Chapter – VI

Major implications of the research
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In doing the study and analyzing the findings, the ecological system theory and the life cycle approach clearly explained the formation of Identity of the Children of Sex Workers.

I

The life cycle approach helped in understanding the variations in behavior of the individual child in relations to their chronological ages and their developmental stage they were in.

Erikson’s description of the stages of life shown in Table 1, the IV and V stages (school age, puberty and adolescence respectively) clarify the behavior of the children studied.

The fourth stage of Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development is ‘industry versus inferiority’. This stage occurs between the ages of six and twelve years. It is the stage when the child’s peer group gain greater importance and become an importance source of the child’s self-esteem. The child feels the need to win approval by showing specific capabilities that are valued by society and begin to develop a sense of pride in the accomplishment. If the child is unable to develop the specific skills that the society demands, then he/she may develop a sense of inadequacy/inferiority. When the child is encouraged for his/her accomplishment, he/she begin to feel industrious and confident in one’s ability to achieve goals. If the child is not encouraged or restricted by parents or teachers, then the child begins to feel inferior, doubting self-abilities and therefore may not reach to his/her potential. Some failure may be necessary so that the child can develop some modesty, there should be a balance between competence and modesty. Success in this stage lead to the virtue of competence.

Looking at how Erikson describes the fourth stage of psychosocial development, it was easier to understand and relate that to the behavior of the children of sex workers. It is noticed that the fourth stage age group was becoming closer to their friends. Among the friends they shared their likes and dislikes, their dreams, what happened at home, what they ate, what happened at school, what did their teacher tell them, what happened in their favorite serial etc. The bond with the friends were growing
in this stage. But the circle of friends was very limited. Most of the children of sex worker did not have many friends at school because they feared that their identity might get exposed. They remained quiet in school and did not want to be the center of attention. Most of them never felt that they need to win approval from the society. The school is their first contact of the so called mainstream society. The children kept themselves isolated and did not actively participate in school activities because the children wanted to hide their identity. They did not want to the ‘popular’ ones in school and come in the limelight. They kept themselves aloof from the rest and preferred having friends in their own locality i.e. the red light area.

In school where the children are eager to show their skills, talents and compete with each other, the children of sex workers remained isolated. The children at this age like to talks about home, parents, siblings, grandparents, their toys etc. at school with other friends. We forget that the children of sex workers have to struggle every day in school to cope up with such conversation, they have to have skills to manipulate things and not to talk about their family, they need to look for ways to avoid such talks. It is a challenge for them to be in a school and spend the entire day surrounded by the people who look down upon sex work. This is when the child losses interest in going to school. Female children lose even more faster than the male children, it is because of the intensity of stigma attached to female children is more than the male children. This is because of the belief of the society that a girl child of a sex worker becomes a sex worker when matured.

So the conflict in this stage i.e. inferiority becomes higher not because of the child’s performance or skills but because of the identity attached to the child. The children of sex workers lack encouragement and motivation at home and at school they keep themselves isolated, so this doesn’t help them explore their potentials and reach their goals.

The fifth stage, another crucial stage is ‘identity vs role confusion’. This occurs during adolescence, from about 12 – 18 years. During this stage, adolescents through an intense exploration of personal values, beliefs and goals search for a sense of self and personal identity. At this stage, children become more independent and begin to think of the future in terms of career, relationships, families etc. Children will re-examine his/her identity and try to find out exactly who he or she is. The individuals
seek to fit in the society. During this period, the individuals explore possibilities and begin to form their own identity based upon the outcome of their explorations. When they fail to establish a sense of identity within society then it will lead to role confusion (identity crisis). Role confusion involves the individual not being sure about themselves or their place in the society.

Now looking at the children of sex workers who belong to the age group of the fifth stage of Erikson’s psychosocial development, it was found that these children lack behind ‘the exploration’ which is essential to come to a point of proper understanding of oneself. Their exploration is limited to Khalpara red light area. In the fourth stage before entering this stage, most of the children do not resolve their conflict and this leads them in being inferior. Some signs they show of being inferior are: they think that all children except the ones living in red light area are happy living a better life, they believe that they have the lowest social status. So this conflict in them which is not solved does not let them explore themselves. It creates limitations and boundaries. Since the children of sex workers are confined to the red light area, the possibilities of their identity and exploration are also narrowed and it is rooted in Khalpara red light area. Some of them may explore beyond the boundaries that are created for them by the society and may gain an identity which he/she desires but the identity that is attached to them by birth does not get removed easily. Being born with this Identity in a country like India where virginity is preferred before marriage, is like being born with a curse. The conflicts, coping mechanism, the capabilities, adjustments, rationalizations and projecting the future pf these children have been demonstrated through the case studies.

II

The five systems of “Ecological system theory” of Urie Bronfenbrenner were identified in the study. The micro system consisted of the people or a group that had direct contact with the child. It involved people who interacted in child’s daily life like mother, mother’s counterpart/biological father, neighbors, school teachers, school mates and other groups like the friends from the tuition class, play group and even the owner of the shop where the child visited regularly. They are also the agents of socialization. The microsystem of the children of sex workers were very limited.
The interaction between the micro system formed the mesosystem, like the role of the sex workers in the social group of the child. The interaction between the sex workers and the child’s school teacher also formed the part of mesosystem. The interaction between the micro system was minimum or even absent. There was no contact between the teachers and the child’s parents. The interaction between the parents and the child’s peer group was also not very interactive. The micro system did not work along one another, which showed negative impact on the child. **The micro and the mesosystem of the children of sex workers were easy to identify and did not differ from the children of normal mothers who are not a sex worker.**

The exosystem which refers to the events that an individual does not take active participation but has an impact on the child was identified. In case of the children of sex workers, earning more money by the sex workers allows these children to visit cinema halls, children parks, own a cell phone and to go out with friends with money in their pockets. The sex workers in Khalpara red light area earn money according to the number of customers visiting them. Some sex workers attract many customers than the others. So the mothers earning more money tend to give more money to their children. This is how exosystem affects the child. The exosystem rely on macro system in which the child lives.

The macro system included religious practices and government laws for example the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA), the word immoral itself tells that the child’s mother is involved in an immoral act and this has an influence on the child and affects the child in a negative way. The culture and human rights also fall in this system. Like now a day’s rights of sex workers are topic of discussion but it is left only in discussion without solution. The government controls large portion of human rights. As a social worker, we could act as a bridge between the government and the sex worker’s children and bring them from exclusion to inclusion.

The food habit is also the part of this system. It influences the health of the child thus influencing their thinking process. Music, art, creativity and medical practices is included here in the system. The kind of music the child listens also shapes their thinking process. The kind of movies they watch shape their behavior. Like for example watching too much of furious movies, one learns to be aggressive.
Ultimately influencing the child is the chronosystem like climate change, demonetization in the country and technology advancement. During November, 2016 when Government of India announced the demonetization of all 500 and 1000 rupee notes, it was observed that there was decrease in the number of customers in the red light area. The sex business went down in KHALPARA red light area and the sex workers faced lot of problems. Some of the sex workers had moved out from there when there were no customers.

Another example in terms of technology advancement that is applicable in the life of the children of sex workers is the android phone. The children of sex workers use this phone to get in touch with other people through social networking site. Some of the children of sex workers have phone and some use their mothers. They use apps like Facebook and Instagram to connect to other people. The children reported that they have many friends in this social networking site but they have not disclosed their real identity. They have given their false name and address and chat with them. Their conversation usually includes their likes and dislike, what they do in school and other things. One of the child had almost 250 friends in his Facebook account. Only few of them he knew personally, others were all unknown to him. But he somehow chatted with many of them in his friends list.

All the systems of the ecological system theory were identified and this research helped to arrive to the ideas of Bronfenbrenner where a child finds himself instantaneously entangled in different ecosystems, from the closest home ecological system moving outward to the larger school system and the most expansive system which is society and culture. Each of these systems unavoidably interact with and influence each other in every aspect of the child’s life was visible.

### III

As a social worker’s intervention and approach we need to give a necessary torque to the personality of the children of sex workers, making them self-reliant and helping them make their own decision, expanding their thought about themselves and helping them see the world in a larger perspective. Lack of education leaves these children with no option than to join the flesh trade or some activities related to it. It was found that there were no actions taken to protect these deprived children since birth. Basic
education and life skills education could be provided to these children for building their self-confidence.

We need to **focus on opportunities** for the children of sex workers and also the skills that are required to achieve those opportunities. Less attention has been paid to the children of sex workers who are victims of the circumstance starting from the time they are in their mother’s womb, denied from the opportunities of being free from their parental background, and deprive of the environment favorable to their physical and psychological development and from social opportunities.

We need to provide job oriented skills and capacity building through **vocational guidance**. To bring the children of sex workers to mainstream society, we need to provide them with proper education, vocational training and life skills. **Motivational meeting** should be arranged with the sex workers to discuss about their children. Because most of the sex workers give up with the life of their children thinking that their child has no place in the society and the society will never accept them, this is also the reason why most of the sex workers do not focus much on rearing up the child in the best possible way. They think it is a waste of time because one day or the other, their child’s identity will be exposed and that will leave no place for him/her in the society. This thought of the sex workers should be removed and be replaced with a thought that their children can also do something better in life and not just follow the vicious circle of sex trade but be a part of mainstream society. It is also crucial to teach the children of sex workers the life skills, in order to pay their way for dignity through employment and also to foster healthy independence.

The sex workers in the red light area have no viable marketplace skills. They are women betrayed by their trusted ones, lured by promised jobs and sold to be a sex workers and some women join due to financial crisis. Even if they want to leave the profession, there are no alternatives. Government and NGOs should provide them with schemes focusing on vocational training and skill development so that the sex workers can take up a job other than in being in the sex trade. This will help them to live a normal life which will help their children in return.
For the sex workers being a mother and being in the sex trade is a difficult task. Service providers must recognize this in order to promote their motherhood so that they can take good care of their children.

IV

Social workers could fight the prejudice and stigma. The prejudice and stigma comes from the society. As the barriers developed from the societal side, societal remedy is essential. Mass awareness is required to change the mindset of the people living in the society. Society could learn to accept the children of sex workers and understand that these children are innocent and have no fault of their own. It is because of their mother and a man visiting mainly from the mainstream society that has led to the birth of this identity of a child of a sex worker. It is an identity that is imposed to them. Society could understand that it is not just the sex worker alone who has given birth. Without a man, it wouldn’t have been possible. And this man’s identity is never exposed publicly. They escape the stigma. There wouldn’t be sex workers if there was no demand for it. Without demand there would be no supply. Therefore, we should not always target the sex workers for being immoral, equally immoral are the men who visit them. But the ultimate victims are the children born to sex workers.

Measures could be taken to create mass awareness among the people in society. Mass media is the best way to reach out. Instead of portraying a woman with red lipstick in skimpy clothes to highlight red light area, a picture of filthy man with money in his pockets and lust for sex in his eyes could definitely turn the whole image of red light area. When we talk about red light area the first thing that comes in our mind are the female sex workers but there are many men behind this trade. The men who are actively involved in this trade like for e.g. the pimps and the men who are involved by attaining the service of the sex workers. But nobody talks about these men. Because these men could be any one or one of our brothers from the so called mainstream society. It would be a disgrace to talk about it. But it is easy to point a finger on the sex workers and blame them for dirtying our society. The huge population of men who are involved in sex trade or the customers escape the stigma and discrimination. It is the women or the sex workers who are solely blamed and looked down upon. Media should reach out to the people and create awareness about these victims. They should not always portray a sex worker with a bad virtue.
The children of sex workers could be portrayed as any other child who needs proper love and guidance and not to be stigmatized and isolated. In some of the Bollywood movies, when someone is angry at the other person and wants to humiliate that person, we hear him swear “randi ka bachha” which in translation to English means “child of a sex worker”. I think this could be stopped. These are the little steps through which the media can bring about change in the society.

Our society plays a major role in discriminating and isolating these marginalized section i.e. the sex workers and their children. In every local language there is a term for a sex worker. But there is no term to define men who loiter around the red light area and seek for sexual pleasure from these sex workers. Our society has become biased and is not aware about the distance and isolation that our society is creating for these women and their children all in the name of morality. Today we talk about rights and equality but what about the rights of these innocent children? Where is our inclusive society?

Mass awareness has to be created among the teachers, students, parents of regular children, police and other public authorities. In addition, target oriented programs should be undertaken by the government and the NGOs to create awareness and to bring about acceptance of the children of sex workers in the mainstream society. But we need to remember that the expected result will not be achieved until government will be in the front line. It is the government’s responsibility to ensure the inclusion.

Some of the NGOs working for these target group are focused on specific areas only and because of the necessity to complete the project, the NGOs work for the sake of working. And also most of the organizations do not allow the intervention of the outsiders. Therefore, their work on this target group becomes limited and time bound. While conducting this research it was found that Social Work intervention can come out with various outcomes. It is not always necessary to have an organizational intervention.
This research indicates that by targeting the special areas of child’s life we can come up with combination of strategies or specific strategy from the perspective of mental health, school social work, family health and ecological perspective.

The children of sex workers face lot of mental health problems. Some of the problems identified were depression, anxiety disorder and eating disorders. The major one was depression. A problem that has directly been evolved with their identity. The children of sex workers face depression at some point of time with different intensity. It was noticed that the girls were more depressed than the boys. A social worker can come up with an approach to look into this matter carefully and intervene for a better solution. This provides an area for future research.

Another area is a school social work. School social workers act as an integral link between school, home and community in helping students achieve academic success. They can work directly with the school administrations as well as the children of sex workers and their mothers to create a safe and efficient school environment for the development of children. Social workers in this field can concentrate in helping the children of sex workers cope with the problems and pressures that they may face every day, both at home and in school including stigma and discrimination. For instance, students that may seem to be struggling academically or socially may be approached by school social workers. Severe behavior problems might also be addressed by school social workers. In some instances, the problems that students experience at school may be directly linked to their experiences at home. Because of this, school social workers are trained to recognize when students are possibly experiencing problems, such as abuse or poverty at home and stigma and discrimination outside home. The school social workers can also focus on the other children in the school and teach them about the acceptance of the children of sex workers. They play a great role in removing the stigma and discrimination of children of sex workers in school which will help these children to perform his/her studies well. The children of sex workers lack praises and rewards, the school social worker can motivate these children to perform well by praising for their good work and rewarded them for their good result. The school social worker can also talk to the sex workers and give counselling session to them, talk to them about the child’s performance in school and help to create a study environment
for the children not just in school but as well as in the red light area. This will improve
the academic performance of the children of sex workers in school.

The school social worker can also sensitize the teachers in school about the
children of sex workers who needs proper guidance and praises for their good work. The teacher also plays a great role in bonding the children of sex workers and other
school together in class. School social workers are also trained to read the psychology
of the children, this will help the children of sex workers to open up and speak about
their problems and challenges which they hardly share with others. This will help in
understanding the children properly and help them according to their needs. The
presence of school social worker will make accessing proper education easier for the
children of sex workers which will help them to get into the mainstream society without
being stigmatized and marginalized.

The area defined in terms of family health consist of physical, mental, emotional, social, economic, cultural and spiritual dimensions of the family which result in the holistic wellbeing of the family ultimately developing the child in a healthy way. In a family of a sex worker, it is usually the mother and the children. Only some sex workers have their counterparts. As a social worker, the role would be to carry out or to inculcate the various dimensions mentioned under family health among the family of sex workers. This will bring together the boldness of each members in the family. It will not differ much from the family of the mainstream. At present the sex workers live an individuated life within a family. There is no bond and hardly any we feeling. Social work intervention in perspective of family health would be very effective. This would bring about the change in the perceptive of the sex workers and their children on family. They would gradually learn to live as a family and this would help them to integrate later with mainstream society. The goals of the children of sex workers specially the girls are to move out of the red light area someday. Their goals are very much clear but it is not directed. As a social work approach, focusing on the family health perspective would give a direction to the children of sex workers to reach their goals.

Through ecological perspective, one can identity and intervene upon the strengths and weaknesses in the transactional process between the children of sex workers, sex worker’s, families, cultures, communities and policies. Holistic approach can provide a paradigm for understanding how these systems and interactions can help
in the development of the child of a sex worker. This understanding will help to integrate the children of sex worker in an inclusive system of the society.

VI

The research indicates that awareness on legal issues could be provided to the sex workers. Many of the sex workers are not aware of their custodial rights. Therefore, she may not fight the battle when her counterpart takes away her child. She should be aware of her ownership on the child.

Awareness could be provided to the sex workers about the schemes which gives basic health facilities and other facilities like Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana which was launched in 2008. This scheme aims to provide cashless health insurance coverage to the unrecognized sector workers belonging to the below poverty line category and their family members. Another important one for the children of sex workers is the Anwesha Clinic which was also initiated in the year 2008. It is an adolescent-friendly health centre. It is a tool for the empowerment of the adolescents and acts as the nodal point. Mutual interaction among the adolescents regarding health issues, improving social awareness regarding inculcating habits are an integral part of the programme. This programme would provide them necessary guidance for proper nutrition, safe motherhood, mental and physical problems, cancer, diabetes, breathing problems and dealing with social inequality and violence.

As a social worker we need to help this isolated population avail these schemes and help them in bridging the gap from their exclusion to inclusion in the society. We need to empower the sex workers with their rights, integrate them with the society and this will have ripple effect in the development of their children. This way the children of sex workers will gradually become a part of the mainstream society where there imposed identity will gradually fade and not be a threat to their life.