Chapter – III

Research Method and Profile of the Area of Study
Chapter - III

I

Research Method

The methodology applied in this research is qualitative in nature as it tries to develop a thorough understanding of the identity formation of the children of sex workers through socialization, which is subjective in nature. It aims to get the meaning, feeling and describe the situation. It involves an in depth analysis study and it is exploratory in nature. It is a cross sectional. A cross sectional is a type of observational study that involves the analysis of a data collected from a population, or representative subsets, at one specific point in time. The children of different ages were studied. I had chosen children from the age group of 6-14 years and had given equal importance to each age, this method helped me to economize the time over the longitudinal method and hence find greater application. Time which would have been spent in the study of one child was better utilized when I made a comparative study of a number of children over a very short period of time.

3.1 Research Design

The formidable problem that follows the task of defining the research problem is the preparation of a design of the research project, popularly known as “research design”. The research design applied in this study is exploratory in nature. Exploratory research studies are also termed as formulative research studies. The major emphasis of this study is on the discovery of ideas and insights. The study tries to address the ‘what’ question: “What is the role of socialization in identity formation?” Exploratory research design is appropriate for this study as it is flexible enough to provide opportunity for considering different aspects of a problem under study, it tries to investigate social phenomena without explicit expectation and it also helps to gain familiarity with a phenomenon or acquire a new insight into it in order to formulate a more precise study.
3.2 Sources of information

The two main sources of information in this study were primary and secondary source. The responses to questions put to the people constituted the major sources of data. This source is called the primary source of data. The primary data are those which are collected afresh and for the first time, and thus happens to be original in character. The primary sources in this research are the children of sex workers, their parents and their neighbors, non-government organization (Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee, Child In Need Institute (CINI), Aatma Vikas Sanstha) staff, school staff, health staff and peer group of the children of sex workers. The location for collecting these data was in Khalpara, which is located at Siliguri. Siliguri is the most important town in North Bengal of West Bengal and Khalpara is known for the oldest trade in the World, ‘Prostitution’. Siliguri, being the busiest business town in North Bengal, flesh trade business at Khalpara red light area was developed since a long time. On the other hand, some data was already available in the form of secondary data such as documents, records, articles, research studies, magazines, websites etc. The methods of collecting these two data’s i.e. the primary data and the secondary data differed since primary data was originally collected in the field with face to face interaction; while in case of the secondary data the nature of data collection work was merely of compilation.

3.3 Methods of data collection

The data was collected through triangulation which entails more than one method to collect data on the same topic. This is a way of assuring the validity of research through the use of a variety of methods to collect data. However, the purpose of triangulation is not necessarily to cross-validate data but rather to capture different dimensions of the same phenomenon.

The methods used for collecting data for the study are as follows:

In order to study the 1st objective Case study approach was used as the study required qualitative analysis and involved a careful and complete observation and an in-depth investigation. Collective or multiple cases of the children of sex workers was chosen for
the study. Being an exhaustive study of a social unit, the case study method enabled me to understand fully the socialization of children of sex workers and how it helps in the formation of their identity and then further exploring the limiting and restricting factors in their identity formation. Since the observation and analyses was done by the outsider, there could be bias from my side. Hence the data was collected after trying to reduce the preconceived notions as much as possible. While making the case studies, I also used Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale on the children of sex workers to know their perception about themselves and to understand their identity in depth. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale is a 10-item scale that is widely used as a self-report instrument for evaluating individual’s self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). 10 full-length case studies were conducted for the purpose of the study.

In order to study the 2nd objective an **In-depth interview** was used in which the participants were encouraged and promoted to talk in depth about the topic under study without the researcher’s use of predetermined, focused short answer questions. The researcher was required to be aware of major domains of experience likely to be discussed by the participant and be able to probe how these relate to the topic of study. The interview was more open-ended and less structured. The structured format was used only in gathering the socio-demographic information. To begin with the interview, the researcher had to first establish a rapport with the respondents. If the participants did not trust the researcher, they will not open up and describe their true feelings, thoughts and intentions. Therefore, I took time to build the rapport with the respondents before interviewing them. I was able to find the information not only in the answers of the participants but also in the facial expression and their general conduct during the interview. The information received during the interview was then processed and was arranged according to concepts, codes, and categories and then further into themes. The chief advantage of this method lies in the researcher’s getting not only the formal information but also her own observations of the participant’s behavior.

**Observation** as a method was used in order to fulfill all three objectives. It generally involved spending a prolonged amount of time in the setting. Field notes was taken throughout the observations and was focused on what is seen. Marshall and Rossman
(1989) define observation as “the systematic description of events, behaviors and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study” (p.79). I used observation during field work in Khalpara red light area. Fieldwork involved active looking, improving memory, informal interviewing, writing detailed field notes, and perhaps most importantly patience. The field work was conducted for 24 months (December, 2014 - December, 2016) and during these months I used observation as one of the method to collect data. This helped me to learn through exposure from the day to day or routine activities of participants in the research setting. For good observation I had to maintain the fundamental principle of social work that implies acceptance and non-judgmental attitude and was a careful observer and a good listener.

**Focused group discussion (FGD):** A focus group is a special type of group in terms of purpose, size, composition, and procedures. It is a structured interview with small groups of like individuals using standardized questions, follow up questions, and explorations of other topic that arise to better understand participants. This technique was efficient because I could gather information from many sex workers in one session. Focused group discussion is also usually enjoyable for the participants, and they may fear less of being evaluated by the interviewer because of the group setting. It allowed me to study people in more natural conversation pattern. The FGD session was prepared carefully with the sex workers who are mothers and have their children living with them in the red light area, through identifying the main objective(s) of the meeting, developing key question, developing an agenda and planning how to record the session. Keeping in mind the 2nd and 3rd objectives, repeated FGD was conducted with the number of participants in each FGD being 7-8.

### 3.4 Data collection tools

**Interview guide** consisted of two set of components: a set of domains that the researcher would ask and an instruction to the researcher about how to proceed through the questions. The question was set in the order in which the respondents were to be asked. The guide did not consist of focused short questions. The interview guide helped me to be on the track and seek for those information needed to fulfill the objectives of the
study. It also helped in saving time, the interview guide directed the researcher as in what and when to ask questions to the respondents without spending much time in irrelevant questions.

I also kept Field diary in order to record the daily activities in the field. It included thoughts and reflections, a record of what was seen and observed, a record of phone calls and meetings, unsolved problems, issues or questions to be asked, key words, visual materials, plan of actions etc.

Recorder from phone was used during interview because if the participants had noticed that their answers in such an interview are being recorded in paper, their reaction may have changed and become unnatural and it would also be a long process and there would also be chances of missing out some information. This difficulty was obviated with the help of a recorder. The recorder has the obvious advantage of preserving the entire verbal part of interview for later analysis. Although some respondents were nervous to talk while being recorded, this uneasiness disappeared in a short time.

3.5 Sample Design

A sample design is a procedure or a plan drawn up before any data are collected to obtain a sample from any population. The Sampling of target population for this study was chosen purposively. Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon who the researcher thinks would be appropriate for the study and also willingness to participate. Since there could be difference in the life experience of female and male children, the sample for the study consisted both. The parents of the children, neighbors, school staff, NGOs staff, peer group and health staff were also interviewed.

Population: The population or the main target group are the children of sex workers. Target participants for the study were chosen who meet the criteria of the study objectives:
Children of the sex workers who belong to the age group of 6-14 years old were considered for the study. The logic behind selecting this age group of 6-14 –middle childhood and early adolescence – is because this is the time of important developmental advances that establish children’s sense of identity (Erikson, 1980). During these years, children make strides towards adulthood by becoming competent, independent, self-aware and involve themselves in the world beyond their families. Biological and cognitive changes transform children’s bodies and minds. Social relationships and roles change dramatically as children enter school, and get involved with peer and adults outside their home. During middle childhood, children develop a sense of self-esteem and individuality, comparing themselves with their peers. They come to expect that they will succeed or fail at different tasks. At this age they develop more realistic concepts of themselves and what they need to survive and succeed in culture (Hurlock, 1956: 535).

Inclusive criteria:
- Both male and female children
- Children who are living with their mother and the mother’s counterpart

**Target area**: Khalpara Red Light Area, Siliguri, West Bengal.

**Sample size**: 10 children (There are approx. 60 children belonging to the age group of 6-14 in the Khalpara area, out of which around 22 belong to the target group and half its population was taken as the sample size).

### 3.6 Data analysis and validity

The narrative analysis situates the best. It attempts to transit sensations which are felt in the field, through silence, the tone used to say something, the expression on someone’s face, or even the smell of the place where it took place. There sensations are difficult to convey through scientific language and are important in trying to portray and evoke a cultural context. Narrative analysis works well for this objective. Second, this research seeks to find a qualitative data by recording the conversations and incidents as they occurred. The most appropriate way to present these data is through narration. The researcher was careful while narrating and did not have or tried to ignore the preconceived notion, in order to make the research more ethical and valid. Keeping the
validity and reliability of data in check, the researcher tried to transmit the cultural sense of the field without any preconceived notions and also used triangulation method as a strategy for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

While doing any research, we need to consider whether our research procedures are likely to cause any harm to the respondents or participants. The researcher took several methods for dealing with these issues. In the beginning the first few months was spent in getting the consent. Firstly, the researcher obtained informed consent before the study from the Commissioner, Siliguri Municipal Corporation; the Commissioner of Police, Siliguri Metropolitan Police; the Inspector-in-charge, Siliguri Police Station; the non-government organizations and also verbal consent from the mother of the children who was considered as respondents for the study. Consent is not just for knowledge of the occurrence of an action but consent confers right on others. Withholding or withdrawing consent withholds or removes that right. Secondly, since the research topic is qualitative and the target group is very sensitive, the researcher avoided exploring sensitive issues, for example, about opinions of the children on their mother’s profession (sex work), before establishing a good relationship with the respondents. Thirdly the researcher ensured the confidentiality of the data obtained, which helped the researcher in getting the information smoothly. In the beginning some of the sex workers did not want their children to be interviewed but when the researcher confronted them that the information will be kept confidential and will be used only for study purpose, and then only the researcher could interview the children without any hindrance. With time the children and the sex workers were able to open up more without any fear of having their information disclosed. Last but not the least, keeping in mind the key principle of social work, that is to respect the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals, the researcher ensured that the sex workers and their children were respected throughout the data collection phase which helped the researcher to complete her field work and data collection process without much obstacles. The dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing of participants was the primary consideration in the research study.
3.8 Social Work Methods

The two social work methods mostly applied in this study are social case work and social group work. Social case work is a process which deals with individuals within its total setting. It is concerned with the Individual as a whole personality and helps individuals to cope more effectively with their problems in social functioning.

There are principles which are to be taken care while conducting social case work. They are:

Principle of confidentiality: It is the duty of the social workers to maintain confidentiality with the client. There may be some case like HIV Aids, such case need to be kept confidential. If such case is disclosed, the client will face problems. There are two types of confidentiality. 1: Relative confidentiality- the social worker shares the case with third or fourth person but the case remains within themselves and it is not disclosed to public. 2: Absolute confidentiality- it is when the case is dealt between the client and the social worker and there is presence or interference of the third person.

Principle of Individualization: It is the recognition and understanding of each client’s unique qualities. It is based upon the right of human beings to be individuals and to be treated as not just a human being but as a human being with his personal differences.

Principle of acceptance: It is the principle of action where the social worker perceives and deals with client as he/she really is including his/her strength and weakness, congenial and uncongenial qualities, his/her positive and negative feelings, his/her constructive and destructive attitudes.

Principle of right to self-determination: Client will take decision for him/her self. The social worker will not impose or force anything upon the client. It is a right and need of a client to have freedom in making his/her own choice and decision in the case work process. The social worker has a corresponding duty to respect that right, recognize that need, stimulate and help the client to activate that potential for self-direction.
Principle of participation: Client has to participate in taking initiative and making decision. This helps the client to be self-dependent or self-reliant. In every phase of case work, client’s participation is needed.

Principle of controlled emotional involvement: It is the social worker’s sensitivity to the clients feeling. There should be a controlled emotion towards the client, for e.g. if the client is crying, the social worker should not cry along with the client. Therefore, there is a need to control emotions.

Principle of non-judgmental attitude: It is based on the conviction that the social workers function excludes any kind of biasness, evaluated judgments about the attitude, standards or actions of the client.

Principle of purposeful expression of behavior: For every behavior there is a purpose. It is the result of an understanding. To modify the behavior of the client, to identify the negative behavior and to correct it is the work of a social worker.

Principle of relationship: There are various kinds of relation. To develop good relation, we require positive reinforcing power (recognizing the client’s performance and showing appreciation), give and take relation (degree of reciprocity). There is no relationship where conflicts do not exist. To maintain a good bond there should be conflict regulation skill. There are positive and negative relationship. Professional positive relationship is the worker-client relationship.

Principle of resource utilization: To identify the resources available and to make the use of these resources in its optimum manner.

Principle of beginning with the client: This principle says that the social worker should understand how to start working with the client. When the social workers come in contact with the client, social workers should understand what the client is experiencing, feeling and wanting. Social workers should listen carefully to the client.
Principle of self-awareness: It is important for social workers to be aware about oneself, one’s behavior, strength and weakness, attitude relating to caste and religion, moral values and so on. This helps in the smooth functioning of the relationship between the social worker and the client.

The above principles of social case work were applied while conducting the case studies of the children of sex workers. These principles helped in conducting the case studies without much obstacles.

Another method of social work applied in this study is the Social group work. Social group work helps individual to enhance their social functioning and to cope more effectively with their personal, group or community problems. I chose to apply this method of Social work in my study because of its objectives. Its objectives are:

- Group work enables individual changes.
- It provides individual support
- It provides opportunities for socialization
- It helps to develop the self-concept of the group members
- Group work teaches values (every individual has dignity and worth, social justice, mutual help and responsibilities)
- It provides opportunities to reflect and develop

The group work was conducted with the children of sex workers and throughout the group work the principles of group work was maintained. The principles are: (i) principle of planned group formation, (ii) principle of specific objectives, (iii) principle of purposeful worker group relationship, (iv) principle of continuous individualization, (v) principle of progressive planning, (vi) principle of direct group interaction, (vii) principle of democratic group self-determination, (viii) principle of flexible functional organizational, (ix) principle of resource utilization, (x) principle of evaluation.
II

Profile of the Area of Study

Flesh trade is operated in many forms-brothel based sex workers, call girls, escorts and street sex workers, etc. Brothel based sex workers operate particularly from a place considered as red-light area. Red light area is a place where sex workers develop their own separate community which meets dual purpose of business and shelter with their immediate family members (children, male counterpart and sometimes relatives). The research study was conducted in Khalpara red light area which is located at Siliguri, the most important and largest city in North Bengal of West Bengal. Siliguri is situated at 396 feet above sea level and on the banks of Mahananda River (length of 91.7kms) and is a witness as to the importance of ‘geographical location’ in the growth and development of the place.

The name “Khalpara” which in Bengali means a narrow land village was named because of its geographical location. In this narrow land, during the time of British rule there used to be houses of three to four sex workers but now this area is popularly known as red light area with around 515 sex workers. Siliguri is the major commercial gateway to the seven northeastern states of India as well as three neighboring countries of Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh. Siliguri being an important transit point having interstate Bus terminus, New Jalpaiguri Railway Station and Bagdogra Airport assumes an important place in the tourism map and is considered to be the gateway of North East India.

At present there are 47 Wards under Siliguri Municipal Corporation out of which 33 Wards (62%) falls within the district of Darjeeling and the remaining 14 Wards (38%) under Jalpaiguri district. Khalpara red light area falls under Ward No. 7.

According to the Census 2011 the total population of Siliguri is 705,579 (male=362,523; Female=343,056). Hinduism is majority religion in Siliguri city with 91.98% followers and Islam is second with 5.37% following it. Remaining are Jainism, Sikhism and Christianity. As per census 2001, the total area of Khalpara is 81 acres with 9889 (Male=5239, Female=4650) population (Source: Siliguri Municipal Corporation). Siliguri Junction Railway station is the closest railways station to Khalpara, it is 3kms

76
near to the Red Light area and New Jalpaiguri Station, the major railway station is 6.9kms away from the red light area. There are two temples near Khalpara red light i.e. Kali Mandir and Sankatmochan Hanuman Mandir and there are two mosques. The nearest hospital to this red light area is Siliguri Distrcit Hospital. Every Monday and Thursday a doctor (general physician) from Siliguri District Hospital pays visit to Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (Non-Government Organization) in Khalpara red light area where he provides free health checkup mostly to the sex workers and their children. The nearest police station to Khalpara is Siliguri Police Station. There are few schools in this ward like Hindi Balika Vidyapath, Samsia Madrasa High School, Siliguri VidyaSagar Vidyalaya, Siliguri Hindi High School for Girls. The medium of instruction in these schools are Bengali, Hindi and Urdu.

The flesh trade business at Khalpara red light area existed from long ago. It is now considered as a major trading centre of children and sex workers from Eastern Nepal districts and North Eastern part of India. Women are taken from Nepal and other North Eastern states in India to Khalpara and from Khalpara they are sold to different brothels like Sonagachi red light are in Kolkata, Grant road brothel in Mumbai, Pune, New Delhi and other places. Sex workers in Khalpara red light area come from different corners of West Bengal and neighboring states of West Bengal like Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram. There are many instances where these girls were married to strangers and after few months they were sold to Khalpara red light area by their husbands. Many girls left their home in search of a job but ultimately landed in Khalpara. A major part of sex workers in Khalpara are from Nepal and Assam and they are highly in demand by the customers. In 2014, there were around 515 sex workers and in 2017 the estimated numbers of sex workers are around 320.

There are women from different social background engaged in sex work. There is some evidence of social mobility in the profession. E.g. many of them have their own houses and some do not have. Some sex workers have husbands/male counterpart with them but the others do not. The male counterpart is known as “babu” to the sex workers and it is known as “kaku” (uncle) to their children. In Khalpara red light area the male partners (babus) remain attached to the female sex workers but his role in a family as a
provider was absent altogether. But in some cases the male partners extended support for the children’s care and education. These *babus* act as husbands of sex workers and they are not allowed to fall in love with another sex worker from the same area. If the *babus* leaves his partner and falls in love without another sex worker, the *babus* are beaten and taken out from the red light area and is never allowed to enter the premises. Some of the *babus* work outside the town and pays visit once in a while whereas some stay with the sex workers. The *babus* allow their lover to sex trade and most of the time lives by the expense of the sex workers.

The residents of the red light area celebrate almost all the religious festivals throughout the year like Diwali, Holi, Eid-ul-fir, Rakshabandhan, Dussehra, Christmas and many more. But if any death occurs the body is burnt or buried according to one’s own religion and rituals. The sex workers earn from hundred to three hundred rupees from one customer. The customers usually visit the red light area from 6pm-10pm on the week days and on Sundays there will be many customers from 10am in the morning till late at night. In Khalpara red light area there are *bariwallis* (female brothel keepers), who manage the house of prostitution. The word *bariwalli*, literally a female house owner in Bengali has come to mean a female brothel keeper. The *bariwalli* in most cases is also a sex worker. The common relation between the sex worker and the *bariwalli* in most cases is that of the landlady and her tenant, and there is no other obligation. But some of the *bariwallis* are not only landladies but also the capitalists of the trade. They buy minor girls and also finance young women to give them a start in their life of sex work. The income of the sex workers is uncertain and there are days where she may not secure any visitors; while days of illness means loss of income. When the sex worker is ill, the *bariwalli* makes arrangement for her treatment and looks after her. She takes lease of the house and sublets the rooms to sex workers at a higher rate. These *bariwallis* have a house with five to six rooms which are given to sex workers for rent. The price of the rent depends on the location and size of the room. Usually the room rent is approx. 1500 per month. The rooms near the road side are expensive than the rooms in the interior location because it is easy to attract customers from the roadside. There are flying sex workers also. Flying sex workers are the sex workers who do not live in the red light area and they are available through phone calls. They are also known as call girls. Some of these sex
workers come along with the customers to the red light area and rent a room on an hour basis which is usually hundred rupees per hour.

There are four categories of sex workers who live in Khalpara red light area. the first one is the independent sex workers who earns for herself and her family and has her own house to live. The second type of sex workers are those who pays the room rent (approx. 1500 monthly) and for the food to bariwalli and keeps what she earns. The third type of sex workers are those who give half of what she earns to the bariwalli in a daily basis. The fourth type of sex workers are the bonded sex workers, who has to give everything she earns to the bariwalli and in return the bariwalli provides her with food and shelter. These types of sex workers are mostly the sex workers who are bonded to the bariwalli who has brought them for some months or years after which they gain a degree of independence within the sex industry.

Khalpara red light area was known to be even very crowded before. There used to be many customers lined up for one sex worker. The sex workers had to attend the client one after the other. Sometimes the clients were robbed inside the red light area and the pimps would always guard the sex workers if the clients tried to fight back. The red light area 20 years back was not what it is now today. During that time the sex workers would pull men from the road side and force them for sexual intercourse and if not then they would rob them. That was the time when there were more trafficked women in the red light area. The red light area in the morning would look dirty with lot of used condoms and alcohol bottles lying everywhere. Despite of many used condoms, HIV/AIDS rate was high during those days. One of the NGO member said, “during those days even the dogs had HIV”. The children of sex workers were born without proper medical care and they also lacked proper post-natal care. The sex workers had to get back to work as soon as they delivered the baby. No proper rest was taken and they had to attend the clients. If they didn’t attend the clients, the bariwalli would not like and that would create a problem for the sex worker. There are no male sex workers in Khalpara red light area.
References