education?
13 If no, do you think there is a need for a health education program for you?
Yes….no….
14 Do you know what HIV/AIDS is and how HIV can be transmitted?
Yes….no…
15 If yes, how it can be transmitted?
16 Do you know how one can protect oneself from HIV/AIDS?
17 Do you have any other comments about HIV/AIDS and sex work?

Section 3: Experience on stigma related to HIV/AIDS:
18 Do you know what stigma is? Yes…No…
19 If yes, have you ever been a victim of stigma?
20 Is this experience related to HIV/AIDS?
21 Could you share your experience on that subject?
    When? How? Where? Why? By whom?
22 What kind of problems did you face as a result of this stigma?
23 Have you individually or jointly taken action against this stigma? Yes…No..
24 If yes, what was that?
25 If no, why?
26 Have you any recommendations for sex worker organizations, general people
    and the policy makers to fight stigma related to HIV/AIDS and your work?

Section 4: Experience on Human Rights and Social Justice:
26 Do you know about your human rights? Yes…No…
27 If yes, what are they?
28 Are you getting your rights? Yes…No…
29 If yes, could you describe how are you enjoying these?
30 If no, how are your rights violated? Please elaborate.
31 What would be the best strategies to influence the policy level to achieve your
    rights?

Section 4: Experience on Community Organizing Processes:
32 Is your organization doing activities, in order to address your human rights,
    especially stigma related to HIV/AIDS? If yes, what are they?
33 If no, do you know why?
34 When dealing with stigma and discrimination, how does your organization
    work in harmony with other organizations?
35 Do you know about any plans for the future of your organization? If so, name
    them and let me know how your organization will realize these plans?
36 What kind of challenges are your organizations facing to address your rights
    or fight against stigma?
37 What would be the best strategies to overcome the challenges?

Appendix: 3 Guideline for ethnographic field observations

Observation date __/__/__
Observation place/documents: __/__/__

Section 1: Background / demographic Information:

1   Name of the brothel/ drop-in centre
2   Address :
3   History /background of the brothel and the DNS DIC

Section 2: Activities related to HIV/AIDS, Human Rights, and Stigma:
4   What kinds of activities are being done by the organization to address HIV/AIDS related stigma and to achieve their human rights?
5   Have sex workers suffered abuse due to misconceptions about their profession and HIV/AIDS? Who/ how/ why/ when?
6   In this context, who are sex workers' allies? How? Why? Specific examples
7   What kinds of meetings, initiatives, or protests are taking by the organization for fighting against stigma?

Section 3: Community organizing processes:
8   Name and address of the organization…
9   What are the missions, visions, and objectives of the organization?
10   What are the organizational structures?
11   What are the membership structures?
12   What are the leadership structures?
13   What are the existing organizational practices and policies to achieve human rights, especially HIV/IDS related stigma?
14   What would be future actions to address the stigmatized situation?
15   What are the challenges the organization facing and what are its overcoming strategies?
16   When dealing with stigma and discrimination, how does the organization work in harmony with other organizations?
17   What is the brothel / DIC power structure?
18   What is the ruling relation inside and outside of the brothel or DIC of the sex work community?
19   What is the organization's meeting minutes and policy documents related to human rights?
20   Are there organizational plans for future development? If so, what are these and how the organization will realize these plans?

Appendix: 4

Informed Consent Form for Focus Group Discussions

Hello. My name is Rehana Akhter. I am a student of MA in a Special Individualized Program of Concordia University, Montreal, Canada (Contact info: 4620, Avenue Linton, Apt 2, Montreal, Quebec, H3W 1K1, Canada, Tel: 514-345-1095, e-mail: akhtercanada@yahoo.ca). I have come to conduct a focus discussion with you in a group about your experiences on HIV/AIDS related stigma and your community organizing processes. The name of my project is: "Sex worker organizations and HIV/AIDS related stigma in Bangladesh". The purposes of my study are: to assess the organizing processes of two different sex worker organizations (DNS and NMS) in Bangladesh, in order to explore their strategies to fight against HIV/AIDS related stigma; to enhance their future community organizations for the advocacy and support of sex workers; and to produce my MA thesis. Furthermore, the findings might be published in a journal, and the results could be presented at a workshop or a conference. I am also describing the focus group guideline and explaining the terminologies that I have used in this research, in order to clarify the nature of this study. We will discuss the definitions of stigma, human rights, community organizing process, and so on. In defining stigma, my point of view is that stigma means giving someone a bad name or shameful identity. For example, when a homosexual is identified, people address him/her as a threat for the society or his/her activities are viewed negatively. Similarly, we will discuss how you are stigmatized in the society due to your work and the threat of HIV/AIDS.

I will spend around two to three hours with you for this group discussion. The information extracted from the discussion will be used only in research purposes. The confidentiality of the information provided by you will be highly respected. Your identity will remain strictly confidential unless you otherwise indicate on this consent form. During the discussion if you do not want to answer a particular question, then you can discontinue the discussion or if you do not feel free to respond to that specific question, you may refrain from doing so. Your participation in this research project is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time. Your refusal to participate does not harm you in any way or put you in any kind of danger. Additionally, you are requested not to disclose any other group participant's information from this study to anyone else. By participating in this group discussion, you agree to keep the identities of participants confidential.

While sharing your experiences, if you feel bad or get upset please feel free to say so. I will refer you to some organizations, which provide psychological support to sex workers. Furthermore, the potential benefits of this discussion would be: your organizations' organizing capacities to fight against stigma would be increased; your communication skills would be enhanced by expressing your daily life experiences; your group realization about cultural oppression and discrimination towards you would be explored; possibilities of global networking with other organizations would be discovered (through the research dissemination in Canada). Moreover, you will receive TK 35 (CAD

0.62) in cash money by signing a money receipt form in Bangla and English as an honorarium; I will also provide the food and refreshment during this discussion. Finally, your ownership of the research results and social action would make you feel empowered and your information will be very helpful to understand the specific stigmatized experiences towards sex workers and their organizations.

In order to maintain proper data storage methods, your information from this study will be kept in a locked and secure place at my home, in Bangladesh and Canada. I will be the only person to have access to these data. However, data tapes will be transcribed with the assistance from my note taker at my home and all participant information will be stripped away during the transcription process. Furthermore, following completion of my research, all diskettes, discussion logs, consent forms, and other products of the study will be kept in a secure filing cabinet in my home in Canada for four years. After four years, diskettes used will be re-formatted (to erase data) and then manually destroyed, and all consent forms, discussion logs, and other paper materials will be shredded.

Please further note that I have been funded to conduct the study by FQRSC, a provincial governmental funding agency in Canada.

Now, I need your consent before discussing with you.

Do you agree to attend this focus group discussion?   Yes   ☐   No   ☐

Do you agree to tape your discussion in a tape recorder? Yes   ☐   No   ☐

Do you wish your first name to be known in published work?   Yes ☐   No ☐

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance unit, Concordia University, at (514) 848-2424 x2425 or by email at kwiscomb@alcor.concordia.ca , or please kindly communicate with me via Light House or directly by using my above mentioned address and contact number.

Name of the Interviewer_____ Signature & date_____

Name of the Note taker_____ Signature & date_____

Name of the FGD participant_____

Signature & date_____

Appendix: 5

Informed Consent Form for ethnographic field observations

Hello. My name is Rehana Akhter. I am a student of MA in a Special Individualized Program of Concordia University, Montreal, Canada (Contact info: 4620, Avenue Linton, Apt 2, Montreal, Quebec, H3W 1K1, Canada, Tel: 514-345-1095, e-mail: akhtercanada@yahoo.ca). I have come, in order to stay with you for some time to observe your organizational activities, reviewing your documents, as well as attending your meetings. Therefore, I can explore your experiences on HIV/AIDS related stigma and your community organizing processes, in order to address this situation. The name of my project is: "Sex worker organizations and HIV/AIDS related stigma in Bangladesh". The purposes of my study are: to assess the organizing processes of two different sex worker organizations, in order to explore their strategies to fight against HIV/AIDS related stigma; to enhance their future community organizations for the advocacy and support of sex workers; and to produce my MA thesis. Furthermore, the findings might be published in a journal, and the results could be presented at a workshop or a conference. I am also describing the ethnographic field observation guideline and explaining the terminologies that I have used in this research, in order to clarify the nature of this study. We will discuss the definitions of stigma, human rights, community organizing process, and so on. In defining stigma, my point of view is that stigma means giving someone a bad name or shameful identity. For example, when a homosexual is identified, people address him/her as a threat for the society or his/her activities are viewed negatively. Similarly, we will discuss sex workers are stigmatized in the society due to their work and the threat of HIV/AIDS.

I will spend five to seven days with each observation taking around three to four hours per day with my note taker. The information extracted from the discussion will be used only in research purposes. The confidentiality of the information provided by you will be highly respected. Your identity will remain strictly confidential unless you otherwise indicate on this consent form. During the discussion if you do not want to answer a particular question, then you can discontinue the discussion or if you do not feel free to respond to that specific question, you may refrain from doing so. Your participation in this research project is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time. Your refusal to participate does not harm you in any way or put you in any kind of danger. Additionally, you are strongly advised not to disclose any other group participant's information from this study to anyone else.

During the observation of your activities, if you feel bad or get upset, please feel free to let me know. I will refer you to organizations in Bangladesh which provide psychological support to sex workers. Rather than any unexpected situation, the potential benefits would be: your organizations' organizing capacities to fight against stigma would be increased; your communication skills would be enhanced by expressing your daily life experience; your group realization about cultural oppression and discrimination towards you would be explored; possibilities of global networking with other organizations would be discovered (through the research dissemination in Canada). Moreover, your organization will get TK 600 (CAD 10) in cash by signing a money receipt form in

Bangla and English as an honorarium for allocating time to allow me to observe your organizational activities; I will also provide food and refreshments during this field observation. Finally, your ownership of the research results and social action would make you feel empowered and your information will be very helpful in understanding the specific stigmatized experiences towards sex workers and their organizations' community organizing processes in response to this stigma.

In order to maintain proper data storage methods, your information from this study will be kept in a locked and secure place at my home, in Bangladesh and Canada. I will be the only person to have access to these data. However, data tapes will be transcribed with the assistance from my note taker at my home and all participant information will be stripped away during the transcription process. Furthermore, following completion of my research, all diskettes, discussion logs, consent forms, and other products of the study, will be kept in the secure filing cabinet in my home in Canada for four years. After four years, diskettes used will be re-formatted (to erase data) and then manually destroyed, and all consent forms, discussion logs, and other paper materials will be shredded.

Please further note that I have been funded to conduct the study by FQRSC, a provincial governmental funding agency in Canada.

Now, I need your consent before observing/discussing with you.

Do you agree to allow me to observe your activities?   Yes ☐   No   ☐
Do you agree to tape your discussion in a tape recorder? Yes   ☐   No   ☐

Do you wish your first name/names to be known in published work?   Yes☐   No   ☐

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance unit, Concordia University, at (514) 848-2424 x2425 or by email at kwiscomb@alcor.concordia.ca , or please kindly communicate with me via Light House or directly by using my above mentioned address and contact number.

Name of the Interviewer_____ Signature_____

Date_____

Name of the Note taker _____ Signature_____

Date_____

Name of the participant_____ Signature_____

Date_____

Appendix: 6

Informed Consent Form for the Note Taker

This is to state that I agree to assist in a program of research being conducted by Rehana Akhter, student of MA in a Special Individualized Program of Concordia University, Montreal, Canada (Contact info: 4620, Avenue Linton, Apt 2, Montreal, Quebec, H3W 1K1, Canada, Tel: 514-345-1095, e-mail: akhtercanada@yahoo.ca).

A. PURPOSE
I have been informed that the purposes of the research are as follows:

To assess the organizing processes of two different sex worker organizations (DNS and NMS) in Bangladesh, in order to explore their strategies to fight against HIV/AIDS related stigma; to enhance their future community organizations for the advocacy and support of sex workers; and to produce the student's MA thesis. Furthermore, the findings might be published in a journal, and the results could be presented at a workshop or a conference. I am also describing all guidelines and explaining the terminologies that I have used in this research, in order to clarify the nature of this study. We will discuss the definitions of stigma, human rights, community organizing process, and so on. In defining stigma, my point of view is that stigma means giving someone a bad name or shameful identity. For example, when a homosexual is identified, people address him/her as a threat for the society or his/her activities are viewed negatively. Similarly, we will discuss how sex workers are stigmatized in the society due to their works and the threat of HIV/AIDS.

B. PROCEDURES

I will assist the researcher to collect her field data as a note taker. Before starting our field work, we will discuss the whole data collection and research procedure, as part of my research training. During focus group discussions, individual interviews, and ethnographic field observations in Tangail and Dhaka, I will be with her to take notes and to assist in data collection. The average length of individual interviews and group discussions is two hours. We will also spend three/four hours per day at the brothel or on the street for the field observations. Furthermore, if any unexpected incidents occur during our data collection process, I will also help the researcher to address the problems and their solutions. After data collection, I will assist her to help to transcribe data from a tape recorder and all participant information will be stripped away during the transcription process. Moreover, the researcher will be the only person to have access to these data. Furthermore, if something is missing and the researcher needs this missing information I will take the responsibility to provide her with the information from Bangladesh. The research processes will be kept fully confidential and I will never disclose the research findings to anyone.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

There is no risk in taking part in this research for me. I do not have any professional or personal relationships with the researched sex worker organizations. I am assisting the researcher as a neutral and also because of my professional experience with the sex workers' community. By involving myself in this research, my communication skill and working in a research cycle will be a resourceful asset for my professional and personal development. I will also receive a total amount of TK 7000 (CAD 100) in cash money by signing a money receipt form as an honorarium for this research work. The researcher will bear my transport, accommodation, and food costs during my stay with her for her data collection and field observations.

I have been informed that the researcher has been financially accepted for conducting the study by FQRSC, a provincial governmental funding agency in Canada.

I understand that my participation in this study is non-confidential (i.e., my identity will be revealed in study results)

If at any time I have questions about my rights as a note-taker, I can contact the Research Ethics and Compliance unit, Concordia University, at (514) 848-2424 x2425 or by email at kwiscomb@alcor.concordia.ca , or can communicate with the researcher by using her above mentioned address and contact number.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO TAKE NOTE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME   _____

DATE   _____

SIGNATURE

_____

Appendix: 7

Informed Consent Form for Individual Interview

Hello. My name is Rehana Akhter. I am a student of MA in a Special Individualized Program of Concordia University, Montreal, Canada (Contact info: 4620, Avenue Linton, Apt 2, Montreal, Quebec, H3W 1K1, Canada, Tel: 514-345-1095, e-mail: akhtercanada@yahoo.ca). I have come to talk to you individually about your experience with stigma. The name of my project is: "Sex worker organizations and HIV/AIDS related stigma in Bangladesh". The purposes of my study are: to assess the organizing processes of two different sex worker organizations (DNS and NMS) in Bangladesh, in order to explore their strategies to fight against HIV/AIDS related stigma; to enhance their future community organizations for the advocacy and support of sex workers; and to produce my MA thesis. Furthermore, the findings might be published in a journal, and the results could be presented at a workshop or a conference. I am also describing the individual interview guideline and explaining the terminologies that I have used in this research, in order to clarify the nature of this study. We will discuss the definitions of stigma, human rights, community organizing process, and so on. In defining stigma, my point of view is that stigma means giving someone a bad name or shameful identity. For example, when a homosexual is identified, people address him/her as a threat for the society or his/her activities are viewed negatively. Similarly, we will discuss how you are stigmatized in the society due to your work and the threat of HIV/AIDS.

I will spend around two to three hours with you for this interview. The information extracted from the interview will be used only in research purposes. The confidentiality of the information provided by you will be highly respected. Your identity will remain strictly confidential unless you otherwise indicate on this consent form. During the interview if you do not want to answer any particular questions, then you can discontinue the interview or if you do not feel free to respond to that specific question, you may refrain from doing so. Your participation in this research project is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time. Your refusal to participate does not harm you in any way or put you in any kind of danger.

During sharing your experience if you feel bad or get upset please feel free to let me know. I will refer you to some organizations, which provide psychological support to sex workers. Furthermore, the potential benefits of this interview would be: your organizations' organizing capacities to fight against stigma would be increased; your communication skill would be enhanced by expressing your daily life experiences; possibilities of global networking with other organizations would be discovered (through the research dissemination in Canada). Moreover, you will get TK 70 (CAD 1.23) in cash money by signing a money receipt form in Bangla and English as an honorarium; I will also provide food and refreshments during this interview. Finally, your ownership of the research results and social action would make you feel empowered and your information will be very helpful to understand the specific stigmatized experiences towards sex workers and their organizations.

In order to maintain proper data storage methods, your information from this study will be kept in a locked and secure place at my home, in Bangladesh and Canada. I will be the only person to have access to these data. However, data tapes will be transcribed with the assistance from my note taker at my home and all participant information will be stripped away during the transcription process. Furthermore, following completion of my research, all diskettes, interview logs, consent forms, and other products of the study, will be kept in the secure filing cabinet in my home in Canada for four years. After four years, diskettes used will be re-formatted (to erase data) and then manually destroyed, and all consent forms, interview logs, and other paper materials will be shredded.

Please further note that I have been funded to conduct the study by FQRSC, a provincial governmental funding agency in Canada.

Now, I need your consent before interviewing you.

Do you agree to participate in this individual interview?   Yes ☐   No   ☐

Do you agree to tape your interview in a tape recorder? Yes   ☐   No   ☐

Do you wish your first name to be known in published work? Yes   ☐   No ☐

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance unit, Concordia University, at (514) 848-2424 x2425 or by email at kwiscomb@alcor.concordia.ca , or please kindly communicate with me via Light House or directly by using my above mentioned address and contact number.

Name of the Interviewer_____ Signature_____

Date_____

Name of the Note taker_____ Signature_____

Date_____

Name of the Interviewee_____ Signature_____

Date_____

Appendix: 8

Activity Plan (June 2009 – July 2009)

No.	Activities	With whom	Expected outputs	Timeline
1.	Plan and discuss about the field work implementation	Local NGOs / Sex worker Organizations in Bang	Getting consents from organizations	By 27th May 2009
	Bangla typed guidelines and Consents are ready	Light House	Bangla documents	28th May 2009
2.	Pre test guidelines and finalize for data collection	Rehana/sex workers and Partner NGOs in Bang	Finalize research final questionnaires	31st May 2009
3.	Conduct FGDs, ethnographic field observations, and interviews with the respondents in DICs	Members of Local NGOs / SWOs in Bang	Survey conducted and data gathered	By 1st week of June 2009
4.	Same in the brothel	Same	Same	By 2nd week of June 2009
5.	Draft write-up, data analysis, and revisit the groups if needed	Members of Local NGOs / SWOs in Bang	Draft data analysis	By June 2009
6.	Organize sex work and HIV/AIDS related workshop with Light House Participants	Light House/Rehana	CIHR workshop has been implemented	By 3rd week of June 2009
7.	Share draft findings with SWOs and PNGO for any editing/ revising	same	Cross-checked data	By 1st week of July 2009