



*Development and empowerment through the Crèche
and the role of female sex workers
Field practice in India*

Jessica H. Jönsson

From the foreword:

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Development and Empowerment

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"Pedagogiska meddelanden" is a series of publications on field practice and educational issues at the Department of Social Work at Mid Sweden University.

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Foreword

Since the publication of *“Devotion and empowerment”* in 2008 there has been more Swedish students in the village of Hirekumbalagunte for field practice. Jessica H. Jönsson is one of them. Her report is, as both professors Marulasiddaiah and Kamali remark in their introductions, a valuable contribution. It takes student reflections on social work, social justice and concepts like development and empowerment to yet another level. It should be no surprise to anyone that Jessica today is a motivated PhD student at the Department of Social Work at Mid Sweden University.

Jessica’s report reflects the fact that the social work education at Mid Sweden University has changed a lot since the students from *“Devotion and empowerment”* were here in Östersund.

A considerable amount of essays written by students on their last semester recent years are linked to international experiences and the importance of critical reflection on concepts such as multiculturalism, ethnicity and migration.

The impact of this particular knowledge area - what we here amongst lecturers call «inter/inter» - actually represents a very clear trend in relation to the earlier relatively superficial and even naïve way to present such issues in education. Critical and postcolonial theory on issues of migration, pluralism, ethnicity, gender and power, are today more firmly established both in the education programmes and the department as a whole. Our substantial experience of international practice is of course one important factor in this development.

Enjoy!

Magnus Ottelid, Editor.

Introduction

Social work is one of the major disciplines within social sciences which has continuously defined and redefined social justice as the core of social solidarity in each society. Much of social work in each society is part of its civil sphere where people take care of each other in local communities. This leads us to the fact that social work in its common sense has never been exclusively western and has its core in each society irrespective of their place on the imagined 'axis of development'. Social work students have been during the last decades travelling around the world and doing their field works. Extensive field reports can be used to illustrate such activities within the education of social work. Living in local communities, interacting with people and participating in social work actions in non-western countries are valuable in many respects. Learning from different conditions of lives in different socioeconomic and cultural contexts and personal development are among the impacts of such international field works. Many of students can improve their professional skills and abilities for working within the field of global social work, including working in plural and diverse societies of today.

The field of global social work needs new ideas, theoretical perspectives and models in order to generate new and effective models for monitoring social change and social justice. International field work can hopefully provide proper opportunities for personal reflections and critical evaluation of our 'saving mission' of the 'others'. Field work reports are valuable materials which should be used in social work education and critically analyzed in order to improve the quality of our education and its models of field work. Jessica H. Jönsson's report from her field work in India is a proper contribution to these efforts.

*Masoud Kamali, professor of Social Work, Mid Sweden University
Östersund, October 2010*

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of you who have been involved in making my field practice the most interesting and unforgettable experience and those who have supported me in making this report possible.

First of all, I want to thank all the villagers; men, women and children in the communities: Hirekumbalagunte, Chikka Kumbalagunte, Gollarahatti, Bodajjana Bande and Myasarahatti for your cooperation, great hospitality and for most interesting and unforgettable meetings and moments. Special thanks to all of the teachers, the helpers and the mothers, for sharing your experiences, thoughts and feelings with me. Without you, this report would not have come true. Thank you!

Many thanks to Dr. H.M Marulasiddaiah for inviting me to SWASTI for my field practice, for many interesting and motivating discussions about social work and social development, and of course for all wonderful support in making this report. Thanks to Mid Sweden University and course coordinator Mrs. Carina Thörn who introduced me to SWASTI. Thanks for your support on the way. Many thanks to Social worker Mr. H.B Kanni, for your cooperation during my field practice. I admire your commitment to your work and your professional way of meeting people's needs. I want to thank Suvarna Kanni, the kind-hearted and strong woman of SWASTI house. I fondly remember our interesting and valuable discussions we had had over a cup of tea, made of the healthy and delicious milk from Hirekumbalagunte.

Many thanks to all KSTC members. I am impressed by your devotion and knowledge.

Thanks to Ms. Deepa Rose for the time and the thoughts that we shared. The world needs such bold and wise women as you are. I want to show my gratitude to Dr. Rajendra Kumar with his lively family, for great hospitality, and kindness. During my field practice I had the opportunity to get an insight into many aspects of social work carried out in the different parts of Karnataka.

I am most grateful for this. Thanks to all of you who made this possible!

Bangalore 2008

Jessica H. Jönsson

Introduction

Field practice in India

I felt happy and excited over my plans to do my field practice in India in spring 2008. I was ready to leave a snow covered and cold Sweden to meet the challenges in a sunny and hot India. As a student of social work at mid Sweden University, situated in Östersund in Northern part of Sweden, I did have the great opportunity to do my field practice abroad in Karnataka, south of India. I have a great interest in development issues in a global perspective and have been engaged in voluntary development projects such as of Amnesty International, SAK (Swedish committee of Afghanistan) and Fair Trade - organization. When my plans for a field practice abroad started, I was interested of joining a voluntary organization functioning at grass root level, to gain an insight into the international social work, to learn more about voluntary initiative and organizations acting, at the grass root level, furthermore to increase my knowledge in social work and different methods of practising it. I got the great opportunity to join a voluntary organization in Karnataka, India, called SWASTI (Social Work and Social Transformation Institute), committed to social work particularly in the rural communities in the area of woman and child welfare and social development. I was going to be helped by two organizations during my field practice: SWASTI and KSTC (Karnataka State Trainers Collective), under the supervision of Dr H.M. Marulasiddaiah, professor of Social work, and assisted by Mr. H.B. Kanni, a professionally trained social worker, at the field level.

It is 12 years since last group of Swedish students from Mid Sweden University were doing their field practice at the organization SWASTI (i.e.1995). All of the earlier students, who chose to do their field practice in rural India between 1988 to 1995, have written field reports based on their practice and experiences gained on various issues related to social work in rural India. These reports have been collected and brought out as a book namely: *Devotion and empowerment*, by Mr. Magnus Ottelid (Ed.) at the Department of Social Work, Mid Sweden University in 2008. The book can serve as a source of inspiration and can be studied from various angles by anyone interested in social work training and crossing borders.

The report

To complete my field practice and to write this report was an invigorating challenge. I felt very motivated to go to rural India for 15 weeks to study social work, but even if I have been travelling abroad before and been active in international development projects this was going to be different in many ways. Unlike former organized practices, I came alone as the only Swedish student from Mid Sweden University to live and work in the most marginalized and poverished communities in rural India. Very few people could speak English. I had to wake up to temple music every early morning, children frequently climbed the house to peep through the windows to see me and people never stop staring at me and asking odd questions. Who is this foreign Madame and what is her purpose to come and be here in the village?

I was in a totally new context depending on my supervisor and social worker in the field.

I was fighting to get a structure in my daily work and to plan an agenda for the following 15 weeks. Several times I missed my own privacy, my routines and my structured and 'independent' life in Sweden. I wanted to discuss with someone who could understand my situation, my feelings and reflections of the social work which I was involved in. Many times I felt confused and frustrated, but still, happy, proud and full of curiosity. I had to adjust, accept, respect and try to understand the context, the food, the climate, the environment, the people and the social and cultural conditions. In spite of my limitations, I completed my field practice and report of social work after many interesting experiences, unforgettable moments and meetings, which have given me most valuable knowledge and awareness of social work ethos in India.

In order to get a strong base for this report, I have studied relevant literature for my field work. The book *Devotion and empowerment* helped me to get an insight into SWASTIs' objectives and principles. Reading of the earlier students' feelings, observations and reflections helped me to get a better knowledge for my situation and the context I was in.

Literature about social development, women and child welfare as well as valuable discussions with competent, professional, and open minded persons, who I have met in my field work, have given me increased knowledge and awareness.

Many thanks are due to Dr. H.M Marulasiddaiah, Social worker Mr. H.B Kanni, KSTC members and of course all respondent women: teachers and mothers I have interviewed.

The report is divided into 3 parts; A, B and C. In part A, I present SWASTI, the voluntary organization and its objectives and principles. I give a presentation of my field study of 4 communities and 4 crèches (day care centres) in the most marginalized and impoverished communities of Bellary District in Karnataka. The study is based on participant observations made and interviews held. I shall be discussing the role of the crèche, the potential to become a tool in the hands of the social workers to bring about social change and development in the rural communities. I have observed the role of the child, the teacher, the helper, the mother, the family and the community, from 5 dimensions; Education, Health, Economy, Harmony and People's power. I am basically focusing on 3 aspects: Education, Health and Mothers' meetings.

Self help groups of women that provide small loans in form of micro credits have increased in the world, and it is equally true that with regard to the rural areas in Karnataka were SWASTI functions. In part A, I discuss the efforts made by the self help groups as also the hindrances they face to achieve sustainable economic and social development, besides focussing attention on the function of crèches.

In Part B, I discuss community mobilization for work with female sex workers, from my experiences participating in a training programme held by KSTC. I discuss if effective community mobilization is the way for long term sustainability of current initiatives.

The main goal of the community mobilization process of the programme which KSTC has launched is to help the sex workers function as organized group, a collective, in order to help themselves move from being self diffident individuals to empowered women with a strong collective voice. Collectivization would be a primary mechanism to move towards social action in the society.

In the last part: C, I delineate my thoughts and express my reflections of my total experiences of Social work in India, during my field practice with SWASTI and KSTC.

METHODOLOGY

The study, including Part A and B is based on conducted interviews and participant observations. I have collected relevant information for my study. The best method to realise the aim of the study fully was to use a qualitative method, as I was interested in obtaining a proper understanding of the attitudes, feelings and thoughts the mothers and the teachers have. I have interviewed them closely and have tried to give a description of their feelings, attitudes about the crèche and its role for social development including of the child, the mother, the family and the whole community. The Interviews were found to be channels to make the informants to be more open and flexible. Through the qualitative method it was possible for the respondents to express their perspectives, views, feelings and opinions in their own words. The respondents were not forced into a specific pattern of thinking. During the personal interviews I conducted and the training programmes with KSTC I attended, I did get translations into English from Kannada, the local language. I did secured a training manual in English, so I could follow the training programme with KSTC. Still I could not always get all the information in detail and as a result misunderstandings sometimes did arise. The answers in the interviews regarding some of the questions have almost been similar. The women were never alone during the interview when villagers, other relatives also were represented. This might have had given a good or bad influence of the respondents. Even though the women were in a hurry to go back to work in the fields or to take care of their family, I always felt that they had time to share their thoughts and experiences with me. I have interviewed 5 mothers and 1 teacher in each community, totally 20 mothers and 4 teachers.

DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY

In a time of huge economic, environmental and social changes all over the world it is for me important to keep in mind that development is not about things or numbers. It is about people. Social development is human development. I believe that many organs working with development issues do not seriously look at the social dimensions of development. Even if they know it is important, it is many times neglected in practice. Successful development is unfortunately often synonymous with economic growth and poverty is often described in a pathologic way. Social development has to be a collective responsibility and interest including human rights, social justice, solidarity, participation and wellbeing with respect to the diversity which form human societies.

The globalization and the worlds unequal distribution of the world's resources put the world politics in a new direction today, the countries of the world are today in a big dependence of each other and development issues affects both poor and rich countries. The fight against poverty has to include all of the countries in the world.

Poverty is a dynamic concept and is not only about lack of money or purchasing power. It is even lack of freedom, security, resources, opportunities and power. People with experiences of poverty rarely express the economic dimension but to point out lack in other aspects such as ill-health, insecurity, difficulties in achieve social or cultural abilities. Factors such as sex, age, ethnic and physical challenges also affect the experiences of poverty and the possibilities to rise from poverty. Rich countries welfare and economic growth cannot continue develop at the expense of poor countries. We have to find sustainable forms of development which respect and give an environmental and equal contribution within and between countries. Otherwise there is a big risk that the world will go on suffer from conflicts, environmental catastrophes and increased poverty. We will find increased pressure and conflicts, large scaled migration, increased environmental and health – risks all over the world.

In KSCCW (Karnataka State Council for Child Welfare) Annual Report 2004-2005, it is argued that, being poor in India means lacking good health and skills to make advantages of economic opportunities. Being poor also means a very high chance of being illiterate. Millions of children of poor families never attend school or complete their education and countless numbers never receive the quality education that is their right. Poverty and lack of education cause most children to be where they are. Education can be seen as one key to this problem, and the world needs to attack the root of the problem. Against this background, SWASTI has established nine crèches in nine communities of Bellary district.



Part A

Development through the Crèche

SWASTI - SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION INSTITUTE

SWASTI was formed in 1987 as a nongovernmental voluntary organization.

When SWASTI started as an organization the main objectives were the following:

1. To take steps for social – economic development
2. To motivate the people to participate in the area of health and hygiene
3. To organize youth and women for enhancing their quality of life
4. To organize educational programmes
5. To associate closely with the educational centres governmental and voluntary for organizing teachers and students for social development
6. To collaborate with the national and international funding and development organizations for social change and social development
7. To create an International forum for exchanging views and experiences of social workers, social work educators and social and other scientists
8. To undertake publications of relevant literature including periodicals

Some of the objectives have already been accomplished and in previous years SWASTI had many employees but today, one social worker, H.B. Kanni and his wife Suvarna are working in the organization. The objective of SWASTI today is to work with child care and women welfare through which SWASTI desires to bring about change and development in the most marginalized and impoverished communities in the Hirekumbalagunte region.

SWASTI is today a small organization and H.B Kanni is working with other responsibilities of social work in other districts of Karnataka as well. Today's work in SWASTI basically consists of supporting and counselling the villagers and their families with different kind of social, economic issues, etc. It is important for SWASTI that people themselves are active and work hard for their own development.

People in the surrounding villages are today engaged in self help groups, agricultural projects, etc. basically maintained by themselves but with support from SWASTI. The villages are in a good development situation says social worker H.B Kanni. They have made political and social improvements. For example, many of the agriculturalists are growing cash crops which will give them more money. There are

many people who are active in self help groups, giving support to each other, but still there are some hindrances to achieve sustainable development says H.B Kanni. These aspects are alcoholism among the villagers, the vulnerability of the women; still they do not have the freedom which is their rights, farmers do not use modern methods in their agricultural works and they use lots of chemicals, etc. which in long term will increase the poverty in the villages.

SWASTI is not planning for new projects and they are not interested in external financial support. SWASTI believes in empowerment of the people and that people shall work for the improvement of their life conditions. This means that whatever is called 'community development' cannot be created by others or from the outside of the community. If people themselves want change, you can help them to trust their own capacity and abilities and by that overcome hindrances in their way.

India is divided into 27 states which are divided further into districts. (For example Karnataka State has 29 districts). Districts are divided into Taluka, Taluka into Hoblis and Hoblis into villages. There are 3 tier political systems namely: Gram Panchayat at the village level, Taluka Panchayat at Taluka level and District Panchayat at the district level. This administration setup is formed like this particularly in Karnataka state. My field practice was mainly positioned in Karnataka State, Bellary District, Kudligi Taluka, Hosahalli Hobli and the village Hirekumbalagunte, where I was staying.

HIREKUMBALAGUNTE

Hirekumbalagunte is a rural village, where the SWASTI organization is located. The population in Hirekumbalagunte is 1,625, with 785 women and 840 men. Total 217 children between 5-18 years are going to school (governmental and crèche). The main occupation in Hirekumbalagunte is agriculture. They grow jowar, ragi, gram, groundnuts, sunflower and silk. Men, women and children are working in the fields.

I have also been around to all of the other villages for the aim of my study and I have also been introduced to other social activities in Bagalkot, Bangalore, Dharward, Kolar, Mangalore, Mysore and Shivamogga districts.

The main objective for SWASTI today is:

- Child care and women welfare through which SWASTI desires to bring about social change and social development in the most marginalized and impoverished communities in the Hirekumbalagunte region. The five dimension of SWASTI's work are: Education, Health, Economy, Harmony and Peoples power.

SWASTI has maintained nine crèches in the most marginalized and impoverished communities of Bellary District, Karnataka namely: Hirekumbalagunte, Chikkakumbalagunte, Gollarahatti, Shantanahalli, Bodajjana Bande, Hosakere Papayanahatti, Myasarahatti, Linganahalli Tanda and Chikkajogihalli Tanda. There are about 8000 people habituating in these villages; about 300 children, below the age of 6 years, are looked after in the nine crèches. Each crèche is maintained by two

women: a trained teacher and a helper. The children are provided with play materials, food, medical care, and counselling services at the crèche. The teacher and the helper develop reports with the mothers of the children, the other members of their families and also the leaders of the village. Efforts are made to educate the mothers in the areas of child care, personal health and hygiene, family budget, banking, public sanitation, environment, etc. SWASTI aims at bringing about a total development of the concerned village community through the child-mother-family combine. It also aims at building a network among the nine village-communities with a view of creating positive and constructive attitude among the villagers towards building a healthy inclusive rural community.

The crèche in Hirekumbalagunte was started in 1989. The crèches in Chikkakumbalagunte, Gollarahatti, Myasarahatti and Hosakere Papayanahatti were started in 2006. The crèches in Linganahalli Tanda, Bodajjana Bande and Shantanahalli were started in 2007.

KSCCW (Karnataka State Council for Child Welfare) give financial support to eight of the total nine crèches. 90 % is given by KSCCW and the rest is borne by SWASTI.

The Hirekumbalagunte crèche gets financial support from the Central Social Welfare Board situated in New Delhi. This crèche is managed by “the women’s organization” in Hirekumbalagunte. SWASTI is supporting all of the crèches.

There are some reasons why I have chosen to study only four of these villages and crèches. First of all, I was interested to study the crèches maintained by SWASTI and aided by KSCCW. The Hirekumbalagunte crèche is not maintained by SWASTI.

Secondly, due to the time constrained I decided to study 50 % of the crèches run by SWASTI, why 4 of them were relevant for my study.

Thirdly, the selected communities; Chikkakumbalagunte, Gollarahatti, Bodajjana Bande and Myasarahatti are the most marginalized and poverished communities in the region of Kudligi Taluka. These four villages were selected for the reason that they all representing different segments of the most marginalized and impoverished parts of the rural society.

Fourthly, since SWASTI has been closely associating with KSTC (Karnataka State Trainers Collective) I have been introduced to the various activities of KSTC in order to get an opportunity to develop an insight into the efforts made by KSTC to develop skills among social workers engaged in development endeavours at the grassroot level, as well as to get information about a social work training ‘outside the formal set up’. SWASTI and KSTC have professional relationship with schools of social work and certain voluntary organizations - NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations). I was introduced into KSTC s work with community mobilization for the work with female sex workers. I found it interesting to give some attention to this form of social work as well.

Lastly, it is also important to point out that there were some difficulties to get structured interviews in the villages. The villagers’ time is valuable and they have

to work hard for the survival of the family. So, even due to the cooperation and availability of the people ready to participate in my study, these four villages were selected.

THE CRÈCHE

KSCCW, supports the NGOs to maintain crèches in Bangalore and in 7 other districts of Dharward, Chickmagalur, Davangere, Bagalkot, Tumkur, Kolar and Bellary. Each crèche has 25 – 30 children in the age group of 0 - 5 years. The children come from the lower income group and are the children of the agricultural labourers. Each crèche has 2 staff members:

A teacher and a helper. The crèche provides nutritious mid-day meals, conduct preschool activities, health check-ups and conduct mothers' meeting. SWASTI is coordinating structural monthly meetings with the teachers, helpers and mothers from all of the crèches. The conditions, activities, principles, problems and improvements of the crèches will be discussed together during these meetings. For every month the teachers write reports discussing their experiences, the problems they face and suggestions for improving the crèche.

The teachers submit these reports to SWASTI for perusal and follow up action. They have a review together with SWASTI of the activities of the last month and in the same time preparing the agenda for the next month. The teachers also get their monthly salary during these meetings.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CRÈCHE

- To give the child a good pre-education
- To give care and help to the poorest of the poor
- To be as second mothers for the children and take the responsibility for them
- To give the children good healthy food
- To support the working mothers and their children

GUIDELINES FOR RUNNING CRÈCHES (formulated by KSCCW)

Physical environment

1. Minimum space of 6 to 8 sq. ft. per child to ensure that children can play, rest and learn without any hindrance
2. Crèche centre should be clean, well lighted with adequate ventilation
3. There should be a clean toilet with proper water facilities
4. Clean drinking water should be available
5. Adequate safe play area outside the centre
6. There should be sleeping facilities for children i. e mat, pillows, sheets, etc.

7. Essential play material, teaching and learning material must be available to meet the needs of pre school children
8. Kitchen should be located from activity area of the children to avoid accidents

The timings in the crèche and the pre school activities depend on the convenience of the local working mothers. Usually timings could be from 9 a.m to 3-3.30 p.m and could be extended depending on the needs of the mothers.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

For Physical Development

Running, rolling, jumping, hopping, skipping, throwing, crawling, climbing, stretching, rocking, sliding, balancing, swinging, bouncing, pushing, pulling, lifting, carrying and dancing.

For Intellectual & Language Development

Collecting twigs, shells, sticks, beads, leaves, stones, seeds, match boxes, bottle tops, etc. Sorting - more and less, arranging in order, making sets, collect and bring, matching cards, making pairs, picture cards, addition and subtraction. Talking and listening, singing songs and rhymes, working out puzzles, listening and narrating stories and events playing with puppets, group games.

For Sensory and Emotional Development

Sensory games-guess by smelling, guess by tasting, guess by feeling, guess the sound. Action songs/nursery rhymes, simple games, creative activities, drawing, colouring, paper cutting, story telling, outings, etc.

For Social Development

Group games, group activities like dancing, skits, outings so that children learn to share and work in cooperation.

Day meal

1. Crèche must have adequate cooking facility, cooking utensils, plates, tumblers, etc.
2. Food provided to the children must have adequate nutritional value with variety in use of pulses, vegetables, greens and fruits
3. Food should be prepared in a hygienic manner
4. Food should be provided on all 6 working days in a week
5. Food should be served between 12.30 p.m. to 1 p.m. After lunch the younger children can be allowed to rest

Health check up

1. Crèche teacher must conduct health check up for the children every six month by either contacting the Governmental hospital or Corporation hospital doctors. If it is necessary referral services must be provided to the children.
2. Crèche teacher should tie up with the nearest Anganwadi¹ centre for health care, inputs like immunization , polio drops, basic health monitoring.
3. Crèche teacher should see that regular de worming of children is done.

Home visit

One can get to know the child better, fully only when one visits the home of the child and see the environment in which he lives and the relationships within the home which play a vital role in nurturing the child and development his or her personality. Therefore it is necessary that:

- Crèche teacher does a home visit of each of the enrolled children at least once in six months and when necessary more often.
- If children continue to exhibit behavioural problems the teacher must meet with parents regularly and offer counselling or make a referral to an appropriate service.

Mothers' meeting

1. Mothers' meeting must be organized monthly. Topics related to health, nutrition and children's problem, etc. can be discussed.
2. Demonstration of simple and nutritious recipes with locally available ingredients can be arranged during the mothers' meetings.
3. The parents' role in improving the crèche could be achieved by associating the self help groups and organising the vocational training programmes and enabling the women to access better employment rights.

The role of the helper

To assist the crèche teacher, bringing children from their homes and sending them to school if necessary. The helper is cooking and serving meals for the children, maintaining cleanliness and hygiene of crèche centre and substituting for the teacher during her absence.

Charts to be displayed in the class room

Weekly activity time table, daily menu, birthday chart, fees chart, name chart with photographs of the children, list of children enrolled into school during the previous year and crèche budget.

¹ Anganwadi is a government sponsored child-care and mother-care center in India. It caters to children in the 0-6 age group.

At the local level there should be a regular supervision of the crèches by the district Council.

EMPIRIC – THE VILLAGES AND SUMMARY OF THE INTERVIEWS

Total population	406
(f)	201
(m)	205
Literates	84
Illiterates	73
Total number of houses	75
Total houses with families	68
Total number of children (0-6 years)	49
Total number of children in school (0-18 years)	98
Total number of drop outs (5-18 years)	14
Total number of self help groups	7
(f)	4
(m)	3
Gram panchayat members	1
Artists	11
Govt. employees	2
Ngo. employees	2
Devadasis	4
RSSNB members	1
Religious affiliation - cast	Harijana – “the ex. untouchable”

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS IN CHIKKAKUMBALAGUNTE

ECONOMIC SITUATION

All of the mothers in Chikkakumbalagunte are working in the fields with agriculture. They are basically labourers. Some of the families have their own fields. They get between Rs 25 and 50 per day and Rs 500 to 2000 per month. The expenditure goes to food, soap, hospital visits and they spend money on festivals.

EDUCATION

Two of the interviewed mothers have never visited the crèche, 2 of them are frequently going to school and 1 of them has only been there 1 or 2 times. Almost all of the mothers know what kind of activities the teacher and children are doing in school, the content of the mid day meal; what the children eat in school. 2 of the 5 mothers have learning materials at home. While discussing the role of the crèche, the importance of education, and why it is important, the mothers have interesting answers and reflections. All of the interviewed women are illiterate; some of them can sign their names. The majority of the women say that education is important because their children should be intelligent and learned. They should get a good future with

a good job. Their life should not be as poor as their parents. Further they point out that education is important because the children should be able to take care of the family in the future. One woman says that it is hard to survive without education. She does not give concrete examples. One woman says that she respects and has a high regard for the teacher in the crèche because she does not make any discrimination between the children, even if their children belong to “the ex. untouchable”. Good things about the crèche according to the mothers are: they do not have to worry about their children when they are working in the fields. They feel safe when their children are in the crèche, they will get healthy food and learn good things. Earlier, when the children were running around in the village, the mothers did not feel that their children were in a safe environment. One mother expresses that the crèche is a good preschool for the governmental school and that the crèche is better than the government school, because the quality of the food, the teacher and the education.

One of the mothers gives a further suggestion for the school by saying that she wants the crèche to have benefits for pregnant mothers. Frequently changing of the teacher is not good for the children she points out, but continues by saying that she is very happy with the present teacher in Chikkakumbalagunte.

HEALTH

The mothers express that the health of their family is usually good with some exceptions. Sometimes they get ordinary diseases such as cold, cough, stomach problems, fever, etc. One woman specially expresses her anxiously for the children when they get sick and the family is not able to afford the expenditures for doctor and hospital. She is praying that a better economy will help them. Usually the children take bath every day and the parents alternative days or 2-3 times a week. Some of the women say that some people in the house and in the village are drinking alcohol and eating ‘stars’ (a trade name given to a drug type - chewing gum). Once a week the families go to the marketplace nearby to purchase fruits, vegetables, bread, etc. Sometimes the families also eat meat, when they have the money. Usually the families eat dinner together but the women are always waiting for the husband to come home before eating. Usually the families go to bed between 8 p.m. - 6 a.m. and get up 6 o’clock in the morning. All families mainly use clothes made of polyester. Only some of the clothes are made of cotton. Basically for the reasons that cotton is expensive, polyester is easier to wear and wash.

MOTHERS’ MEETING

All of the respondents think that mothers’ meeting are important and they are interested to participate. Unfortunately some of them are not going due to their work in the fields, they do not have the time to go when the teachers calling for meetings. However some of the mothers have been participating in the meetings where they have discussed cleanliness, the crèche and the children. One woman is saying that she believe it is very important to discuss the children in order to give them a good future. One of them states that it should be compulsory for all of the mothers to participate

in the mothers meeting and to contribute money for the crèche. Unfortunately, many of the mothers are not interested she is saying. Her own experience is that the mothers' meetings and SWASTI's monthly meeting give her good self esteem.

INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHER IN CHIKKAKUMBALAGUNTE

The crèche in Chikkakumbalagunte was started in the year of 2006. The present teacher has been working in the crèche for 1 year. Before that she was working in the village of Gollarahatti for 5 months and before that in Dasarobanahally crèche for 7 years. She has completed 10 days training held by KSCCW in Bangalore and three days in the small town of Davnegere. She is monthly visiting 10 families to discuss cleanliness, education, problems, and improvements of the child/children. Regarding the mothers' meeting she is saying that every month between 12 to 20 mothers are participating in the meetings. In some case if the mothers are not able to come, their relatives will come instead. The teacher is saying that they have had some problem to find a time for the meeting suitable for everyone, but they are having regular discussions with the mothers and other villagers in order to find a good solution to this problem. In the meetings the teacher and helper discuss different aspects such as education, health, cleanliness, diseases, vaccinations and first aid. They try to motivate the mothers to take responsibility in these matters. They even report to the mothers what have been discussed in the monthly SWASTI meetings. While discussing the benefits of the mothers' meeting, the teacher is saying: It is important to motivate and educate mothers to learn and understand the needs of their children, for example that the children should come clean to school. If the mothers are well educated the children will have better conditions.

In the crèche, the teacher is learning the children alphabets, how to write, with help of seeds and food grains, she is teaching mathematics and numbers. She is teaching the children things related to animals, birds, fruits, colours, designs and cubes. The children play games, indoor and outdoor games, singing songs and dance. Teacher expresses that all of these activities are important because the child should develop and when the child learns, he or she will get a better position and will be respected in the society. The teacher considers the crèche as well functioning and the cooperation with the villagers as good. She says she is ready to take all responsibility for the school and the only suggestion she has for improvement of the school is that she wants the number of children in the crèche to increase.

Total population	748
(f)	373
(m)	375
Literates	283
Illiterate	465
Total number of houses	152
Total houses with families	139
Total number of children (0-6 years)	89
Total numbers of children in school (0-18 years)	173
Total numbers of drop outs (5-18 years)	7
Total number of self help groups	11
(f)	6
(m)	5
Gram panchayat members	3
Artists	23
Govt. employees	2
Ngo. employees	4
logammas	5
Religious affiliation - cast	Golla community - cattle and sheep grazing and farming

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS IN GOLLARAHATTI

ECONOMIC SITUATION

All of the mothers in Gollarahatti are working in the fields with agriculture. They are basically labourers. Some of the families have the own fields. They get between Rs 25 and 50 per day and Rs 500 to 2000 per month. The expenditures go to food, soap, hospital visits and much to festivals.

EDUCATION

All of the interviewed mothers except one have been visiting the school. One of them is regularly going, another woman has been there sporadic. Another one, only once for a short visit and one of the mothers has not been to the school at all. All of the mothers can inform me what kind of activities and what meals the children are having in the crèche. Only one of the mothers' has learning materials at home. All of the interviewed women except one are illiterate. A few of them can sign their names. In our discussions about the importance of education, the role of the crèche, the mothers answers were the following: The teacher and helper are too nice, says one of the mothers, she wants more discipline to be maintained and punishment awarded in the school. "Education is important because the children will learn better and they will have a good future and not live like our family does now", says another woman. Another woman is of the opinion that the school and teacher are very good and the crèche is needed for the villagers to be able to give their children a good future. In the same time she expresses the difficulties to put all of her children into school, and at the same time struggle for the survival of the family. It is impossible for her to send all of her

children to school; some of them have to work in the fields for the sake of the family's income. Another woman states that the crèche is good and important because the children will be clean and through education they will get a good preparation for the future. Suggestions for the school: school uniforms for the children, the children should learn English because the teacher can speak English.

The majority of the mothers are ready to take the responsibility to contribute Rs 10 /month for the crèche.

HEALTH

The health of the family is basically good according to the mothers. The family members got ordinary diseases such as cough, fever, stomach problems, etc some times a year. The mothers express that good economy would make the health situation better and for example lots of milk means better health for the family. All of the women use mainly polyester clothes and rarely clothes made of cotton. They spend between Rs 3 – 4000 a year for hospital. The children in the families take bath almost every day and their parents 2-4 days a week. The families are able to purchase fruits, bread, and sometimes meat on market days, when they can afford.

MOTHERS' MEETING

Few of the interviewed women regularly participate in the mothers' meetings, due to lots of work in the fields. However, some of them have once or several times participated. These women are of the opinion that the meetings are important and relevant for all of the mothers, to discuss matters regarding the children's development, health, education, etc.

INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHER IN GOLLARAHATTI

The Gollarahatti crèche was started in 2006. The present teacher has worked there for 7 months. She has completed 10 days training in Bangalore held by KSCCW. The teacher in Gollarahatti has been very active in creating learning materials and she is having lots of different activities for the children in the crèche. She is teaching: the local language Kannada, alphabets, and mathematics. The children learn different forms, colours, designs, and they are singing songs and dancing, etc. In Gollarahatti crèche, both teacher and the helper design the activities in the school together. When we are discussing the aim of learning, the teacher considers that the child should learn things in school for happiness, for its own activity and for physical and mental improvements. The teacher suggests some further improvements of the school, according to the present situation and to the problems she faces: SWASTI is now paying the monthly rent of Gollarahatti crèche, which should be the responsibility of the village to contribute this money. The teacher says that she is ready to take the responsibility for the survival of the school and she is ready to discuss with villagers and panchayat members in order to collect the monthly rent.

The teacher is giving me the information that now unfortunately very few mothers participate in the monthly mothers' meetings in Gollarahatti. In the last two months only two or three women have been to the meetings, since they are busy in the fields, or for other reasons as well. Earlier, the mothers came and discussed with teacher and helper about: cleanliness, vaccinations, nutritious food, health, etc. Gollarahatti crèche also have to deal with the fact that many children, because of better standard in the crèche, actually are leaving the governmental school to join SWASTI's crèche instead. This creates problems both for the crèche and for the governmental school. Some women in Gollarahatti have discussed with the teacher that they wish to start a new self-help group. They have earlier not succeeded with the groups because all of the women were illiterate. The teacher is saying that she is ready to take the responsibility to help the mothers to restart the group. According to her, It is today a problem that the self help groups in Gollarahatti are not working properly.

Total population	236
(f)	118
(m)	118
Literates	60
Illiterates	176
Total number of houses	37
Total houses with families	37
Total number of children	80
Total number of children in the crèche	31
Total number of self- help groups	2
(f)	2
(m)	0
Total number of voters	60
Local doctor - nature medicine	1
Main occupation	Stone cutting and agriculture
Religious affiliation - caste	Schedule tribes, ST and SC

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS IN BODAJJANA BANDE

ECONOMIC SITUATION

The main occupation for the Bodajjana Bande people is stone cutting and subsidiary is agriculture. They will get between Rs 30 to 50 per day as wages. Majority of the inhabitants work with stone cutting, which will give them better wages than working with agriculture. Some of them do not have the skills for stonecutting and therefore they work in the fields as agricultural labourers.

EDUCATION

Out of five interviewed mothers, all of them are illiterate. Four of them have visited the crèche. Two of them come frequently, almost every day to observe the teacher, and to make sure that their children gets good and nutritious food. They believe that education is important to give the children a better life than their parents have and

so that they can take care of their parents when they are becoming old. Few of the mothers have some learning materials at home for their children. One of the mothers, living outside the village, agrees that education is important for the improvements for the children and their future, but due to her family's situation and poor conditions it is very difficult for her to give the children good education. The survival of the family is depending on income from the fields. They live outside the village and it is difficult to take the children to the crèche and then bring them home, when they have to be in the fields and work. Another woman also takes up the survival aspect and says: even though education is important for the mental improvement of the child, it is impossible for me to let all of my eight children go to school. For the survival of the family some of them have to work in the fields. The interviewed mothers give some suggestions for the crèche: The school has to be painted; the teacher should learn more alphabets; play more games and sing more songs with the children.

HEALTH

Under the discussions on the health aspects with the mothers in Bodajjana Bande, the answers turned out to be similar as in the other villages. Majority of the mothers think that the health of the family is fine, except for some ordinary diseases as cough, cold, fever, small wounds to the body, etc. The families go to sleep between 7 and 10 pm and get up 5-6 in the morning. Both the children and parents take bath on alternative days. They are basically wearing polyester clothes but also cotton clothes like lungi² etc, for the men.

MOTHERS' MEETING

In the interviews with the mothers, one of them says that they do not have mothers' meeting in Bodajjana Bande, why she has not participated. Another says that she has been at the mothers' meeting twice and they had some discussions about the children along with others. She expresses that it is very important to participate and argues that all mothers should learn about education and health. She is of the opinion that those women who are not coming to the meetings should be punished in the form of financial sanctions. One mother has been to meetings twice and another woman says that she has not been to any meetings because she was busy working in the fields. Another woman claims she has not been invited and therefore not participated.

INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHER IN BODAJJANA BANDE

The crèche in Bodajjana Bande opened in 2007. The teacher there has been working since the beginning, for about seven months. She has completed training in Bangalore held by KSCCW. We had some discussions about the situation in school. "*The children are few and they are not coming regularly*", she says. She often has to go to the families to motivate them to send their children to the school. The villagers are complaining that the teacher is not coming on time to the school. She confirms that she is often late,

2 Lungi is a garment worn around the waist, particularöy in the rural areas.

and she is saying that it is difficult for her to walk the long distance from her home to the crèche in the morning. The teacher tells me about her activities in the school. She is playing games, singing songs, dancing, learning alphabets, months, days, etc. While discussing the aim of learning she believes that the content of her lessons will motivate the children to get engaged in more activities and become intelligent. She suggests painting of the school and says that the children need clothes and they need new mats to sit on.

She is saying that the cooperation of the villagers is always present. Regarding the mothers' meeting she is saying that no meetings were organized last months. There have been some language problems as the villagers speak Telugu (another Indian language) which is difficult for her to follow and she finds it difficult to organize meetings every month. However, she is saying she will try her best to take the responsibility to organize mothers' meetings regularly here afterwards, because she thinks it is important for the children and their family's wellbeing.

Total population	504
(f)	300
(m)	204
Literates	161
Illiterates	185
Total number of houses	81
Total houses with families	71
Total number of children (0-6 years)	57
Total number of children in school (0-18 years)	92
Total number of children not going to school (5-18 years)	41
Total number of self help groups	2
(f)	1
(m)	1
Total number of Voters	247
Religious affiliation - caste	Hunters

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS IN MYASARAHATTI

ECONOMIC SITUATION

All of the respondent mothers in Myasarahatti work in the fields for earning money. They work in their own, relatives' and as labourers in others' fields. They earn about Rs 15 -50 a day. According to the respondents, the men always earn more money than the women.

EDUCATION

According to the women in Myasarahatti, education is important because their children should have a better life with better work than their parents have. All of the respondents are illiterate. The children should learn to be strong and self sustaining so that they can take care of themselves and their parents in the future. None of the

mothers have learning materials for the children at home. Not all of the mothers have been visiting the school, but a majority have and they can tell me what kind of activities they have in the school.

The women assume that the crèche is important because, the children shall improve and not be as 'backward' as their parents. One of the women says that she wants her daughter to get a good education, because then she can work hard and the family can get money for dowry which, otherwise, is a big economic burden on the poor family. The mothers is of the opinion that the crèche is important because the children get systematic and good education and they learn to be independent. They mothers feel assured that their children are in good hands when they are working in the fields. The mothers have made different suggestions for improvement of the school. They want the school to be painted, they want more families to send their children to the school and all of the children should be clean. All of the interviewed mothers are ready to contribute Rs 10 a month per child to be given to the school, but say that they are not not ready to take other types of responsibilities.

HEALTH

The mothers express that the health of the family is good. Sometimes they get ordinary diseases such as cold, cough, stomach problems, fever, etc. Usually the children take bath every day and the parents on alternative days or 2-3 times a week. Once a week the families go to the marketplace to purchase fruits, vegetables, bread, etc. Usually the families go to bed 8-10 pm and go up 6 am. All of the families use clothes mainly made of polyester, only some clothes are made of cotton fabrics. Reasons being that cotton is expensive, polyester is easy to wear and wash. One of the mothers expresses her problems that all of the income goes to her husbands' alcohol consumption, which gives the family even bigger problem with the economic situation.

MOTHERS' MEETING

Diverse answers were given regarding the mothers' meeting. The started system of monthly contribution to the crèche has not been working properly with the last teacher. One of the mothers has participated once, but it is now three months ago. Another woman has been there totally three times but claims she can not remember what they have discussed.

The mothers do think that the mothers' meetings are good for having common discussions and to solve their problems. One of the mothers has attended in the meetings totally five times and remembers that they have discussed about the health and cleanliness of the children. She expresses that the meetings are an important forum to discuss and share thoughts about the children. One of the mothers has not been to the meetings but says that she is ready to attend.

INTERVIEW WITH THE TEACHER IN MYASARAHATTI

The crèche in Myasarahatti opened in 2006. At the time of interviewing, the teacher has worked in the school only for about two months. She has not yet got conducted by KSCCW.

She likes her job and feels very happy to work in the school she is saying. She describes her activities in the school. They have daily prayers in the crèche. She is doing health check up, looks after children's cleanliness and health. She teaches alphabets, numbers, songs, etc. She found it difficult to discuss the problems connected with school, village, etc. However, she says that she has been mixing with villagers in order to get to know them and their families well. The aim of her teaching and activities in the crèche according to her is to develop self confidence and courage to the children. Regarding the mothers' meeting, she is working hard to organize them, she is saying that last month she convened the meeting but only four mothers' attended. Some of them left early and they did not show any interest in the meeting. The teacher says that she is not discouraged, that is why she says she along with the helper goes to the families and tries to motivate them to participate in the mothers' meeting.

I ask her about the aim and benefits of the mothers' meetings and she is responding that the mothers should not complain over the work of to the teacher and helper or any other problems they have. They should instead participate in the mothers' meeting to discuss the problems, thoughts they have about their children and the school. To get the earlier reports from the SWASTIs' meetings they should personally go to SWASTIs' monthly meetings and take part in the discussions. The teacher continues by saying that she will restart the monthly contribution from the mothers' as the use to do before.

SELF-HELP GROUPS AND MICRO CREDITS

In the village Hirekumbalagunte there are 32 self help groups, almost all of them are of women members. I had some discussions with the accountant of one of the groups, and also with three other women active in these groups. All of the groups get loans from Grameen Bank. The groups invest the credits in tailoring, agriculture, sheep, hotels, insurance, etc.

Grameen Bank is the microcredit organization which provides small loan in form of micro credits.

It is appropriate to mention the work of Muhammad Yunus. In 2006 Muhammad Yunus from Bangladesh, got the Nobel peace prize for his work to "create economic and social development from a bottom up perspective" by organising the grassroots not necessary depending on the powerful occupation upper strata. The microcredit - system is built on the idea of enabling impoverished people to engage in self-employment projects, which will generate higher income and lead to the exit of poverty. Muhammad Yunus believes that only if big groups of poor people can find ways to mobilize themselves out of poverty, sustainable peace and harmony can become reality. It could happen only by organizing themselves with whatever

resources they possess. He does not argue that micro credits are the one and the only solution for the poverty in the world, but it is one way and it has been shown that even the poorest of the poor can work for their own development.

Microcredit has a releasing power and is important in communities where special women struggle against oppressing economic and social conditions. Muhammad Yunus argues that neither economic growth nor political democracy can be achieved if the woman is not equal to the man.

After my discussions, I did find that self help groups have been positive to many women. Grameen Bank which provides micro credits is an alternative way for poor people to get loans to different projects, which can get the women, the family and the community better economic status and improved living conditions.

However, Kramsjö (2000) who for many years has worked with village development and poverty reduction by civil organizations, pointed out the complexity around the microcredit system for social development. He does not believe in micro credits as the ultimate way to pull out of poverty for the poorest of the poor. The biggest reason is that poverty is not due only to lack of money or lack of purchasing power. It is also lack of freedom, security, resources, opportunities and political power. People experiencing poverty rarely express the economic dimension but point out lack in other aspects such as ill-health, insecurity, difficulties in achieve social or cultural abilities. Members of the self help groups show that they are capable to handle loan, they can invest in productive income generating business and therefore improve their lives. However, the microcredit system is runned without questioning any of the structural causes of poverty. When talking about real empowerment it is not sufficient to only provide micro credits. The economic efforts should lead to social and political empowerment otherwise it loses its meaning, or it become irrelevant for changing the economic imbalance and it will only lead to maintaining and reproducing traditional stethoscope. Therefore there is a need to stress on the fight against social and political inequalities in order to abolish poverty and create a better society for all.

I had discussions with four women of a self help group in three different villages: Hosahalli, Hirekumbalagunte and Gollarahatti. The respondents said that the members of self help groups are all of them strong and intelligent but they cannot manage tasks as they are illiterate and always depend on a literate, to maintain the reports, etc required by the bank.

Staff members of the Grameen bank arrange approximately two times a year activities to educate women how to write reports, fill in papers etc. Unfortunately the women do not go to participate in the meetings, because of their illiterateness and they are unable understand what to do. Another aspect which has been discussed with the respondents is that most of the husbands of the members of self help groups and men in the villages do not appreciate that he women should get power, over financial capital through micro credits.

The self help groups should be a social forum where the women could find mutual support to each other and for playing a role of social support to each other. During the meetings the financial and the loan matters are mainly discussed.

According to the women and social workers, the women are only interested in discussing money, and are not ready to discuss any other issues such as, gender, empowerment, family planning even though efforts have been made to have such discussions. The majority of the groups face lots of problems and they have to struggle hard for their existence. The number of self help groups in Karnataka is progressively increasing as the interest of starting new groups high up among the people. However they face problems too difficult to solve easily. According to the respondents, the Grameen Bank state that they work for social development as well as economic development. According to the respondents they will only use this statement as a camouflage for their real interest in the accumulation of economic capital.

DISCUSSION

SWASTI desires to bring about change and development in the most marginalized and impoverished communities in the Hirekumbalagunte region. The organization believes in empowerment of the people and that they can work for their own development. If the people want changes SWASTI can help them to trust their own capacity and abilities and by that overcome hindrances in the way. As shown in the interviews; being poor in the Hirekumbalagunte region means being illiterate, in some cases lacking good health and skills to make economic opportunities. The fact that millions of children of poor families never attend school, complete their education or receive the quality education that is their right is a central reason why SWASTI has maintained nine crèches in these communities of Bellary district. The aim is to bring about total development of the village communities through the child-mother-family combine. It also aims at building a network among the nine village-communities with a view of creating positive and constructive attitude among the villagers towards building a healthy inclusive rural community. The children in the crèches come from the lower income group and they are the children of the agricultural labourers.

The interviews show that good efforts are made to conduct mothers' meetings, to organize monthly contributions of money for the crèche, to educate the mothers in the areas of child care, personal health and hygiene, etc. There is a need for the teachers and helpers to find ways to organize the mothers' meeting in a better way. However the mothers have also expressed their interest in organizing these meetings as they have realised their importance. SWASTI is coordinating structural monthly meetings with the teachers, helpers and mothers, which have shown good response and motivated the mothers to participate in them. However, further efforts have to be made in order to bring about development by the involvement of all family members. According to the interviewed mothers and teachers, the crèche do have the potential to give the child a good pre-education, care and help to 'the poorest of the poor'. The teacher and the helper serve as 'second mothers' for the children and take the responsibility for them. The crèche gives the children good healthy food and the crèche is supports the working mothers and their children, as the objectives of the crèches can be considered as valued and respected.

Part B

Collectivization and community mobilization in the work with female sex workers

In the *Times of India*, Bangalore, Wednesday, March 19, 2008.

Students get together to hold a candlelight vigil against human trafficking in India. Drawing inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi's message of non-violence hordes of people get together to silently protest the societal malaise that is human trafficking. The movement was organized by Indian NGO's.

BACKGROUND

According to UNICEF report, one million people enter the sex trade across the world every year. In India, around three million people fall victim to human trafficking. An UN report stated that 40% of the sex workers in India are below 18 years. In some parts like in Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka - it is more hidden. The rise in the number of people missing in Bangalore may be an indication of increased trafficking. Human trafficking is a mafia which pushes women and children into prostitution and slavery.

Although sex work is considered one among the oldest 'professions' and has been defined even in very old Indian texts as socially accepted organized activity, the status of female sex workers has got worsened drastically over the years. From being a skilled profession, which enjoyed religious and social sanctions, these women are today stigmatized and not accepted and their vulnerabilities have increased multiple with the epidemic of HIV/AIDS. India is estimated to rank second globally in the overall burden of HIV/AIDS with approximately five million who are HIV positive. The estimated number of female sex workers in India ranges from 5 million to 16 million.

A significant number of female sex workers have taken up the need to make sex work a profession because of a variety of factors over which they have little or no control. Some reports state that only a small part of the total number of persons trafficked in the global market enter the sex sector. In many societies, unaged and immature girls are given away in marriage. Some of them become sex workers, being unable to endure family and unable to go back to their families because of their parents poverty and unwillingness to accept them. The respondent social workers consider this as a serious problem.

FEMALE SEX WORK AND HIV TRANSMISSION

Empirical and theoretical studies suggest two important interventions associated with a declining trend in HIV prevalence in the general population.

(1) Behaviour change interventions for populations at risk, including sex workers and their clients through correct and consistent condom usage.
(2) Reduction in the burden of treatable sexually transmitted infection. However, sex workers have a significantly higher risk of infections than most other groups.

Female sex work is an important component of HIV transmission in Karnataka state in India. 80% of female sex workers operate in urban areas, entertaining and asking for clients in homes, brothels, hotels, lodges, on the streets etc. There are substantial differences in demographic and behaviour characteristics, depending on typology of sex work, which in turn influence the risk and vulnerability to HIV. There are a number of stakeholders involved in the lives of female sex workers, including clients, regular partners, madams, pimps, police, rickshaw-drivers and staff of sex work venues. They all play a role, either directly or indirectly, in increasing HIV risk and vulnerability.

KSTC – KARNATAKA STATE TRAINERS’ COLLECTIVE

KSTC was started in the year of 1988, basically due to a demand in Karnataka state for working with environmental and health issues, tribal areas, women issues, etc. Persons, who were highly committed in social and community work, with different background and experiences regarding these areas, were organized together.

KSTC is working for creating awareness to the social structure of society, working with marginalized and impoverished people to motivate educate and empower them, to make movements for their own social development. The Collective is mainly working with people who belong to the dalithes, scheduled castes, tribals and other minorities of the society.

The objective of KSTC

- To work with the people for building equal economic and social system in society, by empowering and educating the people in order to create awareness particularly among the marginalized and impoverished and minorities in the Indian society. Collectivization would be a prime condition to move towards social action.

The collective has been involved in different development programmes such as with infrastructural development, sanitation projects, urban development, environmental and health issues. For example, in 1995-1996, KSTC was working with a development programme of fighting HIV/AIDS by taking preventive measures; in 2002 – 2004 it was involved in a Tank Management programme in cooperation with the government of India, funded by the World Bank; in the year of 2004, KSTC was invited to work with KHPT (Karnataka Health Promotion Trust) with community mobilization, collectivization with female sex workers in Karnataka.

KHPT - KARNATAKA HEALTH PROMOTION TRUST

KHPT was started in order to work on issues related to HIV/AIDS focusing on prevention projects, emerged to the situation of risk and vulnerability to HIV in the context of sex workers in Karnataka and the need for containing the HIV epidemic. Sex workers are considered as human beings, men and women like any other, in need of and entitled to good health, dignity and life free of violence and stigma in their own right. These views are also the important principles for KSTC and their work with collectivization of the female sex workers.

Today, KSTC in cooperation with KHPT is working with a training programme for female sex workers, held by KSTC and KHPT and supported by NGO staff. The training package consists of community mobilization and training modules on enhancing self esteem, collectivization, democratization process and organizational development of collectives of female sex workers. It is a tool kit that serves to aid in working with the community members in response to their needs and realities with the common ideology of community empowerment and ownership through project initiatives. As stated, effective mobilization is the way for long term sustainability of current initiatives. Strong community organization of female sex workers that take leadership through decision making and monitoring, leads to benefits for the community.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND COLLECTIVIZATION

It has been increasingly clear that effective community mobilization is the way for long term sustainability of current initiatives. It has been identified that for the community mobilization process to be successful the women should be able to critically analyse their situations. Initiating the process of critical thinking among them would have to be preceded by engaging them in a process of self discovery to help change negative notions they have about themselves. The main goal of the community mobilization process is to help the sex workers function as group, a collective, which would help women move from being self confident individuals to empowered women with a strong collective voice. Collectivization would be a primary importance to move towards social action.

As stated by KSTC and KHPT, community mobilization of sex workers is seen as means to reduce sex workers vulnerabilities to achieve a HIV related end. It is a process where individual attitudes and benefits, capacities and critical consciousness produce collective action resulting in positive transformation. Collective agency can result in strong community based organizations and networks that empower female sex workers to challenge power structures and create enabling environment to access their rights.

CRIMINALIZATION VS. HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH

Sex work in India is neither legal nor illegal. Female sex workers are either home based, brothel based, street based or hotel /lodge based, a few are also dhaba (motel) based, particularly on highways. Largest group of sex workers are street based, solicit

in public places and accompany clients to sex works sites either in lodges or “brothel homes” where sex workers are not forcibly confined and space is available for rental.

Sex work vary, women may practice part time sex work and may even have a second occupation like vegetable and flower vending / selling, to remain invisible as sex workers for the society and their families. The traditional sex workers are called the *Devadasi*; women enter the sex work through the Devadasi tradition. It is a religious practice of dedicating young girls to a god / goddess which makes her devadasi; ‘hand maiden of god’. In the reality, she lives the life of a sex worker and cannot even marry as per tradition. The system has caste dimensions as well and it is widespread in Karnataka state even though the practice is prohibited by law in the state. Studies tells that devadasis found to be more likely to live and work in rural areas, be illiterate, use their home for entertaining clients, start at younger age, and start for other reasons or at least for reasons less connected to financial needs, they are less exposed to violence and police harassment and face less social stigma. It is stated that devadasis are likely to be easier to mobilize, due to less social stigma and being more open to identifying themselves by their profession.

DISCUSSION

It is very difficult to compare the social work with female sex workers in India and in Sweden, due to huge differences in population, economic, social, cultural conditions and other contexts. However, sex work in India, Sweden or in any other country in the world is a big global issue hard to identify and to effectively work with as a complex issue.

The ‘sex industry’ is a global problem as HIV/AIDS have become a global problem and it is difficult to fight HIV without cooperation of the sex workers and one cannot fight HIV outside the human and workers rights.

Female sex workers, often in alliance with transgender and other groups have been engaging with governments and civil society in many countries across the world. By fighting discrimination, violence and criminalization, they are fighting HIV. Female sex workers have taken up the profession because of a variety of factors and forces over which they have little or no control. There are substantial differences in their demographic and behavioural characteristics, depending on typology of sex work. Women enter the sex work through human trafficking, caused by religious practices such as Devadasi system, financial constraints, emotional and troubled conjugal situations, volunteer as part time sex work or because of sensational contexts. Sex work is seen as prostitution and slavery as well as ‘real work’ which actually feed million mouths; according to them, a work based on demand and supply principle.

Mobilization and collectivization of the female sex workers as shown in KSTC work as a collective group can result in building strong community based organizations and networks that empower the female sex workers to challenge power structures and create enabling environment to access their rights. Principles for mobilizing female sex workers should be: inclusion and respect for diversity, full participation and empowering community, collective decision making and accountability with a ‘human rights approach’.

Part C

Reflections and suggestions

I was privileged to have the opportunity to go abroad, to learn and to participate in social work in another country than in Sweden. I believe that crossing borders and putting yourself into different contexts make you grow and develop as a person. I got the chance to take part in and observe different types of social work in India: Community mobilization, KSTC working program with female sex workers, and women and child welfare through studying the role of the crèche in rural communities, to bring about social change. For these experiences I have got, I am truly happy and grateful.

I want to be humble for giving further suggestions to SWASTI and KSTC. I have only been in India for 15 weeks and it is impossible for me and would be wrong to say what is right and what is wrong. However, after my observations I want to express my reflections and thoughts about the social work I have experienced in India.

I like structure; structure is for me security and effectiveness. I did choose an unstructured field practice. I did know before I was going, but I thought, an unstructured field practice must also mean flexibility and independence. The truth is, I did find myself many times frustrated over too many unstructured days, which made me feel lost, sometimes worried, irritated and frustrated. I had to adjust, accept, respect and try to understand the context I was in, and I was not alone, I was depending on the people around me. I did comfort myself by thinking: you cannot be prepared for everything; anyhow it will not be as you thought it should be. However, much energy was running out trying to get a structure in my work, my meetings, agenda, etc. I had the feeling that I wanted things to get done, as in Sweden, in my university or at my work at a social work office, where I am highly disciplined, and which for me means effective work where no time is wasted.

Maybe it sounds rude or very selfish? Even I was surprised over my reactions. The social work student from Sweden is coming and thinks that she can structure things up...

I did find myself fighting for implementing my structure in order to feel that I did learn as much as possible and at the same time did not waste any time. I was only here for 15 weeks. So, my ambitions were high as usual.

After some time I did realise that it is not working. Someone said; to handle structure is trivial but only the master can handle chaos. In the beginning of the practice things seemed quite chaotic, so I decided to be the master.

My preference was to join a voluntary organization at grassroots level. So of course I have to accept unstructured things, the confusion, the changes, etc. I did understand that in this kind of social work you do not make appointments like in bureaucratic Swedish welfare state. You meet the people where they are, when they have the time, in any places and with any kind of problems. For example, one

day a woman is coming to the SWASTI house and wants support and instructions how to use a mobile phone, another day, a woman and her husband, came to ask for help because their one year old baby has swallowed a spider; or when a woman has burnt her foot almost black while she was cooking, she had no money for hospital and she is in a hurry to go to the fields to work for the survival of the family, what to do? The examples are many and the problems you face as social worker are diverse. I admire this kind of social work, and I am proud of myself that I did choose this kind of experience in spite of my privileged limitations.

For me a dark aspect was the question of skincolour. How much importance is to be given to the colour of the skin. For majority of the people in the village and outside, it is the colour that matters, it appears. Is it the postcolonial syndrome which still is so dominant and implemented? I was trying to understand and that to have discussions with the villagers, but it was difficult. Al over, even in the cities the message is very clear: Whiteness can be seen as synonymous with prosperity, beauty, intelligence and power in the society. Of course, this is not typical for India. But still it is very clear and very deeply implemented in the people special in the rural areas. Actually, only by travel to India I did a "class change", since I was treated as very rich, high educated and most intelligent. Maybe because of my white skin colour, but maybe for other privileged reasons as well?

Some people have told me, you should not go to India, only a few months. Either you go for a couple of weeks or you stay there for years, otherwise you will not get the true and right picture of India: the country, the people and their cultures in a proper way. I have got my own experiences of India in general and its rural areas in the South in particular. Some of my personal experiences are good and some less good, which no one could teach me or provide me by story tellings. I can summarise my experiences in the following ways:

I really could not tolerate the pollution, the dirt, the hysteric traffic and the fact that you always have to pay much, much more for the same commodity or service if you are a foreigner from rich countries in the world. This can of course be related to the socioeconomic, political and demographic factors, such as poverty, high population rate, rapid urbanisation, etc. Many times I experienced, too many people, in the same place and at the same time. It is difficult to get use to, especially when almost all the people are staring at me. Still, there is so much to be in love with in India: the beauty, the kind hearted people, the hospitality, the food, all the fantastic fruits, the music, clothes and not to forget, the fantastic tea and milk in the Hirekumbalagunte village. I actually felt alive in India. Many people in India are interested to communicate, and they are not shy to ask and to help you anywhere, any time.

I think more critically about the way of my life and the loneliness of people in Sweden now, compare to the time before my visit and practice in India. I have many mixed

feelings. I appreciate many parts of my life here at 'home', as well as I miss the unstructured, lively meetings and everyday spontaneity in India.

My other reflection now is on the concept and the industry of "development". Development can be seen as a question of global power when development agencies keep on saying that some countries are "un-developed" with millions of "poor" people who are in need of the help and support from other "developed" countries with millions of "rich" people. It may be true that many of the development projects need funding, but the message is clearly paternalistic and Eurocentric. I was happy to find such initiatives as SWASTI and KSTC. They strongly believe in peoples own mobilization and empowerment and to make efforts towards social changes ' from a bottom up perspective '. I am happily joining such initiatives, as I also believe that development can not be created from others or from outside, as if people themselves want change; you can as social worker motivate them and help them to trust their own capacity and abilities and by that overcome their handicaps and ward off the hindrances. The people in need are to be directing involved in their own development, which I believe would result in a more sustainable social development. Of course in combination with challenging power structures, necessary in order to promote social change.

I want to make some reflections regarding the self help groups and the microcredit system. As a becoming social worker I get worried when the fight against poverty has become a development issue very much related to economy and credit business organized by economists. Like Kramsjö, (2000) points out, this kind of development efforts like the microcredit system is run without questioning any of the structural causes of poverty. It loses its meaning, or it becomes irrelevant for removal of the economic imbalance. The economic efforts should lead to social and political empowerment and one would ask how it is possible without questioning the causes of poverty. Social justice and empowerment cannot be given as a gift. The people must organize themselves and through their own efforts find their capacity to change their living conditions. They need to recognize their own role in the society and to the surrounding power structure. This could be in combination with regularly collective savings as micro credits. The system can be run by economists because they are needed but I would suggest that it would be better in cooperation with social workers who can work for improved social empowerment and development with the people.

Economic growth is of high importance for the organization as well as for the target group.

The agriculturalists in Hirekumbalagunte are growing cash crops which will give them more money. And the number of self help groups in Karnataka is progressively increasing as the interest of starting new groups, high up among the people. However they all face problems which become hindrances to achieve sustainable development: The self help groups should not only be a forum for discussing money

and credits as it is today; it is meant to be a social forum where the women could find mutual support to each other. These groups can play a significant role in women empowerment and furthering social development and making efforts regarding health, education, family issues, etc. The economic efforts should lead to social and political empowerment otherwise it loses its meaning. My point is, the social capital has become irrelevant for the people, and I can see that there is a need for laying further stress on motivating, educating and creating awareness among the people to think of the social aspects of development. They should not forget the importance of the 'soft capital', the social capital which holds the groups, communities together and which will create sustainable development. It was striking how development for the villagers was synonymous with modernity and economic growth. The social capital must be valued, and the social workers have a crucial role to play, to implement this perspective.

Millions of children of poor families in India rarely attend the school or complete their education. Moreover, countless numbers never receive the quality education that is their right and need for a better social life. This is the background and reason why the crèches exist.

I believe that the crèches really have the potential to become a tool in the hands of the social workers to make social change in rural communities possible, but some hindrances are there today: the children are not coming regularly to the school, the mothers'-meetings are not organized and regularly and many families are not interested in taking responsibilities for the school such as contributing money, visit the school, etc.

There is a need for SWASTI to find solutions, together with teachers, helpers, and mothers. I have further observed the relation between the teacher and helper, which is not always working well. I believe that a good relation and cooperation between them is crucial in building a strong base, otherwise it is difficult to motivate the mothers' to be more active. I observed that for example in Chikkakumbalagunte the mothers' meetings are well organized and the children are coming regularly to the school. I believe that the good relation and cooperation between the teacher and the helper is a central reason.

The objectives and principles of the crèche need to be very clear and understood by both the teacher and the helper, as I consider they have not understood the importance of the aims.

Active discussions were lacking in SWASTI's monthly meetings. It could be that the teacher, helpers and the mothers' have several problems facing because almost all of the schools are recently started. That is why, in the meetings, very few put their problems clearly and explain their difficulties in detail. During the interviews it was hard for me to get at the base of the difficulties, which I suppose they actually experience. The teachers, helpers and the mothers' are very loyal to SWASTI and maybe

that is the reason why they want to show that everything is under control. I don't know, but to verbalise and discuss their difficulties will only lead to improvement. However, the crèches are newly established, some of them as late as last year (2007) so to achieve the objectives of bringing about total development of the concerned village –communities through the child-mother-family-community require some time.

Inculcating the sense of commitment among the mothers, families, villagers, teachers and helpers in order to build from a 'bottom up perspective' is a big task. For some families education is not priority, survival is. This is an important aspect one needs to keep the voices of the marginalized and impoverished in mind while organizing development programmes.

After doing my study and field practice it was clear to me that SWASTI which is fighting for the women's right should keep on focusing its attention on this. It is not inappropriate, I consider, to quote as Muhammad Yunus who points out, that neither economic growth nor political democracy can be achieved if the woman is not equal to the man.

Lastly I want to make some reflections regarding female sex work in India and KSTC's work with collectivization. The only right approach must be consider sex workers as anyone else as human beings, men and women like any other, in need of and entitled to good health, dignity and life free of violence and stigma in their own right. As long as there is a demand for buying sex there will be sex workers, and they have to be respected as human beings with human rights like any one else. The market of sexual services has not come up to serve the interest of sex workers. The demand for the services in that market has been created by the rest of the society, by its economy, social norms, and many other factors. As long as these grounds exist, the supply of sex workers to the market cannot be stopped. Under these circumstances we need the acceptance of their rights to be treated as human beings and honourable citizens.

After my insight in KSTC work I did find it important that Collectives created by sex workers themselves actually have the capacity to fight against all kinds of harassment and oppressions and to fight for their rights. They are struggle against stigma, discrimination, increased vulnerability and marginalization and for right based equitable, discrimination access for services and care that is rightfully theirs. I believe that, any group, when it is organized, can better demand their rights. It is very important that they are engaged in critical thinking to analyse their (risk and vulnerability) situation in relation to power structures within and or the community and building collective responses to address their needs. I did find the training program very interesting and I was truly impressed by the work the professional trainer did. A huge number of women were participating in the training, and I was truly impressed by their willpower and strength they did show. Almost all of the women were illiterate. The training program and all of the activities was in an understandable frame in form of games, role plays, storytelling, pictures, etc. The

training program was more than very well planned for the groups of women and I was grateful to participate and to follow the activities, the trainers active in the processing, enhancing self esteem, collectivization and democratization processes. It is an important process where hopefully their individual attitudes and benefits, capacities and critical conciseness produce collective action resulting in positive transformation. Collective groups can result in strong community based organizations and networks that empower the female sex workers to challenge power structures and create enabling environment to access their rights.

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