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**Title of Thesis: HIV/AIDS and Commercial Sex Workers in Delhi: Awareness, Risk Behavior, Care & Support**

**Keywords: Sex work, HIV/AIDS, Safe Sex Practice, Risk Behaviour, Care & Support**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Accusation of commercial sex workers for HIV/AIDS has resulted in severe stigmatization of this population across the globe. Although the high vulnerability can't be denied or undermined but this kind of labeling further results in discrimination and marginalization which makes it more difficult to reach the hidden population. Their engagement in high risk is concern and therefore risk behavior assessment and minimizing it is an important aspect of HIV/AIDS interventions. The social stigmatization and the struggle of the infected person is one aspect and the financial aspiration of the government to meet for the care and support of the positive population is extensively huge which can actually neutralize the progress and development of any nation in due course.

Keeping this as a rationale of understanding HIV/AIDS and commercial sex workers as an interrelated phenomenon was attempted in the current study. The study focused to obtain information regarding awareness of HIV/AIDS, risk behavior and care and support mechanisms for commercial sex workers. The impacts are concentrating in and can be very severe for the households directly affected by HIV and AIDS. This is a situation, in terms of welfare effects or policy implications, very different from a setting in which the adverse impacts are distributed evenly.

The study has a mixed method approach with a sample size of 150. Convenient sampling was used to reach the respondents. Interview schedule was used as the method of data collection and SPSS was administered for the analysis purpose. The present study reported more than half of the respondents (69.3 percent) being in the age group of 20-30 years and almost one fourth (24 percent) are in the age group of 30-40 years. Mean age of the respondents is 28.2 years. 53.3 percent respondents are married and close to one three fourth 70.7 percent of the respondents are illiterate. Few have completed their primary education (14 percent) while few

of them (4.7 percent) have studied above the secondary level. Major source of information about HIV/AIDS are NGOs (71 percent) working with the respondent group. This is a good trend that most of the sex workers have heard about HIV however the understanding is not satisfactory. Only 16.7 percent of them were able to depict the difference between HIV and AIDS. Almost half of the respondents were not aware of the symptoms of HIV while about one fourth of the respondents knew correctly about the impact of HIV on the body. Most common mode of transmission identified by the respondents was the sexual mode (84 percent) and low awareness was seen for the transmission from mother to child (62.7 percent). Other major findings suggested that more than half of the respondents (57.3 percent) entertain 10-20 clients weekly. 54 percent of the respondents are engaged in vaginal and oral sex. A considerable amount of 34.7 percent also performs anal sex with their clients. A little more than one third (37.33 percent) of the respondents always use condom however the proportion was as low as 8 percent with regular partner. In the current study more than half (71 percent) of the respondents knew about some centre for HIV in their locality. However most of the respondents (81 percent) were not aware about CD4 and only 6 of them were aware about the window period. Most of the respondents (76.67) were aware of the initiatives of ICTC. 48.7 percent of the respondents took less than half an hour from their residence to reach the ICTC center. 65.3 percent of the respondents did not face any kind of problem in accessing ICTC and its services. A small proportion of the respondents' complained about the rude and non-cooperative behavior of the staffs. Other problems were long waiting hours for the test, non-issue of test report on due date. 19.3 percent of the respondents feel that ART is not a cure of AIDS while 18 percent believed ART must be taken life long.

The gravity and significance is described by analyzing the impact of the epidemic on demography, education, health, commercial and subsistence agriculture along with macro- and micro-economics. The realization of the impact of AIDS is due on socio-economic development along with industrial, manufacturing and tourism sector. This systematic approach enlarges considerably the spectrum of the research on HIV/AIDS and offers some apparatus for a more adequate evaluation of the epidemic, which becomes significant for the formulation of national policies. Thus it requires a more comprehensive and holistic approach of beyond awareness targeting some actions for the negotiations in the designed interventions.