

**Behavioural Surveillance
Survey in Western to
Far-Western Sector of
Mahendra Highway of Nepal
2003**

Behavioural Surveillance Survey in Western to Far-Western Sector of Mahendra Highway of Nepal

Submitted To:

Family Health International/Nepal
Gairedhara
Kathmandu, Nepal



Submitted By:

New ERA
P.O. Box 722
Rudramati Marga, Kalo Pul
Kathmandu, Nepal

February 11, 2003

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The New ERA study team wishes to express its gratitude to FHI/Nepal office for entrusting this study. We would especially like to thank Dr. Laxmi Bilas Acharya, Program Officer (Research) for his understanding and the comments. We would also like to acknowledge Dr. James Ross, FHI/Nepal, Country Director for the valuable comments and to Mr. Steve Mills, Associate Director of the Asia Regional Office, FHI/Bangkok for the invaluable inputs provided from the design phase through the implementation stage of this study. We also received valuable help from Ms. Asha Basnyat, Associate Director, FHI/Nepal. Their help is gratefully acknowledged.

Last but not the least we would like to thank many of our respondents who had agreed to respond many of our questions including their sexual behaviour and cooperated to assist the study teams. Their help is gratefully acknowledged. Without their help this study would not have been possible.

The New ERA Study Team

STUDY TEAM MEMBERS

Key Team Members

1. Mr. Madhup Kumar Dhungana - Team Leader
2. Ms. Sarita Vaidya - Senior Computer Programmer
3. Mr. Muneshor Shrestha - Research Assistant

Field Survey Team Members

1. Mr. Dupchen Lama - Supervisor
2. Mr. Raju Karki - Supervisor
3. Mr. Sushil Joshi - Supervisor
4. Mr. Manoj Pyakuryal - Supervisor
5. Ms. Sanu Maiya Maskey - Interviewer
6. Ms. Kamala Shrestha - Interviewer
7. Ms. Sumitra Shrestha - Interviewer
8. Ms. Rita Shrestha - Interviewer
9. Ms. Jamuna Kayastha - Interviewer
10. Ms. Shanti Shrestha - Interviewer
11. Ms. Janani Magar - Interviewer
12. Ms. Devi Maya Bogati - Interviewer

Data Entry/Tabulation/Coding

1. Ms. Karuna Tuladhar - Coding Supervisor
2. Mr. Babu Raja Maharjan - Coding Supervisor
3. Ms. Dipa Shakya - Coder

Administration Support

1. Mr. Sanu Raja Shakya - Senior Word Processor
2. Mr. Rajendra Kumar Shrestha - Office Assistant

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
STUDY TEAM MEMBERS	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	v
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	vi
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Organization of Report.....	1
1.3 Behavioral Surveillance Survey (BSS).....	1
1.4 Objectives	2
1.5 Study Design and Methodology	2
1.5.1 Study Population.....	2
1.5.2 Sample Design	4
1.5.3 Sample Size.....	4
1.5.4 Research Instrument	5
1.5.5 Pre-Test of the Questionnaire	6
1.5.6 Recruitment, Training and Field Work.....	6
1.5.7 Informed Consent and Incentives to the Sex Workers.....	6
1.6 Data Processing	6
1.7 Problems Encountered During the Fieldwork	6
2.0 FINDINGS.....	8
2.1 Characteristics of Female Sex Workers.....	8
2.1.1 Sex Work Based on Religion and Culture	8
2.1.2 Demographic Characteristics of FSWs.....	9
2.1.3 Socio-Economic Characteristics of FSWs	10
2.2 Visit to India	i
2.3 Level of Awareness of AIDS and STI.....	13
2.3.1 Sources of Information on AIDS	14
2.3.2 Knowledge of Ways to Avoid.....	14
2.4 Sexual Behaviours	15
2.4.1 Types of Clients	16
2.6 Sex Partners and Use of Condom.....	18
2.6.1 Paying Sex Partners	18
2.6.2 Non-Paying Sex Partners	20
2.8 Types of Sex Practiced by Sex Workers and their Sex Partners	24
REFERENCES	25

LIST OF TABLES

	<u>Page</u>
Table 1.1: Distribution of Samples by the Types of Sex Workers' Establishments	4
Table 1.2: Distribution of Sample Size by Location	8
Table 2.1: Demographic and Social Characteristics of Sex Workers	8
Table 2.2: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Sex Workers	9
Table 2.3: Educational Status of the Respondents by their Ethnic Groups	10
Table 2.4: Respondents' Income from Sex Work	11
Table 2.5: Frequencies of Respondents Who have Visited India and Work as a Sex Workers in Indian Cities	11
Table 2.6: Source of Information on HIV/AIDS as Cited by the Respondents	13
Table 2.7: Respondent's Knowledge on How AIDS Virus is Transmitted	13
Table 2.8: Sexual Behaviors of the Respondents	14
Table 2.9: Type of the Clients Reported by the Respondents	15
Table 2.10: Reported Symptoms of STI by the Respondents	16
Table 2.11: Sexual Behavior of Paying Partners	17
Table 2.12: Use of Condom by Different Types of Sex Partners of the Respondents	19
Table 2.13: Distribution of Regular Type of Sex Partners	20
Table 2.14: Knowledge about Condoms	21
Table 2.15: Messages Understood by Respondents	22
Table 2.16: Types of Sex Acts	24
Table 2.17: Frequency of Drinking Beverages Containing Alcohol	24

LIST OF FIGURES

	<u>Page</u>
Figure 1: Sites and Estimated Number of FSW along the Study Area	3
Figure 2: Respondents' Response of Avoid HIV/AIDS Viruses	13
Figure 3: Most Frequently Visited Type of Clients Ranked by the Sex Workers.....	15
Figure 4: Comparison of average Number of Clients with the Average Number of Days Per Week by the Age Group of the Respondents.....	16
Figure 5: Use of Condom in Last Sex by Their Marital Status	18
Figure 6: Consistent Use of Condoms by Their Marital Status.....	19
Figure 7a: Comparison of Use of Condoms by Commercial and Non-paying Regular Type of Sex Partners	20
Figure 7b: Comparison of Consistent Use of Condoms by Commercial and Non-paying Regular Type of Sex Partners	20
Figure 8: Sources of Information Related to Condoms Cited by Respondents.....	22

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Behavioural Surveillance Survey (BSS) is based on classical HIV and STI serologic surveillance methods, BSS consists of repeated cross-sectional surveys of groups where behaviour may help explain the spread of HIV and determine prevention needs in a given country. The method uses a consistent sampling methodology, consistent data collection methods and consistent indicators in order to track trends in behaviour over time.

This survey is the first round of the BSS conducted in western to far-western sector of the Mahendra highway route of FHI project area.

The main objective of the first round of BSS is:

- To systematically measure and monitor HIV risk behavioral trends among sex workers group along Mahendra high way in Mid-western to Far-western sector of Nepal and to establish baseline data that can measure behavior changes over time.

The Study covers 6 Terai districts of Mid-western and Far-western region of the country.

Findings

- The majority (93%) of the female sex workers, including the *Badi* group, reported that their permanent residence was in the Terai regions west of Butwal in Rupendehi district.
- The Mean number of clients entertained by the sex workers in the last 30 days from the date of interview was 8 and the Median number was 7. Almost 80 percent of the sex workers reported the use of condom by their paying sex partners during the last intercourse. In response to a question on the consistent use of condoms in the last 12 months, only 52 percent of FSWs reported that their clients used condoms consistently.
- Use of condom by the Regular type (husband or boy friend) of sex partners during last intercourse was found to be very low (27%) compare to paying sex partners (80%). Similarly, on the consistent use of condoms in last 12 months, only 20 percent of the regular type of sex partners reported to have used it.
- Most of the time, it seems that it was sex worker, rather than the client, who suggested the use of condom.
- Almost all the respondents reported to have knowledge of place or person from whom to obtain condoms. The majority (87%) of the respondents cited drug store/pharmacy as the place to obtain condoms, followed by Hospital (58%), and Health Post (46%). According to the respondents the estimated mean time (to go and come back) to obtain condoms from the nearest place to their was 15.3 minutes.

- Respondents were asked to identify the sources from which they had obtained information regarding condoms. An overwhelming majority (99%) of the respondents mentioned radio, followed by drug store/pharmacy (82%), billboards/signboards (75%), hospital (74%) and friends/neighbours (66%).
- The majority of the respondents identified mainly two messages. The first was: “Use condom against HIV/AIDS, Condom for HIV/AIDS prevention, Avoid HIV/AIDS, Use condom against STI/HIV/AIDS,” and the second message was: “Use condom against STI, Condom for STI prevention, Avoid STI.” The first and second messages were reported to have been understood by 72 and 62 percent of the respondents respectively.
- The most popular, and understood by the majority (88%) of the respondents, was *Condom Lagoun AIDS Bhagaun* and followed by *Jhilke Dai Chha, Chhaina Condom* (80%), *Condom Bata Surakchhya Uoun Swastha Ko Rakchhya* (64%) and *Guruji and Antarey* (53%).
- The sex workers reported to have been engaged in sex business on average worked 3.7 days a week, and on average they entertained 2.6 persons per week. When asked what types of clients visited them, more than half the sex workers said transport workers (53.8%), followed by wage workers (47%), Police/Military (44%), businessmen (44%), local men (36%), civil servants (35%) and *Rickshawala* (13%). In addition to these persons some students, petty shop owners and occasionally social and political leaders were also reported as their clients.
- Respondents had their first sexual intercourse at the mean age of 15 years. On average at the age of 22 years, they had sexual contact for the money. On the question of the number of clients served on the day of last intercourse, the majority (80%) reported having had only one client. The Mean number of clients served by the sex worker on the day of last intercourse was 1.2.
- The level of awareness of AIDS is very high among the FSWs, as almost all of (99.5%) them reported to have had heard about AIDS. Similarly, 92 percent of the respondents reported to have heard about sexually transmitted diseases.
- Radio, billboards/signboards and friends or relatives were the three most cited sources among the listed sources of information on HIV/AIDS mentioned by the respondents. Ninety-seven percent of the sex workers had heard about AIDS from the radio, thus it was by far the most often cited source of knowledge on AIDS; 79 percent said they learned about AIDS from Billboards/Signboards, and 72 percent said from friends or relatives.
- Among those who had heard of AIDS, an overwhelming majority (97%) reported to have knowledge about how the AIDS virus is transmitted. Among those who reported to have knowledge, all of them knew at least one way to avoid HIV virus transmission. Of the respondents who knew about the transmission of HIV virus, a majority of them identified mainly two methods of such transmission: i) having sex without a condom (78%) and ii) having multiple sexual partners (53%).

- Responding to a question on how can a person can avoid transmission of AIDS virus, the respondents who knew about sexual transmission of HIV mentioned three safe behaviours most often: i) not sharing needles (88%), ii) using a condom (87.2%) and iii) abstaining from sex (76.9%). Having only one sexual partner was also mentioned by an impressive majority (72.5%). Furthermore, more than three-fourths of the sex workers made reference to abstinence.
- One half of the sampled sex workers reported to have visited India, including Nepal-India border towns prior to interview date. Among different ethnic groups who reported of working as a sex worker in India, one-third of the sampled occupational groups was found to have worked as a sex worker which was the highest proportion of among any other sampled ethnic groups.
- Almost 50 percent of the sex workers reported to have another profession other than the sex business. The mean and median weekly earnings from the secondary job was Rs. 732 and 500 respectively. The average weekly reported total income from sex work is Rs. 1,032 and it ranged from 30 to 9,500 rupees. The mean and median earnings from the last client was reported to be 346 and 250 rupees. It ranged from rupees 20 to 4,100.
- Almost 60 percent of the sex workers reported to have drunk alcohol during the last four weeks from the date of the interview, but 40 percent of the respondents reported to have never drunk any alcoholic beverages. Three, or 0.7 percent, sex workers reported taking some drugs to intoxicate them, but none of them have tried to inject any drugs using a syringe and needle.
- Only 41 percent of the sex workers reported to have ever attended the school. More than 56 percent of the total respondents were illiterate. Most of the illiterate respondents were from the disadvantaged groups. More than 80 percent of the Tharu, two-thirds of the occupational groups and more than three-fourths of the *Badi* reported to have been illiterate. On the contrary almost three-fourths of Brahamins and half of Chhetris were literate.
- Ethnically almost 29 percent of interviewed sex workers were Chhetri/Thakuri, 18 percent were from *Matwali* groups such as Magar/Tamang/Gurung/Rai/Limbu, 14 percent from occupational groups such as Kami/Damai/Sarki/Gaine, 13 percent were Tharu from the Terai region, 10 percent each were Brahamin from the Hill region and the *Badi*, and five percent from other Terai groups.
- One fourth of the respondents each were never married and widowed or separated. Almost half of the total respondents were married. Among the married group forty percent of the respondents reported to have married before the age of 16 years, which is illegal in Nepal.
- The mean age of the respondent was 26 years. Ninety percent of the respondents were below 36 years. More than two-thirds of the respondents were below 29 years of age.

1.1 Background

Women who engage in sexual services for commercial reasons face special of health problems for a variety of reasons. Frequent sexual contact with a number of partners makes these women specially vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). They also risk unplanned or unwanted pregnancies. At the same time, these women represent a potential source for rapid transmission of these diseases throughout the general population.

Additionally, Nepal's HIV epidemic is related to the epidemic in India, particularly Mumbai. It is a well-known and accepted fact that many Nepali girls are continuously being trafficked to India, especially to Mumbai, to be recruited in brothels. There are wide ranges of estimates made by different organizations and media regarding Nepali girls trafficked to India. For instance, a 1999 New ERA study reported that 8 out of 16 sex workers (50%) who returned from Mumbai were HIV positive, but they still were actively working as sex workers in Nepal. Men who have unprotected sexual encounters with "Mumbai-returned" sex workers would have high risk of contaminating HIV virus, which they can easily pass on to their unsuspecting wives and other sex partners.

In recent years, the rapid spread of STDs and the AIDS has generated more interest in condoms and their role in slowing down the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. However, to be useful in disease prevention, condom use must be understood and practiced effectively. Condom use by Female Sex Workers (FSWs) and their clients is a major concern of programs aimed at preventing AIDS/HIV transmission. By virtue of their behaviors FSWs are at particularly high risk of contracting the disease. This study attempts to understand the behaviors of these groups and to gather data which is considered vital for planners and program managers, health care providers, and donors to support the development of appropriate and effective intervention programs.

1.2 Organization of Report

The study report has been presented in two sections. The first section includes background, the study design and methodology, and the second section includes the findings of the study, including the profile and characteristic of the sex workers, their knowledge of HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI), and lastly the sexual behaviors, including the use of condoms.

1.3 Behavioral Surveillance Survey (BSS)

Behavioral surveillance is important in identifying behavioral practices that put people at high risk of becoming infected with HIV and STI monitoring changes in behavior over time; and in providing key information for planning and evaluating intervention programs. Behavioral surveillance should be an integral component of the national surveillance program on HIV/AIDS and STI so that behavior change can be monitored and interventions planned.

Risk behaviors that are important to track include not only unprotected sexual intercourse between sex workers and clients, but also in other sexual dyads such as sex with multiple partners, sex workers and non-paying partners, irregular sex partners, and husbands and wives (Mills S, Benjarattanaporn P, et. al. 1997). HIV epidemic spreads outside the groups of people with highest risk behavior by the sexual linkages between the populations with highest risk behavior and any population that has a lower level of risk. Behavioral surveillance can help to identify these sexual networks.

The Behavioral Surveillance Survey (BSS) for HIV prevention programs is based on serologic sentinel surveillance survey methods used to detect the emergence of HIV and monitor epidemic trends. BSSs also have the empirical background that the HIV is transmitted through “risk behavior” such as unprotected sex with sex workers, sharing of needle among Injecting Drug Users (IDUs), multiple sex partners etc. Behavioral surveillances surveys are the systems for quantitatively assessing sexual behavior changes, consisting of structured questionnaires, administered periodically to samples of target groups in specific geographic areas (FHI/Nepal, 1995).

In 1998, the first BSS in Nepal was conducted in 16 Terai districts (from Jhapa in the east to Rupandehi in the west) along the major highway routes. Sentinel populations for the study were female sex workers and their clients. The client group included transport workers, industrial workers, police and *Rickshawaala*. It was repeated every year and four rounds of BSSs have already been completed.

The first Far-Western BSS among the female sex workers along the Mahendra Highway was started in September 2002 and this report presents the results of that BSS.

1.4 Objectives

The main objectives of the first round of BSS are:

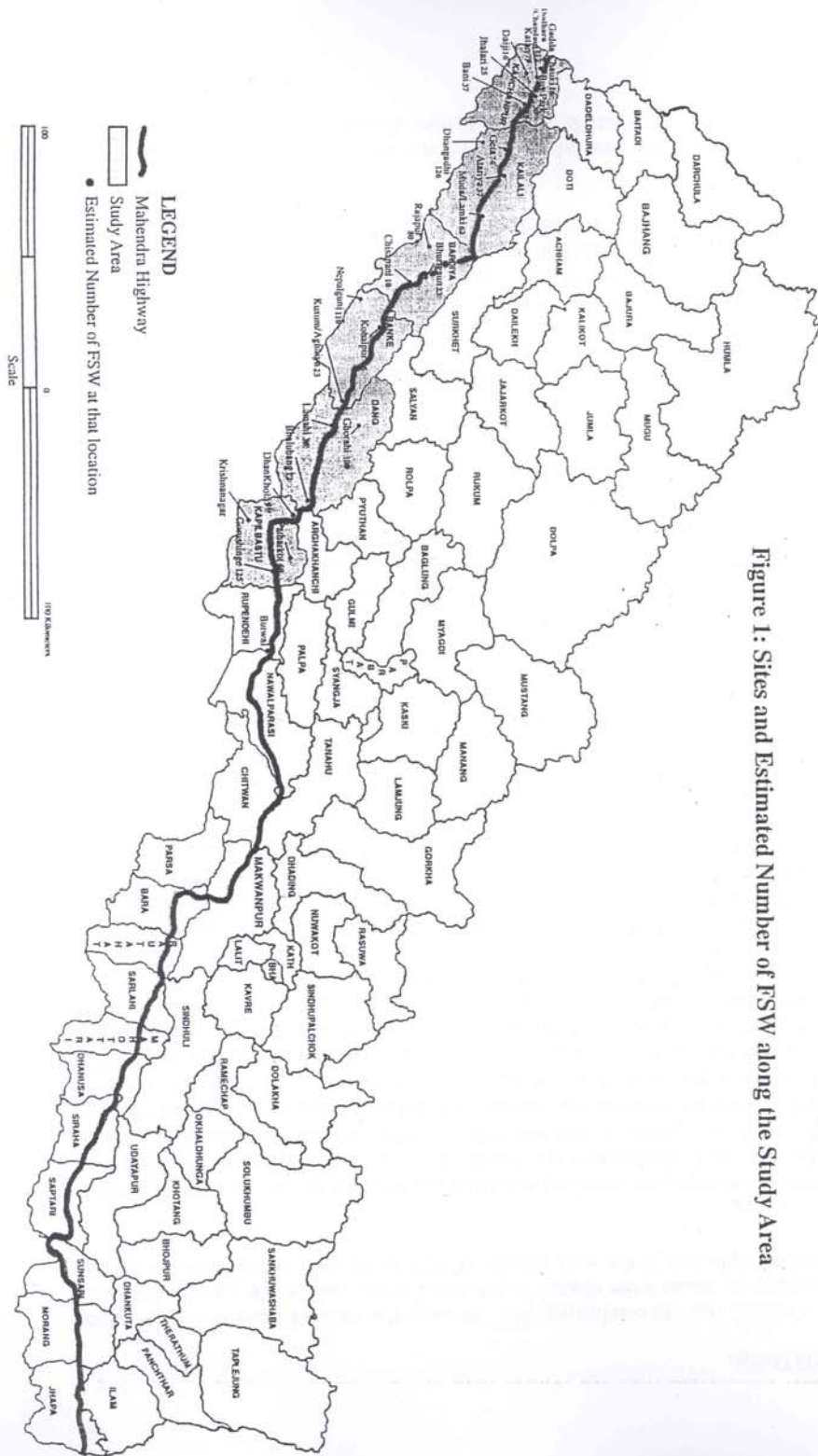
- To systematically measure and monitor HIV risk behavior trends among sex workers in Far Western Terai districts.
- To measure risk behaviors, which lead to HIV infection, as well as behaviors, such as condom use, which protect people against HIV.
- To establish baseline data that can measure behavior changes over time.

1.5 Study Design and Methodology

1.5.1 Study Population

One of high-risk sub-populations of female sex workers was included in this BSS baseline. In it, no particular sentinel sub-group of male clients is covered. However, in order to design a future clients' survey and to compare with the characteristics of transport workers plying on eastern Terai region along the Mahendra Highway a small sample of transport workers was also studied from the present study area.

Figure 1: Sites and Estimated Number of FSW along the Study Area



1.5.2 Sample Design

Sampling is a crucial stage in conducting BSS, because the surveys need to be conducted repeatedly overtime to measure the change in the trend in the successive rounds. Sampling process should be replicable in the next rounds of BSS to be able to measure the change correctly.

It required extra effort to prepare sampling design of sex workers as they are not only highly mobile but they also work clandestinely and besides there is no reliable data estimating their number. A two-week reconnaissance visit was made prior to the survey for mapping exercise in order to find out sites for sex work and estimate number of sex workers along the highway. The list of sites where sex workers solicit their clients was produced during the mapping exercise and it was utilized for drawing a sampling frame. Availability of as many FSW respondents as possible was considered as main criterion while identifying survey sites. The current sampling frame is subject to change depending upon police and military activity along the far-western part of Mahendra Highway.

The mapping exercise yielded 20 major sites from six districts (Figure 1), where sex workers solicit clients. During the mapping exercise in July 2002, it was estimated that there were 1050 sex workers in these major sites. Due to increased police and military activity during the actual survey (September-October 2002) three sites identified during the mapping exercise found to have ceased to exist. Similarly, after police and military activity in post Maoist's attack in Argakanchi district many FSWs working along the roadside were at run. Populations of FSWs tend to be in a constant state of flux, expanding or decreasing from one month to the next, depending on the extent of harassment by police and military. A number of FSWs thus lead a very transient life. A rapid assessment of FSWs working along the high way shows a new distribution of FSW in these locations.

It is also important to mention here that each sex worker has her own network. She communicates with those friends who do not want to be exposed but work secretly as sex workers. Sex workers who were interviewed later contacted many secret sex workers. Secret sex workers do not solicit the clients through the well known establishments such as *Bhatti pasal* (a local liquor shop), restaurant /hotel / lodge, petty/tea shop and squatters area. Rather they prefer to communicate through their trusted friends and operate from their own residence.

1.5.3 Sample Size

Due to difficulty in estimating the exact population size of the respondent groups, past experiences were used to allocate sample size of FSWs groups of respondents at different locations. For this purpose, the sites and localities identified during the reconnaissance visit were used. Numbers of sex workers to be interviewed in different sites were proportionally allocated using the estimated number of sex workers in each of those sites. Specific numbers of FSWs for each of the sites along the highway was decided, making a total of 400 minimum samples. A sample of 407 female sex workers was randomly selected at different locations. (Table 1.1).

Due to increased security activities of police and military in Pattharkot, Gorusinge and Lamahi and Maoist's insurgents attack in Arghaknnchi district the sex workers were at run

from these locations. It was felt that the previous estimate of the number of FSW was not very helpful. As a result a rapid assessment of the number of sex workers at different locations was made. On the basis of this new assessment sample was drawn from different locations.

Table 1.1: Distribution of Sample Size by Location

Location	Number of Interviewed Sites	Estimated Number of Sex Workers	Number of Sex Workers Sampled
Bangai - Lamahi	9	242	93
Lamahi - Bhurigaon	5	231	89
Bhurigaon - Dhangadi	11	262	100
Dhangadi - Mahendranagar	7	315	125
Total	32	1050	407

Source: Rapid Assessment Survey

1.5.4 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire that was used earlier in the first BSS survey along the highway of eastern Terai with some additional questions was used to collect data. The questionnaire included demographic characteristics, sexual behaviors—sexual history, use of condoms, risk perception, awareness of HIV/AIDS/STI, incidence of STI symptoms and alcohol/drug use habit. This information will be used as indicators to measure the behavioral changes among the female sexual workers group over time. A set of questionnaires is included in the Annex.

Trained interviewers of the same sex administered the questionnaire. Due to the sensitive nature of the project, it was essential to build rapport with the sex workers. Thus, they had to be approached two or more times if necessary, before they agreed to be interviewed.

There were number of cases where the sex workers had asked to be interviewed by the male interviewer instead of the female interviewer, and the request was granted.

1.5.5 Pre-Test of the Questionnaire

The Nepali version of the questionnaire was pre-tested in Kalanki of Kathmandu district. After the pre-test the questionnaires were reviewed on the basis of responses received during pre-test in a joint session of New ERA and FHI team members and relevant changes were made. The questionnaires were then translated into English and sent to FHI office for final comments.

1.5.6 Recruitment, Training and Field Work

Twelve experienced persons, four supervisors and eight interviewers, were recruited for the survey. Most of these persons had previous experience in behavioral surveillance survey. Their training commenced immediately after their selection, towards the end of August 2002. Initially, the training focused on general briefing on the objectives of the programs and the general methodology of BSS survey. The major part of the training period was spent on familiarizing the team with the questionnaires and operational definition of key words. Later, the training emphasized role-playing and actual practice of filling up the questionnaires. Four different teams consisting of one male and two female field researchers in each team were sent to the field. The fieldwork started on September 7, 2002 and lasted for almost six weeks.

1.5.7 Informed Consent and Incentives to the Sex Workers

Since confidentiality was one of the most important aspects of this survey, interviewers were never asked their names. They were first told about the purpose of the study; interview was administered only after permission was granted. As an incentive, participating sex workers were given some snacks and money in the presence a member of the research team.

1.6 Data Processing

All the completed questionnaires and the codes assigned to each individual question at the field level were thoroughly checked by the research assistant before the coding started. Prior to coding, a coding manual for each set of data was prepared. On the basis of this manual, the coders started coding all the open-ended questions and rechecked codes assigned by the field staff. After checking, the data was entered into the computer using FOX PRO. Later it was converted into SPSS PC for further analysis.

1.7 Problems Encountered During the Fieldwork

- Due to increased activity of Maoist insurgents in many sampled districts, the situation was no longer normal in villages or communities. Every new person that arrived in the village was under surveillance from security personnel, villagers and above all from the Maoists.

On September 8, 2002, Maoists attacked the district headquarter of Arghakachhi district in western Nepal. As a result the security was increased along the highway joining the district. One of the teams working in the town of Gorusingay on Mahendra Highway, which is also the entry point from Mahendra Highway into Arghakhanchhi district, was arrested by police on suspicion of being Maoists. After explaining why they were talking privately with sex workers (not even allowing family members of

the respondents to enter during the interview), the team members were released four hours later. This incident naturally left a negative impact upon the team.

- Due to increased security reasons, the settlements at Chisapani of Kailali district and the settlements in and around the Mahendranagar Buspark of Kanchanpur district were completely demolished. A large number of sex workers used to operate at these two settlements. Similarly, a large number of FSWs operating at Lamki of Kailali district had moved on due to police and military harassment.

2.1 Characteristics of Female Sex Workers

Some literature classify the sex workers operating along the Mahendra Highway of Mid- and Far-Western regions as: i) traditional prostitutes whose origins are rooted in ancient cultural and religious practices; and ii) local girls plying their trade in towns across the country.

2.1.1 Sex Work Based on Religion and Culture

Historically, culture and religion have played an important role in the development of the sex trade among: (a) the *Badi* caste and (b) among the *Devaki*. While a few studies have been done or articles written on the *Badi*, information regarding the *Devaki* is quite scarce. Since ten percent of the sampled FSWs in this study are from the *Badi* group, a brief history is given only of the *Badi*.

a. History of the *Badi* Group

The *Badi* caste traditionally earned their living as entertainers, dancers and musicians. Originally, they came from far-western Nepal, but plied their trade around the country, entertaining on the streets, at weddings, and other celebrations. They were also patronized by the Ranas and other elite classes. According to one literature, the women "were also used for sexual pleasures of the rich folks but the women did not prostitute as a profession". The literature mentions that they came to Nepal from India in the fourteenth century, first settling in Salyan and later in Rolpa, Rukum, Dailekh, Seti, Jajarkot, Dang-Deukhuri, Banke and Bardiya districts of western Nepal. They moved around in groups of three or more families singing, dancing and narrating the stories of the great Hindu epics of the *Mahabharat* and the *Ramayana*. They were primarily supported by rulers of the three principalities of Jajarkot, Salyan and Musikot, and to a lesser extent, by high caste landlords. Their patrons-cum-clients provided them with their basic needs, and in return, the *Badi* entertained them and provided them with sex, which was not the central element but a part of the whole packaged entertainment.

The literature attributes the present situation in which *Badi* women practice prostitution from an early age to the overthrow of the Rana regime, in 1950, and subsequent establishment of King Mahendra's *Panchayat* government, when the rulers and landlords in western Nepal were stripped of much of their previous authority, and lost the right to tax subjects and exact unpaid labour and rent (on agricultural land) from them. As a result they couldn't afford to support the *Badi*. As a result, the *Badi* women, became professional prostitutes to earn their living. They started to move into urban and semi-urban areas such as Tulsipur, Ghorahi, Rajapur, Nepalgunj where demand for sex workers was expanding.

The descent into prostitution was further accelerated as radio, movies, television and video entertainment reduced the demand for the traditional forms of entertainment practiced by the *Badi*. As a result, their sources of income were jeopardized.

Primarily because of their practice of their traditional trade, the *Badis* are considered low caste and of low status. However, their clients are not limited by nationality, caste or

profession. They may be Nepali or Indian, although Nepali patrons are the most common. They may be truck drivers, engineers or civil servants, and they can belong to any caste, non-caste or class. Despite the restrictions of orthodox Hinduism which forbids contact between them and the high castes Brahman, Chhetri or Thakuri, many high caste Nepalese men have sex with *Badi* women. The high caste clients often but not always visit the *Badi* girl in groups, using her one after the other purely for sex. This is the reason why some *Badi* women charge on a fixed-time basis rather than by client.

One interesting phenomenon—some might even consider it cynical—is that among the *Badi* the birth of a girl is openly welcomed, since she will provide for the support and security of the family. This is in stark contrast to the mainstream Nepali society, where, broadly speaking, the birth of a boy is a matter of family pride but that of a girl burdensome. Therefore, the status of women in the *Badi* family is high since the survival of the family depends upon them. The male members' contribution to the family economy is secondary. Although the *Badi* men once worked as fishermen, musicians also made musical instruments, many today appear to function as "support staff" for the family business, working as procurers and for their sisters and mothers.

Badi sex work is basically a family enterprise. A *Badi* man may find clients and the mother may negotiate prices until a daughter is old or experienced enough to know the appropriate rates for different customers. The parents and the daughter welcome the clients and may sit down to chat with them over a glass of *rakshi*, home-made liquor. There does not appear to be any guilt or negative value placed on the sexual transaction.

Table 2.1: Demographic Characteristics of Sex Workers

b) Local Sex Workers

"Local" girls sell and both local and non-local men buy sex all over the mid and far-western Nepal. Given their social and demographic profile and some additional facts noted by the interviewers, most of the "local" girls were born in the Terai and some were born in the Hills. In pursuit of a better life sex workers born in Hills migrated to Terai with their family.

2.1.2 *Demographic Characteristics of FSWs*

The mean age of the respondent was 26 years. Ninety percent of the respondents were below 36 years. More than two-thirds of the respondents were below 29 years of age.

Marital Status

Almost half of the total respondents were married. One fourth of the respondents each were never married and widowed or separated. Among the married group forty percent of the respondents reported to have married before the age of 16 years, which is illegal in Nepal. The

Age of the Respondent	N	%
14 Years	4	1.0
15 - 19	78	19.2
20 - 24	101	24.8
25 - 29	100	24.6
30 - 34	72	17.7
35 - 39	32	7.9
40 - 44	13	3.2
45 - 48	7	1.7
Mean Age: 26 Years Standard Deviation: 7.2		
Total	407	100
Marital Status		
Married	196	48.2
Never Married	102	25.1
Divorced/Separated	74	18.2
Widow	35	8.6
Total	407	100
Currently Living With		
Husband	161	39.6
Boy Friend	21	5.2
Not Living with Husband or Boy Friend	225	55.3
Total	407	100
Age at First Marriage	N	%
7 - 9 Years	2	0.7
10 - 14	109	35.7
15 - 19	154	50.5
20 - 27	40	13.1
Total	305	100
Mean Age at First Marriage Standard Deviation	15.7 3.0	

Source: FSW Survey.

legal age of marriage with the consent of parents is 16 years for the girls. Sixty-five percent of the sex workers had married while they were still in their teens. The respondents' mean age of marriage was 15.7 years. It should be noted that there was not much difference on mean age at marriage among the different ethnic groups. The mean age at marriage of the respondents lie between 15 and 16 years among the different ethnic groups (Table 2.1).

Although, 48 percent of the sex workers reported as currently married, but only 40 percent reported to have lived with their husbands (Table 2.1). The majority (55%) of the sex workers were living neither with their husbands nor with their boy friends. Only five percent of the respondents were living with their boy friends. Six percent of the total sample, or 13 percent of married women, reported that their husband had a second wife.

2.1.3 Socio-Economic Characteristics of FSWs

Sixty-four percent of the respondents were born in the western Terai region of the country. The majority (93%) of the female sex workers, including the *Badi* group, reported that their permanent residence was in the Terai regions west of Butwal in Rupendehi district. The respondents were found to operate their sex work business locally. At the time of interview, it was found that 80 percent of the sex workers were operating within their own districts of residence and 20 percent were found to have crossed their district boundary, mainly into neighboring districts, to solicit clients. Both the groups are highly mobile within and outside their permanent residential districts.

Ethnically almost 29 percent of interviewed sex workers were Chhetri/ Thakuri, 18 percent were from *Matwali* groups such as Magar/Tamang/Gurung/ Rai/Limbu, 14 percent from occupational groups such as Kami/Damai/Sarki/Gaine, 13 percent were Tharu from the Terai region, 10 percent each were Brahamin from the Hill region and the *Badi*, and five percent from other Terai groups (Table 2.2).

Education

Only 41 percent of the sex workers reported to have ever attended the school. More than 56 percent of the total respondents were illiterate. Among those who ever attended school, 19

Table 2.2: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Sex Workers

Ethnicity/Caste	N	%
Chhetri/Thakuri	120	29.5
Magar/Tamang/Gurung/Rai/Limbu/Newar	72	17.7
Kami/Damai/Sarki/Gaine/Kumhal	58	14.3
Tharu	54	13.3
Brahamin	42	10.3
<i>Badi</i>	41	10.1
Other Terai Groups	20	4.9
Total	407	100
Education		
Illiterate	229	56.3
Literate with no formal schooling	13	3.2
Primary Level (Grade 1 - 5)	79	19.4
Secondary Level (Grade 6 - 9)	75	18.4
SLC (Grade 10)	14	3.4
Total	407	100
Dependants of Sex Worker		
Yes	246	60.4
No	161	39.6
Mean Number of Adults: 1.7 Standard Deviation: 1.1		
Mean Number of Children: 2.4 Standard Deviation: 1.2		
Any Other Profession Other than Sex Worker	N	%
Yes	201	49.4
No	206	50.6
Type of Other Profession		
Tea Shop/Hotel	21	10.4
<i>Bhatti Pasal</i> / Local Liquor Shop	48	23.9
Daily Wage Labor	29	14.4
Petty Shop/Tailoring /Beauty Parlour	19	9.5
Waitress / Dancer / Singer	20	10.0
<i>Paan Pasal</i>	8	4.0
Home Made Liquor Supplier	19	9.5
Working in Own Farm	8	4.0
Fuel Wood Supplier	6	1.5
Domestic Worker	10	5.0
Government Service Holder	7	1.7
Others	6	3.0
Total	201	100
Permanent Residence		
Central Hill Region	2	0.5
Western Hill Region	10	2.5
Mid- Western Hill Region	12	2.9
Far-Western Hill Region	5	1.2
Central Terai Region	4	1.0
Western Terai Region	47	11.5
Mid-western Terai Region	106	26.0
Far-Western Terai Region	220	54.1
India	1	0.2
Total	407	100

Source: FSW Survey.

percent reported to have attended primary level education but only 4 percent reported to have completed it. Similarly, 18 percent of the respondents reported to have attended secondary level education and only 3 percent completed the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examinations (Table 2.2). Furthermore, the data disclosed that most of the illiterate respondents were from the disadvantaged groups. More than 80 percent of the Tharu, two-thirds of the occupational groups and more than three-fourths of the *Badi* reported to have been illiterate. On the contrary almost three-fourths of Brahamins and half of Chhetris were literate (Table 2.3).

Economic Status

Sixty percent of the sex workers reported to have dependents. These dependents were either adult or children or both. A third of the total respondents reported their dependents were only children, and another four percent of the respondents reported to have only adult. The average number of dependents per sex worker was 1.7 adults and 2.4 children (Table 2.2).

Secondary Profession

Almost 50 percent of the sex workers reported to have another profession other than the sex business. Among them 24 percent reported to have *Bhatti Pasal* (local liquor shop), 14 percent were working as daily wage laborers, 10 percent each reported to have tea shop/hotel and working as a waitress/dancer/ singer in a restaurant, and nine percent each reported to have a petty shop and supplying home-made liquor to restaurants and private residences (Table 2.2).

Income

Working on average four days a week and accepting on average 2.6 clients per week, the mean and median weekly earnings from sex work were Rupees (Rs) 1,032 and 600 respectively. The mean and median was calculated from the combined value of cash and gifts received by the sex worker from their clients. It is customary for clients to occasionally offer gifts such as a dress or cosmetics, and 43 percent of the sampled population reported to have received such gifts. The value of the gifts ranged from 10 to 1,000 rupees. But fifty percent of such gifts were valued at rupees 100 or less. The average weekly reported total income ranged from 30 to 9,500 rupees. The mean and median earnings from the last client was reported to be 346 and 250 rupees. It ranged from rupees 20 to 4,100 (Table 2.4).

Table 2.3: Educational Status of the Respondents by their Ethnic Groups

Ethnic Group	Literate		Illiterate	
	N	%	N	%
Other Terai Groups	10	50.0	10	50.0
Tharu	9	16.7	45	83.3
Brahamin	31	73.8	11	26.2
Chhetri	61	50.8	59	49.2
Matwali Groups	39	54.2	33	45.8
Occupational	19	32.8	39	67.2
Badi	9	22.0	32	78.0
Total	178	43.7	229	56.3

p<0.01

Source: FSW Survey.

Table 2.4: Respondents' Income from Sex Work

Weekly Income from Sex Work	Cash		Gift		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not Paid	1	0.2	233	57.2	----	----
Up to Rs. 100	13	3.2	87	21.4	10	2.5
Rs 101 - 200	48	11.8	34	8.4	34	8.4
Rs 201 - 500	132	32.4	42	10.3	130	31.9
Rs 501 - 1000	121	29.7	11	2.7	124	30.5
Above Rs 1000	92	22.6	0	0	109	26.8
Total	407	100	407	100	407	100
Mean Income	939.4		93.0		1032.4	
Standard Deviation	1140.5		175.0		1247.2	
Median Income	600.0		0		600.0	
Income from Last Time Sex Work	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not Paid	7	1.7	234	57.5	1	0.2
Up to Rs. 100	124	30.5	136	33.4	103	25.3
Rs 101 - 200	95	23.3	22	5.4	84	20.6
Rs 201 - 500	138	33.9	13	3.2	140	34.4
Rs 501 - 1000	32	7.9	2	0.5	54	13.3
Above Rs 1000	11	2.7	0	0	25	6.1
Total	407	100	407	100	407	100
Mean Income	304.0		42.5		346.4	
Standard Deviation	364.6		88.2		400.2	
Median Income	200.0		0		250.0	

Source: FSW Survey.

As mentioned earlier, 49 percent of the sampled population reported to have a secondary job other than sex work. The mean and median weekly earnings from the secondary job was Rs 732 and 500 respectively. Tea shop/hotel and *Bhatti Pasal* owners seem to have earned more than the other types of professions. Their average weekly income was reported to have been Rs 1,279 and 1,038 respectively. The average weekly income of other types of professions was less than Rupees 1,000.

2.2 Visit to India

One half of the sampled sex workers reported to have visited India, including Nepal-India border towns prior to interview date. Almost all of them reported to have gone freely. Ten percent of the sampled population reported to have worked as a sex worker in India (Table 2.5). Among different ethnic groups who reported of working as a sex worker in India, one-third of the sampled occupational groups was found to have worked as a sex worker which was the highest proportion of among any other sampled ethnic groups.

On average a sex worker worked in India for 6.1 months. Almost half of those who had reported working as a sex worker in India were found to have operated only in Nepal- India border towns such as Krishnanagar, Rupadiya, Raxaul, Banbasa, Sunauli and Gauriphanta. Another half were found to have operated in major cities in India such as Bombay, Delhi, Lucknow, Kanpur, Nainital, Tanakpur and Darjelling, as well as the Punjab and Gujrat regions of India. (Table 2.5). A large majority (49%) of the sex workers reported to have worked in the border town of

Table 2.5: Frequencies of Respondents Who Have Visited India and Work as a Sex Worker in Indian Cities

Ever Traveled to India	N	%
Yes	203	49.9
No	204	50.1
Ever Worked as a Sex Worker in India		
Yes	42	10.3
No	161	39.6
Not Applicable	204	50.1
Total	407	100
Names of the Major Cities Worked in India*		
Delhi	9	22.0
Bombay	5	12.2
Lucknow	2	4.9
Kanpur	1	2.4
Gujrat	1	2.4
Punjab	1	2.4
Nainital	1	2.4
Tanakpur	2	4.9
Gorakhpur	6	14.6
Lakhimpur (UP)	1	2.4
Darjelling	1	2.4
Haridwar	1	2.4
Name of the Nepal-India Border Towns Worked		
Krishna Nagar	1	2.4
Rupaydia	2	4.9
Raxaul	1	2.4
Banbasa	20	48.8
Sunauli	1	2.4
Gauriphanta	1	2.4
Mean Number of Months Worked in India	57	6.1
Standard Deviation		12.1

Source: FSW Survey

Note: * Due to Multiple responses the percentage add up more than 100.

Banbasa. Similarly, 22 percent of the sex workers reported to have worked in Delhi and additional 12 percent worked in Bombay. Some sex workers said they had also worked in other Indian cities and border towns (Table 2.5).

Respondents interviewed in Kailali and Kanchanpur districts, which comprised 50 percent of the sample, also reported to the interviewers that the sex workers frequently cross the Nepal-India border such as Banbasa in Kanchanpur district, Gauriphanta and Lakhimpur in Kailali district to solicit their clients, but they generally did not stay more than a few hours and returned to their homes at night. The sex workers also reported that as long as they had enough clients within Nepal, they did not cross the border.

2.3 Level of Awareness of AIDS and STI

Awareness of AIDS is based on the number of sex workers who replied positively to the question "Have you ever heard of the disease called HIV/AIDS?" and those who spontaneously mentioned AIDS when asked another question "Have you ever heard of diseases that can be transmitted through sexual intercourse?" Similarly, the knowledge of STI is also based on the number of respondents who replied positively to the question "Have you ever heard of diseases that can be transmitted through sexual intercourse?"

The level of awareness of AIDS is very high among the FSWs, as almost all of (99.5%) them reported to have had heard about AIDS. Similarly, 92 percent of the respondents reported to have heard about sexually transmitted diseases. Furthermore, neither the ethnicity nor the educational background of the respondents appears to be a factor in their knowledge about STI and AIDS, since the majority appeared equally aware about STI and AIDS.

While public awareness of STI and AIDS is a necessary condition for behavioural change, actual change depends to a great extent on the accuracy of knowledge about contracting and preventing STI/AIDS, and each individual's perception of the risk of becoming infected with disease. The following questions were asked to find out whether the sex workers who had heard of STI/AIDS were well informed about the nature of the disease:

- i) Do you know any one who is infected with HIV or who has died of AIDS?
- ii) Do you think that a healthy looking person can be infected with HIV virus that causes AIDS?

The question "Have you ever had an HIV test?" was asked as a proxy indicator to measure how likely it was for the sex workers to contract AIDS?

Among those who had heard of the disease, almost 50 percent of the sex workers knew some people who were infected with HIV or had died of AIDS, but 50 percent did not know anyone. A large majority (84%) of the sex workers was aware that a healthy looking person could have AIDS. Similarly, 87 percent of the sex workers reported that they had never been tested for HIV. This information may be interpreted as a large number of sex workers believe that they are unlikely to get AIDS.

Among those who had an HIV test, 29 of them, or 57 percent, reported to have done so voluntarily and 22, or 43 percent, were required to take it. Seventy-eight percent, or 40 sex workers, had their test done within a year or less, and 21 percent, or 11 of them, had their

HIV test more than a year ago. Ninety-two percent or 47 sex workers reported knowing the results of their HIV test.

Similarly in order to test the level of awareness on STI, the FSWs were asked, “What could be the symptoms for a patient suffering from STI disease?” In response, 69 percent mentioned genital ulcer/sore, 49 percent mentioned swelling in groin area/itching, 47 percent mentioned foul smelling discharge, 29 percent said burning pain during urination and 24 percent mentioned pain during intercourse. However, 19 percent could not mention any symptoms of STI.

2.3.1 Sources of Information on AIDS

Radio, billboards/signboards and friends or relatives were the three most cited sources among the listed sources of information on HIV/AIDS mentioned by the respondents. Ninety-seven percent of the sex workers had heard about AIDS from the radio, thus it was by far the most often cited source of knowledge on AIDS; 79 percent said they learned about AIDS from Billboards/ Signboards, and 72 percent said from friends or relatives. Other sources of information mentioned by the respondents included television, magazine, pamphlets and health workers (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6: Sources of Information on HIV/AIDS as Cited by the Respondents

Sources	N	%
Radio	394	96.8
Friends / Relatives	294	72.2
Television	243	59.7
Newspaper / Magazines	164	40.3
Pamphlets / Posters	238	58.5
Health Workers	175	43.0
School / Teachers	52	12.8
People from NGO	148	36.4
Billboards / Sign Board	322	79.1
Cinema Hall	152	37.3
Comic Book	108	26.5
Community Event or Training	79	19.4
At Work Place	75	18.4
Street Drama	72	17.7
Video Van	58	14.3
Community Workers	57	14.0
Others	3	0.7

Source: FSW Survey

Note: Due to Multiple responses the percentage add up more than 100.

2.3.2 Knowledge of Ways to Avoid Getting AIDS

Knowledge of the ways in which HIV is transmitted is critical to adopting behaviors that prevent infection. An array of questions sought to find out how many respondents knew about HIV transmission. Questions enquired about knowledge of sexual and non-sexual transmission and other questions probed for related misinformation.

Among those who had heard of AIDS, an overwhelming majority (97%) reported to have knowledge about how the AIDS virus is transmitted. Among those who reported to have knowledge, all of them knew at least one way to avoid HIV virus transmission.

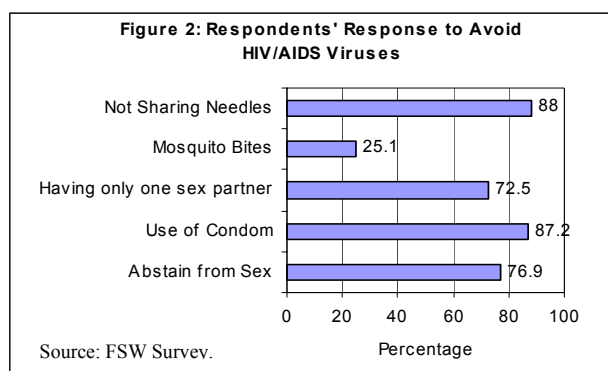
Of the respondents who knew about the transmission of HIV virus, a majority of them identified mainly two methods of

Table 2.7: Respondent's Knowledge on How AIDS Virus is Transmitted

Respondents who know how AIDS virus transmitted	N	%
Yes	396	97.3
No	9	2.2
Knowledge About How it Gets Transmitted*		
Sexual Intercourse	172	43.4
Sex without condom	309	78.0
Multiple Sex Partners	210	53.0
Blood Transfusion	136	34.3
Having exchanged syringe and needles	138	34.8
Infected Mother to her new-born baby	33	8.3
Others	15	3.8

Source: FSW Survey

Note: * Due to Multiple responses the number and percentage add up more than 100.



such transmission: i) having sex without a condom (78%) and ii) having multiple sexual partners (53%) (Table 2.7).

When as how can a person can avoid transmission of AIDS virus, the respondents who knew about sexual transmission of HIV mentioned three safe behaviours most often: i) not sharing needles (88%), ii) using a condom (87.2%) and iii) abstaining from sex (76.9%). Having only one sexual partner was also mentioned by an impressive majority (72.5%) (Figure 2).

Furthermore, more than three-fourths of the sex workers made reference to abstinence.

Respondents were asked whether they thought the virus that causes AIDS could be transmitted from a mother to her child. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents knew about this form of transmission, but eleven percent had no knowledge of such transmission.

2.4 Sexual Behaviours

The sex workers who were interviewed reported to have been operating since the last 32 months on average from the district location where they were interviewed. More than 45 percent of them were working at the place since last 20 months only. It was found that 71 percent of the sex workers had their first sexual contact before or at the age of 16 years. At the mean age of 15, they had their first sexual intercourse. More than one fifth of sex workers reported to have started taking money first time in exchange of sexual intercourse when they were 16 or below 16 years old. On average at the age of 22 years, they had sexual contact for the money (Table 2.8).

When asked how many days ago

Table 2.8: Sexual Behaviours of the Respondents

	N	%
Number of Months Working as a Sex Worker at this Location		
Less than a month	34	8.4
1 - 10 months	46	11.3
11 - 20	110	27.0
21 - 30	73	17.9
31 - 40	42	10.3
41 - 50	27	6.6
51 - 60	23	5.7
More than 60 months	52	12.8
Mean Months	407	32.3
Standard Deviation: 33.1		
Age at First Sexual Contact		
10 Years	1	0.2
11 - 12	26	6.4
13 - 14	117	28.7
15 - 16	146	35.9
17 - 18	78	19.2
More than 18 years	39	9.6
Mean Years	407	15.5
Standard Deviation 2.3		
Age at First Sexual Intercourse for the Money		
12 years	1	0.2
13 - 16 years	86	21.1
17 - 20	100	24.6
21 - 24	93	22.9
25 - 28	62	15.2
29 - 32	39	9.6
More than 32 years	26	6.4
Mean years	407	22.1
Standard Deviation 6.1		
Number of Clients with Sexual Contact in Last Week		
None	59	14.5
1	74	18.2
2	109	26.8
3	63	15.5
4	46	11.3
5	25	6.1
More than 5	31	7.6
Mean Number	407	2.6
Standard Deviation 2.5		
Number of Days Worked as a Sex Worker in a Week		
1 day	68	16.7
2	70	17.2
3	57	14.0
4	62	15.2
5	62	15.2
6	30	7.4
7	58	14.3
Mean Number of Days	407	3.7
Standard Deviation 2.0		
Day(s) of the last sexual intercourse		
On the day of interview	39	9.6
1-2 days ago	183	45.8
3-5 days ago	95	23.7
6-10 days ago	50	12.4
More than 10 days ago	34	8.5
Mean	401	3.8
Standard Deviation: 4.6		
Number of Clients Served on the Day of Last Intercourse		
One	321	80.0
Two	71	17.7
Three	9	2.2
Mean	401	1.2
Standard Deviation: 0.47		

they had their last sexual intercourse, the Mean number was found to be 4 and the Median 2. However, the response of the sex workers to this question varied a great deal, ranging from the same day of interview to 30 days ago. On the question of the number of clients served on the day of last intercourse, the majority (80%) reported having had only one client. The Mean number of clients served by the sex worker on the day of last intercourse was 1.2 (Table 2.8).

2.4.1 Types of Clients

The sex workers reported to have been engaged in sex business on average worked 3.7 days a week, and on average they entertained 2.6 persons per week (Table 2.8). When asked what types of clients visited them, more than half the sex workers said transport workers (53.8%), followed by wage workers (47%), Police/Military (44%), businessmen (44%), local men (36%), civil servants (35%) and *Rickshawala* (13%). In addition to these persons some students, petty shop owners and occasionally social and political leaders were also reported as their clients (Table 2.9).

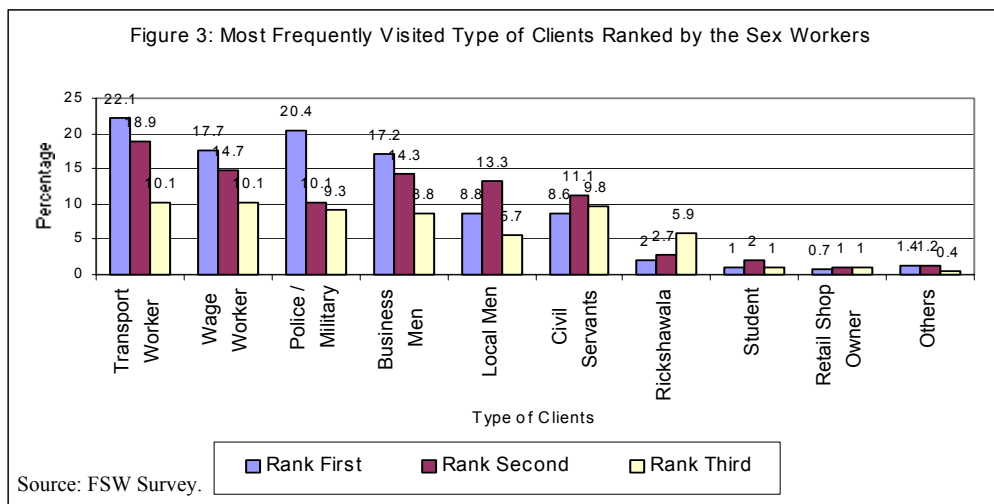
Table 2.9: Type of the Clients Reported by the Respondents

Type of Clients Frequently Visiting*	N	%
Transport Worker	219	53.8
Wage Worker	192	47.2
Police / Military	179	44.0
Businessmen	178	43.7
Local Men	148	36.4
Civil Servants	144	35.4
Rickshawala	55	13.5
Student	20	4.9
Retail Shop Owner	12	2.9
Social Worker / Political Leader	9	2.2
Others	13	3.2
Total	407	100.0

Source: FSW Survey

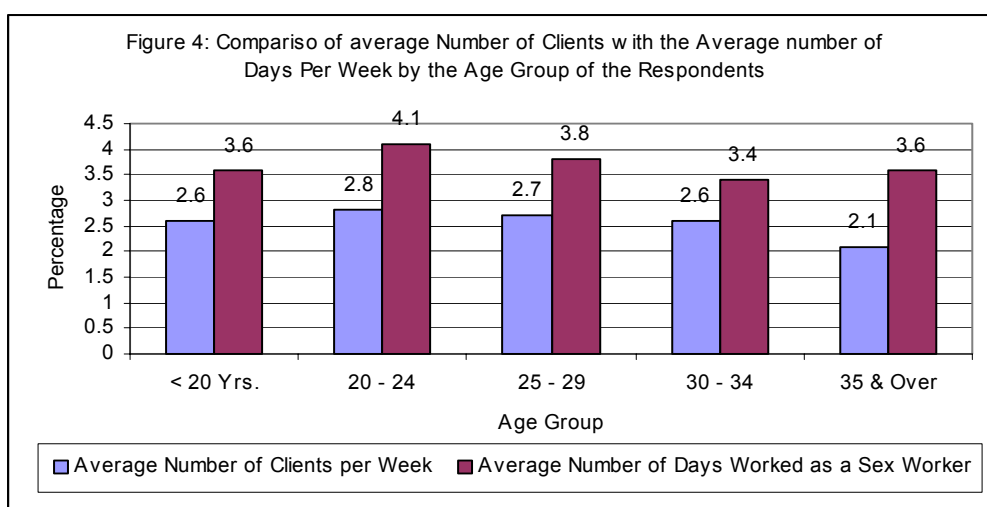
Note: * Due to multiple responses the percentage add up to more than 100.

Among the different type of clients the respondents were asked to rank the three most frequently visiting clients. Thus, 22 percent of the respondents ranked transport workers first, 20 percent ranked Police/Military, 18 percent wage workers, 17 percent businessmen, 9 percent each local men and petty shop owners, and 2 percent said *Rickshawala*. Similarly, 19 percent of the respondents ranked transport workers second, followed by wage workers, businessmen and so on (Figure 3).



The number of clients served by a sex worker in last week of the date of interview varied from 0 to 25 persons. There are number of variables which may affect the serving capacity of a sex worker, and the age of the sex worker could be one such effective variable. Comparing the average number of days worked as a sex worker per week and their average number of clients per week with the age of sex worker it was found that the sex worker of age groups of

20-24, 25-29 and 35-39 worked 4 days a week and also reported to have the highest average number of clients per week. Their average number of clients was 2.8, 2.7 and 2.7 respectively. These numbers were higher among the average number of clients served by the different age groups of the sex workers (Figure 4).



Source: FSW Survey.

2.5 Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)

Sexually transmitted infection is dependent on the number of sexual contact. In the case of the interviewed FSWs, one-fourth of the sex workers reported to have had at least one of the four symptoms of STI during past 12 months from the date of interview. The four symptoms were genital ulcer, genital discharge, lower abdominal pain and swelling in the groin area. Almost 19 percent of total respondents reported to have symptoms of genital discharge, 14 percent reported abdominal pain, almost 9 percent reported genital ulcer and 6 percent reported swelling in the groin area (Table 2.10).

Seventy one percent of the sex workers who were suffering from one of the STI diseases reported to have noticed the symptoms the first time during the past one-year. On average, they noticed the symptoms of the disease for the first time 15 months ago. Among the respondents who reported to have the symptoms of STI, more than three-fourths of them

Table 2.10: Reported Symptoms of STI by the Respondents

	N	%
Symptoms of STI During Past 12 Months*		
Genital Discharge	76	18.7
Lower Abdominal Pain	59	14.5
Genital Ulcer	36	8.8
Swelling in Groin Area	26	6.4
Months Ago When FSW Noticed STI Symptoms		
First Time		
Less than a month	6	5.9
1 - 6 months	39	38.6
7 - 12	27	26.7
13 - 24	8	7.9
More than 24 months	21	20.8
Mean	101	15.1
Standard Deviation		18.6
Weeks Before the Disease Last Appeared		
Less than a week	17	16.8
1 - 4 weeks	25	24.8
5 - 10	12	11.9
11 - 16	22	21.8
More than 16 weeks	25	24.8
Mean	101	17.2
Standard Deviation		25.2
Tried to Treat the Symptoms of the STI Disease		
Yes	77	76.2
No	24	23.8
Place the Respondents Sought Treatment for STI Symptoms		
Private Clinic	30	39.0
Hospital	23	29.9
Health Post / Health Center	10	13.0
Drug Store/Pharmacy	6	7.8
Others (Traditional healers, Self treatment, NGOs)	8	10.4
Total	77	100.0
Did You Receive any Advice on STI Problem from the Place Where You Sought Treatment		
Yes	46	59.7
No	31	40.3

Source: FSW Survey.

Note: * Due to multiple responses the percentage add up to more than 100.

reported to have the symptoms for the last time 16 weeks ago or less. On average, the last time they reported to have the symptoms of the disease was 17 weeks (Table 2.10).

Of the STI patients, more than three- fourths of them reported to have tried to treat the symptoms of the disease. The majority (56%) of the patients tried to treat it within a month after they noticed the symptoms for the first time and 44 percent reported to have treated them after a month or more. Among the respondents who sought treatment, the majority (39%) of them went to a private clinic, followed by hospital (30%), health post (13%), drug store (8%) and 10 percent went to various places, including traditional healers and NGOs. Only 60 percent of these respondents reported to have received advice from the place where they sought treatment (Table 2.10).

2.6 Sex Partners and Use of Condom

Since sexually transmitted infection is dependent on sexual contact, it is important to know the behaviours of the respondents' sex partners. For clarity, the sex partners of the sex workers have been classified into Paying and Non- Paying categories. Sex workers' husbands or boy friends were considered as Non-Paying Regular type of clients, and any person who buy sex in exchange of money or materials was considered as Paying Commercial type of clients.

2.6.1 Paying Sex Partners

The Mean number of commercial sex partners entertained by the sex workers in the last 30 days from the date of interview was 8 and the Median number was 7. The number of sex partners ranged from 0 to 95. More than three-fourths of the sex workers reported having 11 or fewer number of sex partners in the last 30 days from the date of the interview (Table 2.11). There was not much difference among the various age groups of 15 to 39 of the respondents on the average number of clients entertained in the last 30 days.

Among the paying sex partners there were a number of visitors who frequently visit the same sex worker. More than 59 percent of the respondents reported to have frequently visiting clients; they also reported that 81 percent of these frequently visiting clients had visited them in the last 30 days from the date of the interview. The average number of frequently visiting clients who had visited in the last 30 days was almost 1.0 (Table 2.11).

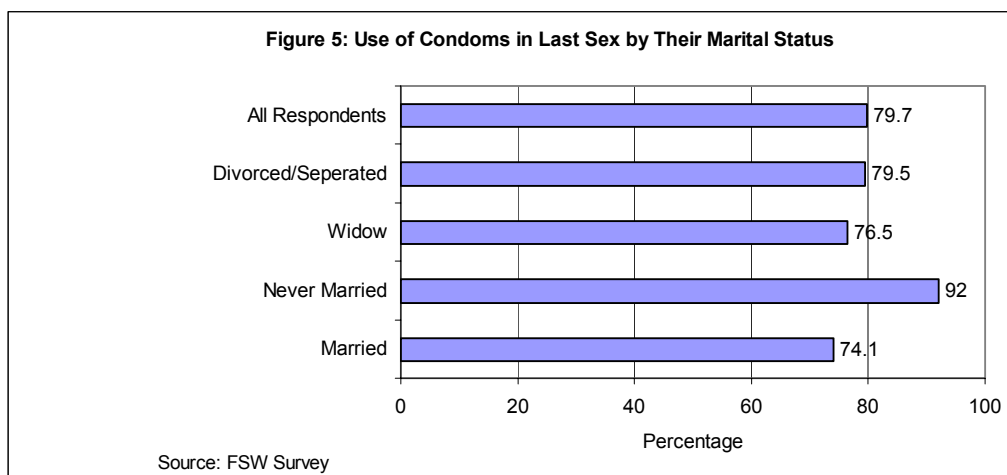
Table 2.11: Sexual Behavior of Paying Partners

	Number of Paying Sex Partners in Last 30 days									Frequently Visiting Paying Partners				
										Yes	No	Visited in Last 30 days		Mean Number visited in Last 30 days
	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-15	More than 15	Total			Yes	No	
N	6	60	63	56	51	57	81	33	407	241	166	196	45	Mean (N= 407): 0. 8 Standard Deviation:1.4
%	1.5	14.7	15.5	13.8	12.3	14.0	19.9	8.1	100	59.2	40.8	81.3	18.7	
	Mean (N= 407) : 8. 5 Standard Deviation :7. 5													

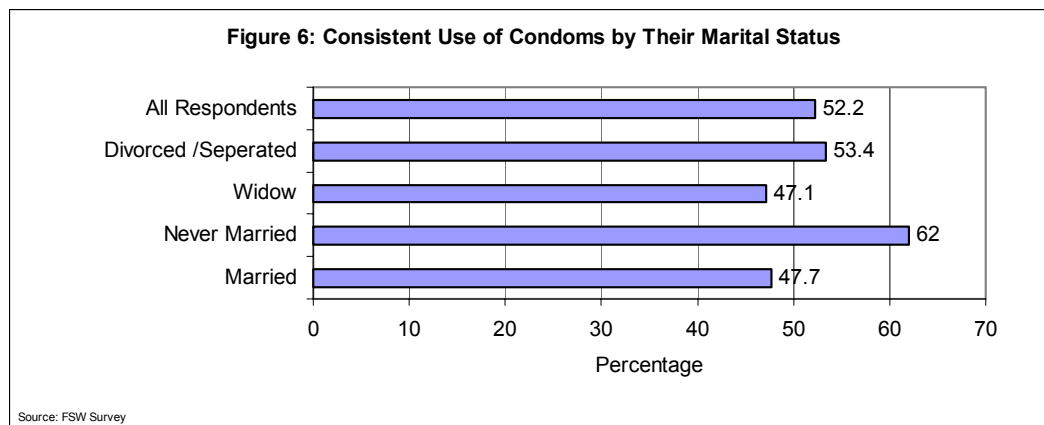
Source: FSWS Survey.

Use of Condom

Almost 79 percent of the sex workers reported the use of condom by their paying sex partners during the last intercourse. Comparing the use of condoms in last intercourse among the married and never married groups, it was interesting to note that a higher percentage of the never married, divorcee and widow groups of sex workers reported to have used condoms than the married groups (Figure 5). Ninety percent of the never married groups of sex workers reported that their clients used condoms, compared to 73 percent of married sex workers. Regarding the use of condoms in last intercourse by the frequently visiting clients of sex workers, 68 percent of them were reported to have used condoms. Among *Badi* sex workers, more than 87 percent reported that their clients used condoms during the last intercourse.



In response to a question on the consistent use of condoms in the last 12 months, only 52 percent of FSWs reported that their clients used condoms consistently. On further analysis of the data, a similar pattern as in use of condoms in last intercourse has been found among the married and never married groups of sex workers. Sixty one percent of never married groups of sex workers reported that their clients consistently used condoms, compared to 47 percent of married sex workers (Figure 6). Similarly 53 percent of frequently visiting clients of sex workers reported to have used the condoms consistently. More than 77 percent of the *Badi* reported that their clients have consistently used condoms.



Most of the time, it seems that it was sex worker, rather than the client, who suggested the use of condom. Thus, 46 percent of the sex workers reportedly suggested the use of condoms, compare to 38 percent of her sex partners who made a similar suggestion. Only 16 percent of sex workers reported to have made a joint decision to use condom (Table 2.12).

Table 2.12: Use of Condom by Different Types of Sex Partners of the Respondents

	Classification of Sex Partners					
	Paying			Non-Paying		
	Commercial		Regular			
	N	%	N	%		
Frequency of Intercourse in Last 30 Days						
Mean	407	12.4	176	11.5		
Standard Deviation	-	9.8	-	8.5		
Did You and Your Partner Use a Condom During Last Intercourse						
Yes	320	78.6	48	27.3		
No	87	21.4	128	72.7		
Person Who Suggested Using Condom:						
Myself	146	45.6	24	50.0		
Sex Partner	123	38.4	9	18.7		
Joint Decision	51	15.9	12	25.0		
My Husband	-	-	3	6.2		
Reasons for Not Using Condom During Last Intercourse:*						
Partner Objected	37	42.5	21	16.4		
I had sterilization	17	19.5	36	28.1		
Use of condom would not give sexual satisfaction	14	16.1	8	6.3		
Used other contraceptive	12	13.7	26	20.3		
Dislike using it	9	10.3	7	5.5		
Did not think it was necessary	6	6.9	22	17.2		
Did not think of it	4	4.6	2	1.6		
Lack of knowledge about condom	5	5.7	-	-		
Don't have it with me	8	9.2	3	2.3		
I want children	-	-	10	7.8		
Others	6	6.9	3	2.3		
Frequency of Condom Use by Sex Partners in Past 12 Months						
Everytime	212	52.1	35	20.0		
Almost everytime	84	20.6	13	7.4		
Sometimes	46	11.3	25	14.3		
Rarely	28	6.9	3	1.7		
Never	30	7.4	99	56.6		

Source: FSW Survey.

Note: * Due to multiple responses the percentage add up to more than 100.

2.6.2 Non-Paying Sex Partners

Sex workers who have husbands or boyfriends, and if they were living together, have been defined as non-paying regular partners. This groups' sexual behavior is briefly described below:

Regular Type

Out of the total number of respondents, more than 43 percent reported having Regular type of sex partners. Out of them about 70 percent were husbands and had sexual contact with them in last 30 days from the date of interview. Similarly, 22 percent reported having contact with their boyfriend and 8 percent of the respondents reported having sex with both the boyfriend and the husband (Table 2.13).

Table 2.13: Distribution of Regular Type of Sex Partners

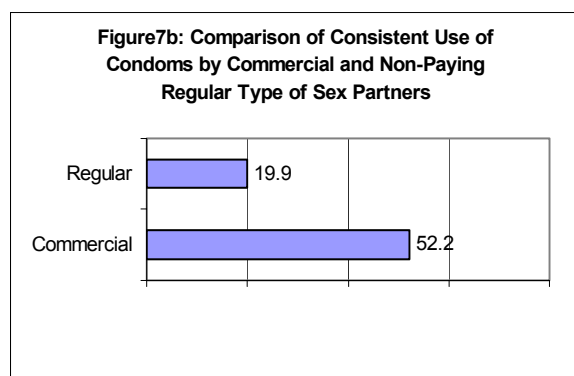
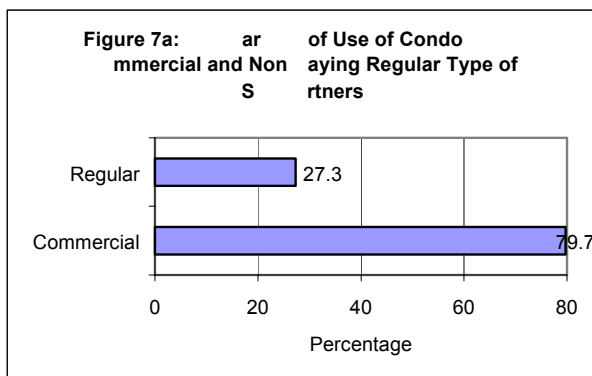
Regular Type of Sex Partners	N	%	Mean Number of Sexual Contacts in Last 30 Days	Standard Deviation
Husband	123	69.9	11.8	8.7
Boy Friend	38	21.6	11.3	8.8
Both	15	8.5	9.2	5.4
Total	176	100	11.5	8.5

More than 20 percent of the sex workers who had the Regular type of partners reported having lived for sometime with a second person other than their husband or boyfriend during last 12 months, and among them, more than 94 percent of the sex workers had sexual contact with this second person.

Use of condom by the Regular type of sex partners during last intercourse was found to be very low (27%) compare to paying sex partners (80%) (Figure 7a). Similarly, on the consistent use of condoms in last 12 months, only 20 percent of the Regular type of sex partners reported to have used it (Figure 7b).

percent of the Regular type of sex partners reported to have used it (Figure 7b).

Once again, most of the time, compared to her sex partners, it was the sex worker who seems to have suggested the use the condoms. Thus, while fifty percent of the sex workers reported to have suggested the use the condoms, only 19 percent of her sex partners did so. One-fourth of the sex workers reported making a joint decision to use condom. (Table 2.12).



2.7 Knowledge of Condoms and Exposure to Specific Messages

Almost all the respondents reported to have knowledge of place or person from whom to obtain condoms. The majority (87%) of the respondents cited drug store/pharmacy as the place to obtain condoms, followed by Hospital (58%), and Health Post (46%) (Table 2.14).

It was interesting to find out that more than 46 percent of the respondents reported to have never purchased condoms for their use. Furthermore, nearly 50 percent of Brahamin, Chhetri, Tharu and occupational castes, and almost one-third of *Badi* and *Matwali* caste groups of the sample had also never purchased condoms.

According to the respondents the estimated mean time (to go and come back) to obtain condoms from the nearest place to their was 15.3 minutes. Among those who have purchased condoms, the mean time it took them to purchase condoms was 18.3 minutes (Table 2.14). Of those who have purchased condoms, fourteen percent reported that they do not buy condoms from the place nearest to their home because they were afraid that their neighbors or other people would find out, and they would feel ashamed.

Twenty percent, or 82 respondents, reported that they generally carry condoms with them, but on verification, only 14 percent, or 59 of them, had condoms with them (Table 2.14). The mean number of condoms carried by a sex worker at hand was 4. It was also found that mainly *Matwali*, Chhetri and the *Badi* carried condoms with them, and all of them were below 35 years of age.

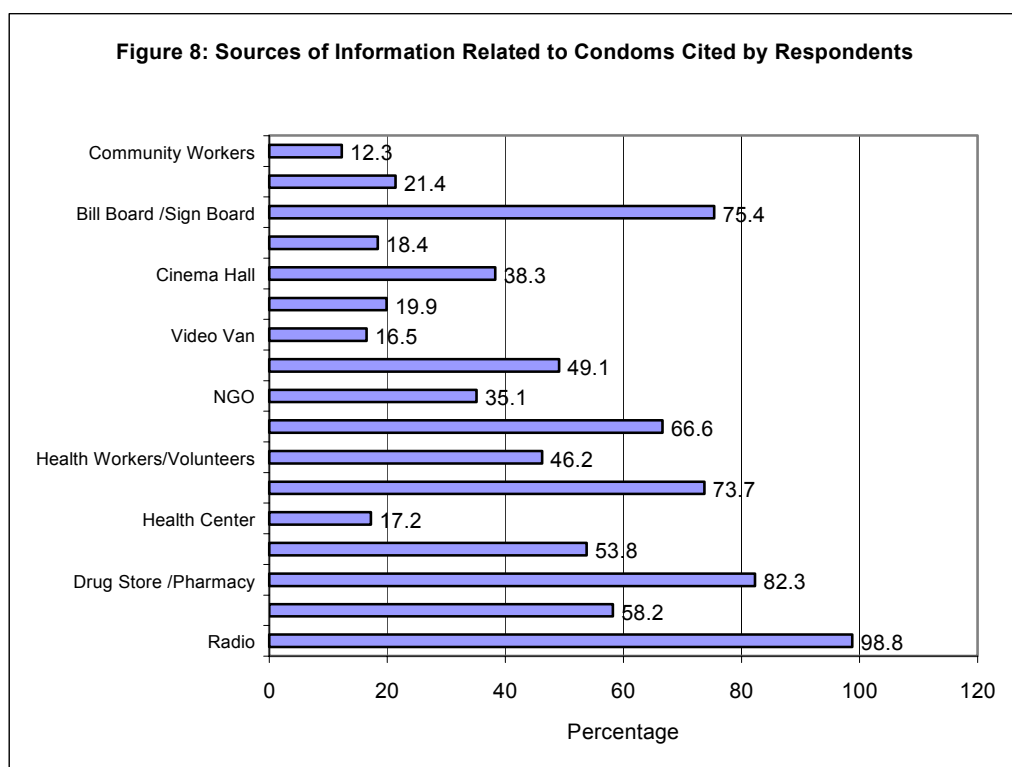
Among those who have used condoms, more than 87 percent used Dhaal and Panthar brand of condoms. Among the condom users 63 percent reported to have used Dhaal, followed by Panthar (24%); and 2 percent each used Kama Sutra and Saajan (Table 2.14). More than 7 percent of the respondents did not know the brand name of the condoms they had used.

Table 2.14: Knowledge About Condoms

	N	%
Know Where to Obtain Condoms		
Yes	404	99.3
No	3	0.7
Place/Person Cited by Respondents to Obtain Condoms*		
Drug Store / Pharmacy	351	86.9
Hospital	236	58.4
Health Post	185	45.8
General retail store	157	38.9
NGO / Health Worker / Volunteers	126	31.2
Paan Shop	75	18.6
Private Clinic	51	12.6
Peer / Friends	35	8.7
Health Center	24	5.9
FPAN Clinic	15	3.7
Hotel / Guest House	9	2.2
Others	2	0.5
Time required to obtain condoms from the nearest place	404	15.3
Mean Time (in minutes)		14.4
Standard Deviation		
Time it takes the respondents to buy condoms from her regular place		
Mean Time (in minutes)	215	18.3
Standard Deviation		16.4
Do you usually carry condoms with you		
Yes	82	20.1
No	325	79.9
Mean Number of Condoms at Hand	59	4.2
Standard Deviation		3.1
Brand Name of Condoms Used		
Dhaal	234	62.9
Panthar	90	24.2
Kama Sutra	9	2.4
Saajan	9	2.4
Nirodh	1	0.3
Ehesash	1	0.3
Do not know	28	7.5

Source: FSW Survey.

Note: * Due to multiple responses the percentage add up more than 100



A list of possible sources of information related to condoms from which the respondents might have obtained was read out loudly; the respondents were then asked to identify those sources from which they had obtained information regarding condoms. The result was that an overwhelming majority (99%) of the respondents mentioned radio, followed by drug store/pharmacy (82%), billboards/signboards (75%), hospital (74%) and friends/neighbours (66%) (Figure 8).

Having identified the sources of information on condoms, the respondents were also asked if they recalled the advertisement message that was in the condom source of information. The majority of the respondents identified mainly two messages. The first was: “Use condom against HIV/AIDS, Condom for HIV/AIDS prevention, Avoid HIV/AIDS, Use condom against STI/HIV/AIDS,” and the second message was: “Use condom against STI, Condom for STI prevention, Avoid STI.” The first and second messages were reported to have been understood by 72 and 62 percent of the respondents respectively (Table 2.15).

Table 2.15: Messages Understood by Respondents

Messages	N	%
Use condom against HIV/AIDS, Condom for HIV/AIDS prevention, Avoid HIV/AIDS, Use condom against STI/HIV/AIDS	290	71.6
Use condom against STI, Condom for STI prevention, Avoid STI	252	62.2
Use condom for family planning, Other family planning messages	55	13.6
Use condom to prevent sexual health	73	18.0
Let us talk about AIDS from today	28	6.9
Always use condom to avoid STI and AIDS	127	31.4
Heard/Seen/Read the following FHI Message/ Characters in Past one Year		
Dhaaley Dai	187	45.9
Guruji and Antarey	215	52.8
Condom Lagaun AIDS Bhagaun	358	88.0
Condom Bata Surakchhya Uoun Swastha Ko Rakchhya	260	63.9
Jhilke Dai Chha, Chhaina Condom	324	79.6

Source: FSW Survey.

Note: Due to multiple responses the percentage add more than 100

FHI started intervention programs along the highway to bring awareness about HIV/AIDS

among high-risk groups found along the highway. Messages regarding the use of condom for prevention of AIDS were broadcast and put up in different forms. The most popular, and understood by the majority (88%) of the respondents, was *Condom Lagaun AIDS Bhagaun* and followed by *Jhilke Dai Chha, Chhaina Condom* (80%), *Condom Bata Surakchhya Uoun Swastha Ko Rakchhya* (64%) and *Guruji and Antarey* (53%) (Table 2.15).

2.8 Types of Sex Practiced by Sex Workers and their Sex Partners

Many studies on sex workers have reported that the sex workers are susceptible to violence or face situations they would prefer not to. Some of these situations, such as rape or anal sex, could put them at risk of contracting STI. Respondents were asked if in the past year from the date of the interview, their clients had forced sex upon them or demanded types of sex they were unwilling to perform. Almost 18 percent of the sex workers reported that they had been asked for sex by force and 16 percent reported to have engaged in other than vaginal sex in the past one year from the date of the interview. Of those who reported to have had other than vaginal sex in past one year, 14 percent had oral sex and almost 2 percent had anal sex. In response to a question on the type of sex act with their last sex partner, the majority of the respondents (99%) reported having vaginal sex, followed by oral sex (4%), and anal sex (1%) (Table 2.16).

Table 2.16: Types of Sex Acts

	N	%
Forced Sex Act Demanded by Clients in Past one Year		
Yes	72	17.
No	335	7
		82.
		3
Any Other Type of Sex Other than Vaginal in Past one Year		
Yes	64	15.
No	343	7
		84.
		3
Type of Sex Act Other than Vaginal in Past One Year*		
Anal Sex	6	1.5
Oral Sex	58	14.
No such Incidents	343	3
		84.
		3
Type of Sex Act with the Last Sex Partner*		

2.9 Use of Alcohol and Drugs

Almost 60 percent of the sex workers reported to have drunk alcohol during the last four weeks from the date of the interview, but 40 percent of the respondents reported to have never drunk any alcoholic beverages. Questioned on the frequency of drinking alcohol in last four weeks, almost 24 percent of the respondents reported to have drunk every day, 23 percent to have had a drink at least once a week, and 12 percent reportedly drank less than once a week (Table 2.17).

Three, or 0.7 percent, sex workers reported taking some drugs to intoxicate them, but none of them have tried to inject any drugs using a syringe and needle. Out of the three persons, two reported having smoked some *Ganja*, and the third person reported having used Phensidyle drug.

Table 2.17: Frequency of Drinking Beverages Containing Alcohol

	N	%
Everyday	96	23.6
At least once in a week	95	23.4
Less than once in a week	50	12.3
Never	165	40.5
Total	406	100.0

Source: FSW Survey.

REFERENCES

Cox, Thomas, **The Badi: Prostitution as a social Norm among an Untouchable Cast of West Nepal**, Contributions to Nepali Studies, 1992

CWD, **Prostitution in Relation to Socio-Economic Strategies and Health Problems, A case Study of Badi Community**, May, 1991.

New ERA, **Behavioural Surveillance Survey in the Highway Route of Nepal: Round No. 4**, May 2002

New ERA, **Draft Report on Behavioural Surveillance Survey in Kathmandu: Round No. 1**, 2002

Onta, Lazima, **Deuki and Badi: Cultural Disguise for Prostitution**, In Voice of Child Workers (CWIN), No. 15/16, December 1992.

