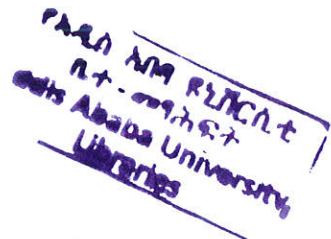


ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The Push and Pull Factors and Coping Strategies of
Child Victims of Commercial Sex Work: The Case of
Dessie Town, South Wollo, Ethiopia

By

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Acronyms

ACPF	African Child Policy Forum
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
CHAD-Et	Children Aid Ethiopia
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
FGAE	Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia
FSCE	Forum on Street Children Ethiopia
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IOM	International Office for Migration
MOLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPA	National Plan of Action
NSC-CSAE	National Steering Committee against Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
SAEC	Sexual abuse and exploitation of children
SCA	Save the Children Alliance
SCD	Save the Children Denmark
SCS	Save the Children Sweden
UN CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Abstract

Sexual behaviour and sexuality are currently topical issues of concern for child care social workers. Social workers are spending more of their time with children who come into care because of sexual abuse or who have an involvement in child commercial sex work. This study explores the factors that push/pull girl children to become involved in commercial sex work and the strategies these girls employ to cope with the situation they are in. The study area is Dessie town, the capital city of South Wollo Zone in the Amhara Regional State. Child victims of commercial sex work who receive services in drop-in-center and safe home were purposefully selected. Seventeen girl children aged from 11-18 years old participated in the research. The study employed a qualitative research method. The study showed that the major factors that push/pull girl children to become involved in commercial sex work were: maltreatment of parents/guardians, arranged early marriage, lack of parental guidance, poverty, death of parents and peer pressures or influences. The study also identified the strategies employed by the children to cope with the situation as: change work places and get out of commercial sex work, establish social ties with other children involved in commercial sex work, men who come to be their clients and bar owners(or their employers), sharing single rooms, initiate ekubs to save money, register by the police to work as street vendors during the day and at evenings and purchase of food and other necessary items in large quantity when they earn a relatively better income. It is recommended that initiatives or programmes devised to support children to quit commercial sex work need to be holistic(such as protection of the girls from violent customers and brokers through establishing safe homes, organizing skills trainings, formal education support and counseling services) and tailored to individual vulnerabilities and should be done through the coordination of different stakeholders.

INTRODUCTION

This research attempted to explore the factors that compel and attract children to become involved in commercial sex work and the efforts being done by the children to cope with the situation they are in.

The main part of the thesis is structured into six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. This chapter provides the background overview of child commercial sex work, objectives of the study and research questions, statement of the problem, justification and limitations of the study. The second chapter presents the literature review part. The third chapter deals with the research methods. The fourth chapter is about the presentation of data and findings. Analysis and discussions part is entertained under chapter five. The conclusion part is addressed under chapter six. The implication to social work practice, research and policy is indicated in the last chapter.

Background

The international attention brought to the issue of child commercial sex work was in the First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) held in Stockholm in 1996 (SCS, 2001). The importance of this event in creating awareness on CSEC among governments, international NGOs and representatives of civil society in many parts of the world has been widely acknowledged (SCS, 2001). This World Congress brought forward the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) as priority agenda by highlighting the scale and impact of CSEC in the world, and linking it with violation of the rights of children to full protection from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse (SCS, 2001).

A Second World Congress was also held in Yokohama, Japan, from 17-20 December 2001 to reinvigorate the momentum started by the Stockholm World Congress, which was

subsiding with time (SCS 2001). One of the major outcomes of this subsequent Congress was the reaffirmation of the commitment to the Stockholm Agenda for Action (SCS, 2001).

Acting upon their commitments at the two World Congresses, countries have taken tangible measures at the national level (SCS, 2001). These measures include, the development and implementation of national plans of action, policy formulation as well as review of existing policies and legislation, networking and cooperation among actors promoting awareness raising and advocacy, and data collection and monitoring regarding CSEC. In terms of policy related commitments, the participating countries have also made SAEC a focal point in policymaking and implementation (SCS 2001). Ethiopia is a party to the two world congresses.

Income poverty is widespread and deep in Ethiopia. Some 31 million people live below a poverty line equivalent to 45 US cents per day; and between 6 and 13 million people are at risk of starvation each year (PASDEP, 2005). There is also extreme vulnerability, with consumption rising and falling dramatically from year to year as the result of drought, ill health, or other family shocks. As a result, many families who are not currently poor are at constant risk of falling into extreme poverty, and can never accumulate enough assets to break out of poverty (PASDEP, 2005). The majority of the population lives below poverty line with over five and a half million children living under especially difficult circumstances (MOLSA 2005). Children are the most vulnerable sector of the society that suffers most from deprivation resulting from the extremely low level of socioeconomic development (MOLSA, 2005).

The study by the African Child Policy Forum on the African child wellbeing ranked Ethiopia 42nd in the child-friendly index ranking of African governments which is listed as one of the least child-friendly countries in Africa (African Child Policy Forum-ACPF, 2008). According to the data from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (2004), an estimated 4

million children live in especially difficult circumstances. Children under difficult circumstances include orphans, street, abandoned, unaccompanied, disabled and children in conflict with the law, victims of child labor, trafficked, destitute, abused and child commercial sex workers (MOLSA 2004).

The problem of child (girls) commercial sex work has become one of the emerging social problems in Ethiopia (FSCE 2003). Though there are no comprehensive studies conducted nation wide to indicate the prevalence, intensity and magnitude of the problem, some sporadic studies undertaken by individuals (academicians) and non-governmental organizations indicate that the problem is rising (FSCE, 2003).

Therefore, the low attention given and the lack of empirical data on the problem of child commercial sex work in general and on the factors that contribute to girl children's involvement in commercial sex work in particular inspired me to undertake my research. The lack of adequate data and the low attention given to the problem of child (girls) commercial sex work is adequately described by James, Selamawit & Rahmet (2006, p. 130- 131)

In the global media, Ethiopian children are often depicted as victims of famine, child labor, and war. Such problems clearly exist in this vast nation. Perhaps because of a long tradition of not openly discussing sexual issues, the far greater threat to this nation's children, child sexual exploitation, is left largely unreported. ... Research on children appears to be fragmented and there are few outlets for publication of research on children's issues . . . Annotated bibliographies of studies of African children and childhood provide no references to published work on sexual abuse, much less on commercial sexual exploitation of children.

The purpose of my research is, therefore, to contribute to fill the existing data gaps with particular focus on the factors that compel and attract girl children to become involved in commercial sex work. Furthermore, although I acknowledge the existence of few local studies conducted, these studies are too broad mainly dealing with a broad concept of child sexual abuse and exploitation. However, these studies lack the focus of dealing with specific target groups who fall as victims of either child sexual abuse or sexual exploitation.

Furthermore, these studies did not indicate clearly the processes how child commercial

workers become involved in commercial sex work and how they are coping once they entered into commercial sex work. The purpose of my research is, therefore, to identify the contributing factors that push and pull girl children to become engaged in commercial sex work and the strategies they employ to cope with the situation. Hence, my research would, to some extent, contribute to fill the existing gaps regarding the factors that force and attract girls to become involved in commercial sex work.

Statement of the Problem

Literature (for instance, FSCE, 2003, SCA, 2005.) has disclosed that child commercial sex work has a severe impact on children's social, physical and psychological development, destroying their childhood and expectations in life. Physical violence has the most immediate impact (SCA, 2005). Child commercial sex workers are often severely beaten and kicked, or brutally raped for non-compliance (SCA, 2005). They are usually not in a position to negotiate safer sex and are frequently exposed to sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS (SCA, 2005). Furthermore, unwanted pregnancies often leading to severe complications and sometimes to death and the risks of unsafe abortion further exacerbate the physical impact on child commercial sex workers (SCA, 2005).

Children exposed to commercial sex work are often faced with a multitude of problems that could have hazardous implications on their future. Such children are often stigmatized, neglected and isolated by most members of the society (SCD, 2004). Hence, mingling with other children as well as the society at large would be difficult for them. The negative societal attitude towards child victims of commercial sex work might further result in social and psychological problems.

In most cases, the rights of these children are unrecognized and even violated by various sectors of the society. This might make the children to lose hope which in turn might result in consequences that might be damaging to their emotional, moral and social stability

which calls an immediate response before it becomes irreversible and unmanageable(SCD, 2004)

Perhaps most problematic is that child commercial sex work in Ethiopia is beginning at even earlier ages (James, Selamawit & Rahmet, 2006). According to these authors, for example, 20 percent of children in their samples began their involvement in commercial sex work before age 11. The normal growth and development of children who are engaged in child commercial sex work could be disrupted due to the ill-suited environment where the children are involved.

In view of the continued progression of the AIDS epidemic, and the means of livelihood for many children, HIV/AIDS would have a devastating effect on the lives of children exposed to child commercial sex work (SCD, 2004). Moreover, according to the International Office for Migration, internal trafficking of children for the purpose of commercial sex work is an existing and steadily increasing practice, highly influenced by the growing urban migration trends. While there is a lack of reliable data on the prevalence, IOM estimates that about 20,000 children, some as young as 10 years old, are trafficked from rural to urban areas every year for commercial sex work and other purposes (IOM, 2006).

Reports reveal that child commercial sex work and the enticement of school girls for commercial sex work is on the rise (SCD 2004). These reports indicate that majority of child commercial sex workers work on the streets, others are employed in small bars/brothels in slum areas while others hang out at the night spots. This situation would expose these girls for different kinds of violence. The practice of enticing young girls from their home, through promises of rewarding jobs, in order to send them abroad or bring them to urban areas is common (SCD 2004) but the majority of these girls end up in commercial sex work.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child during its examination of the 2006 State Party Report by Ethiopia expressed concern on the high numbers of victims of sexual

exploitation and sexual abuse, especially girls, and that the majority of cases are not prosecuted. Furthermore, the Committee is deeply concerned at the lack of information in the State Party Report on the extent of the problem and the number of children affected by commercial sex work every where in the country.

It is commonly assumed, in Ethiopia, that poverty has pushed many girl children to involve in commercial sex work, yet this assumption is rarely quantified in the literature (James, Selamawit & Rahmet, 2006).

While working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide different services for child commercial sex workers, the researcher observed that there is low attention given to understand why these girls are involved in child commercial sex work and how they are coping. The researcher is inspired to investigate the reasons children give for their involvement in commercial sex work and the strategies they employ to cope up once they are involved in the commercial sex work.

Research Objective and Research Question

The objective of this research is to explore or identify the factors that push/pull girl children to become involved in commercial sex work and the strategies employed by the girls to cope with the situation they are in. To achieve this objective, a general guiding research question and specific questions are developed.

The general question guiding this research is: “How do girl children become involved in commercial sex work in Dessie town?” The specific research questions include:

1. What are the factors that force and attract girl children to engage in commercial sex work in Dessie town?
2. What are the challenges child victims of commercial sex work encounter in Dessie town?

3. What strategies do children devise to cope with after their entry into commercial sex work in Dessie town?

Justification for Selecting the Research Topic

In Ethiopia, there is a saying which translate that children are the flowers of today and the fruits of tomorrow. For the flowers of today to bear the desired fruit, adequate nurturing, care and support is required on part of not only parents/primary care givers and guardians but also communities and the public. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) states that

The situation of most African children remains critical due to the unique factors of their socio-economic, cultural, traditional and developmental circumstances, natural disasters, armed conflicts, exploitation and hunger, and on account of the child's physical and mental immaturity he/she needs special safeguards and care (ACRWC, 2004, p.20)

This researcher has long years of personal work experience in both governmental and non-governmental organizations that work in the areas of child rights promotion in general and providing support for child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation, children in conflict with the law, migrant children and orphan and vulnerable children. In addition to this, the researcher has good networks or good rapport/acquaintance with government and non-governmental organizations that work in the areas of child rights promotion and that provide support for marginalized groups of children. This, therefore, would enable the researcher to get access to data (literatures, studies conducted, reports and the like) that might enrich the literature review part of this research. Furthermore, child commercial sex work has become an emerging social problem but less attention is given both by researchers and the media. Therefore, studying the issue could contribute for the voices of these children to be heard.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study might be of paramount importance for organizations (governmental and non-governmental) that work with the issues of child sexual abuse and exploitation of children. Particularly, the National Steering Committee against Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation which is under the auspices of the Ministry of Women Affairs might make use of the findings to initiate targeted interventions for such group of vulnerable children. Furthermore, the findings could also be used by researchers to conduct further research in the area. In addition to this, the results of the study can also contribute to improve the policy documents of the Ministry of Women Affairs such as the National Plan of Action against Child sexual Abuse and Exploitation and the National Plan of Action for Children

Delimitation

The study was conducted in Dessie town, Amhara Region. Child commercial workers who were receiving different kinds of support in the drop-in-center and safe home by a local NGO named Forum on Street Children Ethiopia were the participants of the study. This research mostly provided qualitative information on the push/pull factors and coping strategies of child victims of commercial sex work in Dessie town. The researcher feels that a lot needs to be researched and explored further like quantitative information on the magnitude of commercial sex work in the area.

Limitation of the Study

This study does not include child victims of commercial sex work outside the drop-in-center and safe home in Dessie town. It also acknowledges the limitation in relation to lacking the perspectives of other children who are not engaged in commercial sex work.

Operational Definitions of Terms

A child, for the purpose of this research, is defined as every human being below the age of 18 years as indicated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

Child victims of commercial sex work, refers to the sexual exploitation of a child for the remuneration in cash or in kind, usually but not always organized by an intermediary (parent, family member, procurer, broker or pimps, etc.), (Kevin, 2000). The exchange is exploitative because it comes from a relationship of unequal economic, cognitive and psychosocial power.

Child commercial sex work, in many literatures, is used interchangeably with child prostitution. However, this researcher prefers to use child victims of commercial sex work as the term child prostitute is attached to a kind of stigma and also it tends to indicate that the child more or less has joined into child commercial sex work by choice.

In this research, the researcher's view is that children involved in commercial sex work should be treated as victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation and regarded as children in need. Because, it is believed in that, children lack knowledge and authority to give consent for sex.

Kevin, (2000) objects to the term 'child prostitution'. When referring to children between the ages of 10 and 12, he argues that it is an 'abuse of classification' to refer to them as professional prostitutes as they are not capable of realizing the high levels of exploitation they experience, nor possible alternative lifestyles. Instead, he prefers to label such children as 'victims of sexual abuse'. The distinction between 'professional' and 'victim' is important to make, as it illustrates the lack of choice for younger children.

It confronts the supposition that young children, because they are exposed to the harshness of prostitution and street life, are in some way adult-like and are able to make rational, informed decisions about their lifestyle and their sexuality. The label 'prostitute' implies an individual making a choice, however limited, to engage in survival sex. Pre-pubescent children, argues Kevin, are not in a position to make this choice. Thus, we can argue that the term 'child prostitution' is a misnomer. Apart from the fact that it is very rare for clients to favor pre-pubescent children (as distinct from very young adolescents), when contractual sex takes place between a client and a pre-pubescent child it is more accurate to understand it, not as prostitution, but as child sexual abuse.

Child sexual exploitation is ...the use of a child in sexual activities for remuneration or any other consideration; and, any reproduction by whatever means of a child engaged in real or simulated sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes (MOLSA, 2005).

Child sexual abuse and exploitation (SAEC) is a broad term encompassing various infringements on the rights of children having a sexual and related nature. A comprehensive definition of sexual abuse and exploitation given in UNCRC includes

the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; ... the exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; and, the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials(UNCRC, 1989, P.32)

This definition covers a range of actions relating to consensual and coerced sexual activity involving children; and the sexual exploitation of children by engaging them in prostitution, activities of sexual nature or pornography.

Drop-in-center is a place where temporary shelter where child commercial sex workers come, on voluntary basis, during day time and get different services like play and recreation such as indoor games like table tennis, watching educational films and

reading and writing, life skills trainings, showers and other sanitary services, guidance and counseling, health education and non-formal education.

Safe home is a temporary boarding home with full accommodations where child commercial sex workers who are committed to quit commercial sex work are placed till they graduate from the shelter after getting skills training and get employment. .

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter deals with an overview of child commercial sex work, international, regional, local instruments, history and theoretical perspectives. The theoretical perspectives in this study mainly describe thoughts in relation to sexual behaviors or incidents that might lead to child commercial sex work. However, the researcher does not intend to test the theories rather discusses the findings of the research along with the theories.

Overview of Child Commercial Sex Work

Child commercial sex work is essentially a clandestine activity, so it is scarcely surprising that we lack reliable national data about the number of children involved and their demographic characteristics (Munir & Yasin, 1997). Such information is fragmented deriving primary from small-scale localized research projects and the work of voluntary agencies (Munir & Yasin, 1997).

The exploitation of children through commercial sex work is a global growth industry. It is destroying the lives of millions of girls and boys in rich and poor nations (Munir & Yasin, 1997). In some countries, children as young as seven years of age are bought and sold by adults who might be their parents, their guardians, their teachers or even agents for institutions masquerading as charitable organizations (Munir & Yasin, 1997).

An estimated 300,000 young people below the age of eighteen are involved in commercial sex work in the United States, and child prostitution and pornography are significant problems in parts of Europe and the Russian Federation (Munir & Yasin, 1997). A number of South and South-East Asian countries are magnets for European sex tourists as well as male visitors from elsewhere in the Asian region (Munir & Yasin, 1997)

Child commercial sex work exists in nearly all countries, and in some it is now one of the most common forms of employment among children, especially for young girls. Although acknowledged to be a global phenomenon, the problem is particularly prevalent in the

developing countries of the Asian region (Munir & Yasin, 1997). Best estimates suggest a figure of one million under-aged children involved in prostitution for Asia alone (Munir & Yasin, 1997).

In Thailand for example (Munir & Yasin, 1997), UNICEF claims that there are 100,000 child prostitutes under the age of eighteen. UNICEF also estimate that there are between 400,000 to 500,000 child prostitutes in India, 10,000 in Bangladesh, 60,000 in the Philippines, 30,000 in Sri Lanka and 20,000 in Cambodia (Munir & Yasin, 1997).

Sex tourism, mostly involving men from Western countries, is largely responsible for the growth in the number of child commercial sex workers. Apparently some even use computer networks to communicate information relating to sex and its cost (Munir & Yasin, 1997).

The United Nations Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery has recognized that child commercial sex work is largely connected with mass tourism. A working group sponsored by the Commercial Coalition on Third World Tourism investigated tourism and child prostitution in the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand and concluded that tourism is now very closely linked with the acceleration of child commercial sex work and could be considered as a causal factor (Munir & Yasin, 1997).

International, Regional and Local Instruments

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989, in Article 34, provides that:

State Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, state parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

- a) The inducement or coercion of children to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
- b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;
- c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performance and materials.

There is a call to all countries to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography. The 1990 World Summit for Children, in its World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and Plan of Action, recognized that millions of children live in especially difficult circumstances including those who are trapped in the bondage of prostitution, sexual abuse and other forms of exploitation (SCS, 2001). The Declaration states:

We will work to ameliorate the plight of millions of children who live under especially difficult circumstances as victims of apartheid and foreign occupation, orphans and street children . . . the disabled and abused, the socially disadvantaged and the exploited (SCS, 2001, p. 45).

In this Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action all states were urged to cooperate to address the acute problem of children enduring especially difficult circumstances.

Part II, Para 48, in parts states:

Exploitation and abuse of children should be actively combated, including their root causes. Effective measures are required against . . . harmful child labour, sale of children . . . child prostitution, child pornography, as well as other forms of sexual abuse.

The latest initiative undertaken at the international level to combat child prostitution is the Draft Declaration and Agenda for Action issued by the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Stockholm, Sweden, in August 1996 (SCS, 2001). It is realized that every child is entitled to full protection from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and that all States are required to protect children, as well as to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of the child victim (SCS, 2001).

The Draft Protocol, by virtue of Article 4(d) proclaims that(SCS, 2001) in the case of sex tourism, state parties must develop or strengthen and implement laws to criminalize the acts of their nationals in their country of origin even when the crime has been committed against children in the countries of destination (extra-territorial criminal laws'). Therefore,

state parties should promote extradition and other arrangements to ensure that a person who exploits a child for sexual purposes in another country (the destination country) is prosecuted either in the country of origin or the destination country (SCS, 2001). This involves strengthening laws and law enforcement, to include confiscation and seizure of assets and profits, and other sanctions against those who commit sexual crimes against children in destination countries (SCS, 2001).

The penal law of every country in the world provides for offence against rape and prostitution (Munir & Yasin, 1997). In India, the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act 1956 has been amended in 1986 and has been renamed as the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956 (Munir & Yasin, 1997). In this Act, the procurement, inducement or taking of women or girls for the sake of prostitution are prohibited. The penal law of Thailand which prohibits prostitution does not only cover a person who procures tricks or coerces children into prostitution but also the prostitute. Amendments have been made to increase penalties for these acts of procuring, coercion or trickery. Recently, the Thai Government proposed a legislation targeting the customers of child prostitutes (Munir & Yasin, 1997). In Taiwan, the Child Prostitution Prevention Bill providing for criminal sanctions for perpetrators has recently been introduced into the legislature (Munir & Yasin, 1997).

The Philippine government enacted the most innovative legislation known as the Special Protection against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act (Act No. 7610), (Munir & Yasin, 1997). A number of criminal offences targeting clients, procurers, advertisers, brothel owners and pimps have been created. Section 6 creates a presumption that an adult found in a hotel room with an unrelated child is deemed to be engaged in sexual exploitation. Under section 31 of the Act, the convicted foreigners are to be deported only after serving custodial sentences (Munir & Yasin, 1997).

Australia, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Sweden and the United States now have laws permitting the prosecution of their citizens for sex crimes against children committed outside their countries (Munir & Yasin, 1997). Under the Australian Crimes (Child Sex Tourism) Amendment Act 1994, three types of offences have been created: first, sexual intercourse with a young person outside Australia and committing an act of indecency upon, or in the presence of, a young person outside Australia; second, sexual intercourse with a young person under twelve years of age outside Australia and committing an act of indecency upon, or in the presence of, a young person under the age of twelve years outside Australia; and third, the acts of inciting, organizing or profiting from sex tourism (Munir & Yasin, 1997).

In September 1994, the Congress of the United States of America passed the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Act to amend the Mann Act (Munir & Yasin, 1997). The Mann Act, also known as the White Slave Traffic Act, prohibits the transportation of a woman or girl in interstate or foreign commerce for the purpose of prostitution, debauchery, or for any other immoral purpose. The September amendment expands the Mann Act by adding sections which address the importation of child pornography and the sexual exploitations of children abroad (Munir & Yasin, 1997). More specifically, the new law makes it felony to travel outside the United States to engage a minor in any sexual act which would be illegal in the United States (Munir & Yasin, 1997). Conviction of this crime is punishable by a fine, a maximum sentence of ten years in prison, or both (Munir & Yasin, 1997). The phrase 'conspires to travel' would also be seen to include anyone who assists sex tourists, such as travel agencies or pedophile organizations. In short, the United States will not tolerate any citizen who is involved in sex tourism abroad (Munir. & Yasin, 1997).

Local Instruments

Ethiopia has ratified and endorsed the UNCRC and ACRWC as part of its legal instruments to promote the rights and welfare of Ethiopian children in general and child victims of commercial sex work in particular. The Ethiopian Constitution reflects express commitment to realize the rights of children as recognized in the international child rights framework in Ethiopia. The Constitution, under articles 9 and 13, makes international agreements ratified by Ethiopia part of the law of the land and makes them standards for the interpretation of its human rights principles. In particular, Article 36 of the Constitution is fully dedicated to the protection and fulfillments of children's rights. Besides, Ethiopia has ratified the ILO Convention 182 the Worst Forms of Child Labour which is child commercial sex work

The new Criminal Code (2005) of Ethiopia has addressed a number of child rights issues including the criminalization of harmful traditional practices including female genital mutilation (FGM), clarified contentious issues in relation to offences like trafficking in children for the purpose of commercial sex work, extended criminal responsibility in relation to culturally prevalent violations of child rights, dispensed with corporal punishment of children and increased the penalties for offences against children.

In 2005, the Ethiopian government issued a National Action Plan (2006 – 2010) against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children. The National Action Plan has the overall goal of improving the realization of the rights of all Ethiopian children to be protected from sexual abuse and exploitation and to have access to legal, psychosocial and medical services as well as information necessary for their protection and rehabilitation. A National Steering Committee against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children has been established that oversee the implementation of the National Action Plan. The Committee comprises of pertinent government organizations such as the Ministry of Women Affairs(the lead

organization), Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and the like and local (ANPPCAN, CHAD-ET, FSCE and OPRIFS) and international non-governmental (SCD, SC-N, SCS and OAK Foundation) organizations that work in the areas of child commercial sex work.

History of Commercial Sex Work in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, travelers in the 16th century have written that it was common practice for traders to keep *chen'gerede* or *denge'tour* (literally means mistresses) along the various caravan routes and that the *chen'gerede* or *denge'tour* that follow the noblemen from one camp to another were paid in cash or in kind on special occasions (SCD, 2004). Apart from the occasional payments, they were given land by some of the rich nobility; so they deserved to be called prostitutes (SCD, 2004). With the growth of urban centers, especially Addis Ababa, historians say, came to the commercialization of *tej* (local brew) and the expansion of prostitution, during the reign of Menelik II (SCD, 2004).

The Italian invasion of 1935-1936 gave a great push to prostitution in the Italian occupied Ethiopia (SCD, 2004). The number of prostitutes in the city soon reached considerable proportion. The coming of the Italians who included hundreds of thousands of soldiers and workers thus initiated an extensive and highly developed prostitution, which continues in Ethiopia today (SCD, 2004). Therefore, prostitution has been a late comer in Ethiopia as isolated as the country has been for a substantial portion of its history (SCD, 2004). This became normal practice in the trade as thousands of young women from the countryside fleeing hunger and other difficult circumstances got trapped in the business to survive (SCD, 2004). Then, in time the enrolment of younger sex workers crossed the boundary from young women to children, amidst the interface of HIV/AIDS, which has been known to press patrons to look for younger children in hopes of facing less risk of contracting the deadly disease (SCD, 2004).

The girl child has been moving in the direction of a whole series of unacceptable life choices since recently with as young as eleven years olds being observed in prostitution according to studies in Addis Ababa (SCD, 2004). These choices have on the whole been involuntary often imposed by adults and the hardships of survival at home (SCD, 2004). Child commercial sex work has been a big business involving a whole series of actors from abductors at bus stations, to blue taxis and bar/hotel owners who tend to see children as the spices of their trade (SCD, 2004). As is the case with prostitution, child commercial sex work is evident throughout the country, though highly pronounced in major towns where state, administrative, military, and commercial activities are centered, the most notable place being Addis Ababa (SCD, 2004)

The problem of child commercial sex work has become one of the emerging social problems in Ethiopia (FSCE, 2003). Though there are no comprehensive studies conducted nationwide to indicate the prevalence, intensity and magnitude of the problem, some sporadic studies undertaken by individuals (academicians) and non-governmental organizations indicate that the problem is rising (FSCE, 2003).

According to James, Selamawit & Rahmet, (2006), perhaps because of a long tradition of not openly discussing sexual issues, child (girls) commercial sex work is left largely unreported. Child commercial sex work is wide spread in Ethiopia (James, Selamawit & Rahmet, 2006). Yet, perhaps because this problem is so abhorrent, relatively little attention is devoted to this issue by professionals, the public and the media at large (James, Selamawit & Rahmet, 2006). It is estimated that 28 percent of all street children are engaged in child commercial sex work (James, Selamawit & Rahmet, 2006). Further, of the 90,000 known prostitutes in Ethiopia, nearly 20 percent are children between the ages of 12 and 18 (NSC CSAE, 2004).

There are also initiatives being undertaken by the government and non-governmental organizations to prevent child commercial sex work and rehabilitate child victims of commercial sex work. The Ethiopian government issued a National Action Plan on Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in 2005. The Plan of Action has the overall goal of improving the realization of the rights of all Ethiopian children to be protected from sexual abuse and exploitation and to have access to legal, psychosocial and medical services as well as information necessary for their protection and rehabilitation. A National Steering Committee against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children has been established that oversee the implementation of the National Action Plan.

Furthermore, there are international and local non-governmental organizations that implement programs/projects to prevent child commercial sex work and rehabilitate victims of child commercial sex work. International NGOs such as Save the Children Norway, Save the Children Denmark and funding agencies such as OAK Foundation provide financial support for local NGOs which implement projects to prevent child commercial sex work and rehabilitate victims of child commercial sex work.

For instance, Forum on Street Children Ethiopia (FSCE) has a support and preventive programs for child victims of commercial sex worker in five major towns of the country: Addis Ababa, Nazareth, Dire Dawa, Dessie and Bahir Dar. The support program aims at rehabilitating child victims of commercial sex work through the provision of guidance and counseling, health, recreational, washing and laundry services and life and vocational skills trainings with the aim of preparing the children for further reintegration in the society. Drop-in-centers and safe-homes are established to provide the above mentioned services. The preventive programs on the other hand focus on raising the level of awareness of the public on the problem of child commercial sex work.

Children Aid Ethiopia (CHAD-Et) also establishes drop-in-centers in the Mercato area – the Addis Ketema sub-city of Addis Ababa and provides counseling, medical treatment, play and recreation (in-door and out-door games), life skills training such as assertiveness and resisting peer pressure, vocational skills training like hair-dressing, food preparation and driving skills.

Theoretical Perspectives

Three theoretical perspectives namely: the Anthropological, Rational adaptation or economic hypothesis and the Social disorganization, extracted from the “Theoretical Perspectives on Female Sexual Behaviour in Africa are explained here.

The three theoretical perspectives discussed in this study do not directly describe the situations how girl children become involved in commercial sex work but they do help to understand the different cultural, social and economic factors that might contribute for African girl children to become involved in child commercial sex work. Hence, the theories mainly explore or describe thoughts in relation to sexual behaviors that might lead girl children to become involved in commercial sex work. Therefore, in my research I do not have the intention test the theories rather discusses the findings of my research.

Anthropological Theory. Anthropologists emphasize the influence of social structure in shaping female sexual behaviour (Yanyi, 2008). In line with this tradition, variations in sexual behaviour are primarily associated with socio-cultural factors specific to each society. This theory among other socio-cultural factor, also interpret the female sexual behavior with the system of livelihood (production) and religion. For these theorists, in previous times sexual behavior was the centre of morality and theological doctrine in most parts of Africa. Girls’ purity was maintained with males helping in various ways to keep it as the noblest aspect of social life.

Based on limited anthropological research, the assumption about African girls' sexual permissiveness has been criticized for its overgeneralizations. Critiques argue that girls' sexual behaviour was not, and still is not, the same across the continent. Even within the same country, there exist a wide variety of sexual patterns. Moreover, any review of anthropological literature on African societies reveals that the concept of sex is highly complex.

Rational Adaptation Theory Many researchers believe that female sexual activity is associated with gender inequality in the distribution of resources (Yanyi, 2008). Keeping women poor, it is said, gives prosperous men ready access to multiple sexual partners because the "price" of women's sexual services will be low (Yanyi, 2008). Hence, proponents of the rational adaptation hypothesis argue that the current sexual behaviour of women, especially the unmarried ones, is economically rational. Under the rational adaptation assumption, sexual relations are viewed as a means by which young women get economic benefits.

In their qualitative study on adolescent sexuality in Nigeria and Kenya, Barker and Rich argue that poverty was partly the cause of sexual intercourse. According to these authors, the phenomenon of "sugar daddies"-older men who offer gifts to young women in exchange for sexual favors may have increased in Nigeria due to recent economic difficulties. In general, these sexual relations are not coercive. But in Zaria, northern Nigeria, some respondents reported that female students who live far from schools are frequently forced to accept rides from men and then find themselves in the "owing position".

Though the economic perspective offers a promising avenue to the study of sexuality in Africa, its hypothesis has not yet been empirically tested. Perhaps more importantly, the rational adaptation explanation proposed seems too simplistic for two main reasons. First, while it is true that women have limited access to economic resources in many African

countries, their entry into sexual relations may not be merely the result of poverty. The model of sexual behaviour must include some biological factors and social variables which determine the structure of interaction between potential sex partners. The advantage of such a biosocial model over the traditional rational adaptation model lies in its ability to consider sexual conduct as a form of "activity" which is both biologically and socially determined.

However, even this initial biosocial model is not appropriate because it assumes that males and females are free to calculate rewards and costs resulting from their sexual exchanges without reference to others. Under some systems of classificatory kinship, for example, the potential mates are clearly defined and social control over female sexual behaviour is so strong that freedom of partner selection may be very limited. Social control can, therefore, undermine the effect of poverty on female sexual behaviour. It is suggested that female sexual behaviour be considered as a function of kinship system, individual characteristics, economic resources, and biological factors. A proxy measure for the latter could be age. It is well known, for example, that the frequency of sexual intercourse is strongly associated with age.

While the possibility that female poverty could be associated with sexual permissiveness is not to be excluded entirely, the relationship between these two factors may be more complex than the actual model of rational adaptation suggests. In the absence of detailed data on sexual relations, financial capital, measured through family wealth, can be used to empirically test the validity of the rational adaptation theory.

Moreover, the rational adaptation theory emphasizes that poverty as the major factor that leads girls to involve in child commercial sex work. According to these proponents, young girls' involvement in commercial sex work is mainly for an exchange of gifts, favours or material benefits. It considers girls/females like objects that trade-off sex for economic gains only. However, it ignores social and biological factors that might have an influence on

girls' involvement in commercial sex work. Besides, the economic factor has to be confirmed by reliable data.

Social Disorganization Theory The third type of explanation, which derives from control theory, relates female sexual activity to change in social control (Yanyi, 2008). Called social disorganization, this theory assumes that the current level of female sexual activity results from the breakdown of social control that older persons had over younger ones. Factors usually cited as correlates of the loosening of traditional social controls are education, urbanization, and the mass media.

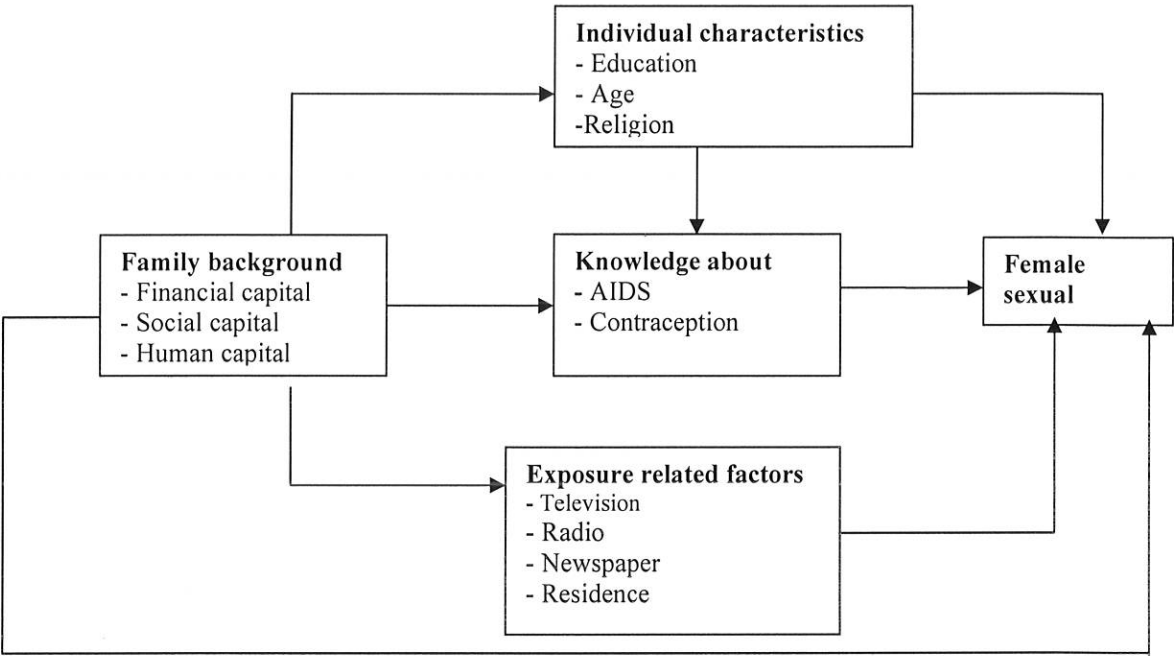
The main assumption of the social disorganization theory is that these modern factors are associated with the adoption of a Western lifestyle, which leads to deferred marriage while removing youth from parental surveillance. Qualitative reports from a town in Burkina Faso consider the television as the principal mechanism destroying customs and morals. In fact, some factors purported to promote female sexual permissiveness are very age-dependent. For example, according to this study, an exposure to television viewing at age 10 will probably have less effect on the timing of first sexual intercourse than an exposure to television at age 17. In the same way, the influence of urban residence on sexual behaviour can be largely conditioned by age.

This review of theoretical perspectives shows that previous research offers several testable hypotheses which, if appropriately applied, appear useful in explaining female sexual activity in societies of Africa. The three theoretical perspectives do have their own strong arguments on how girls' sexual behaviors are influenced which might also contribute to influence the girls' behaviors to become engaged in commercial sex work.

From the theoretical perspectives reviewed above a conceptual framework has been constructed (see Figure 1). This framework is an expanded version of the Coleman's model of social capital. However, my research does not intend to exclusively use these theoretical

perspectives to explore the contributing factors that derive girl children to become involved in commercial sex work. But, I have attempted to relate some of my findings with some aspects of social capital as described in the theoretical perspectives.

Figure 1 Conceptual framework for the study of female sexual behavior in Africa



In a series of publications, Coleman has developed (Frank & Marry, 1995) a theoretical model that includes components from both the economic principle of purposive action and the sociological principle of social context. Coleman argues that(Yanyi, 2008), the economists' assumption that an individual's action is wholly governed by the self-interested desire to maximize utility, or the sociologists' emphasis on social context which considers the actor as having no "engine of action," cannot give a complete account of behavior. Although other authors have also cautioned against the over socialization of the concept of action and the limitations of the principle of purposive action, Coleman's work represents (Alejandro , 2000) the first step towards the conceptualization of a sociological model that takes institutional resources and personal characteristics into account in determining behavior.

Formally, Coleman distinguishes three types of family resources (Alejandro, 2000), or forms of capital, that are essential in social action: financial capital, human capital, and social capital. Financial capital provides (Yanyi, 2008), the physical resources that can aid socialization and the financial resources that smooth family problems. Since income is not easy to measure in Africa (Yanyi, 2008), family wealth can be conceptualized as household amenities or physical capital. Under the rational adaptation hypothesis, the initiation of sexual activity is expected to be negatively associated with financial capital.

Coleman proposes to measure human capital using parents' education (Yanyi, 2008). However, in Africa, human capital is not limited to sole biological parents because most youths receive information about reproductive health from adult relatives, especially those within the same household. Therefore, human capital must be extended to include the educational attainment of all adults in the household.

Human capital represents the stock of educational resources for the child (Yanyi, 2008). This concept allows us to assess the validity of the social disorganization theory through the educational component. Considering the fact that social control is basically vertical (from elders to younger people), human capital may be a better measure of educational influence on sexual changes than a girl's own education (Yanyi, 2008). Three scenarios are possible under the assumption of educational effects on sexual activity (Yanyi, 2008). First, according to the social disorganization theory, both a girl's own education level and household educational level, as measured by human capital, are expected to be positively correlated with initiation of sexual activity (Yanyi, 2008). Second, the two educational variables may affect the dependent variable differently (Yanyi, 2008). For example, individual education may have a positive effect while human capital's influence is negative and vice versa. The last possible scenario (Yanyi, 2008) would be the one under which either none or only one educational variable is significantly associated with female sexuality.

The third component of Coleman's family background model is social capital. The term social capital describes (Alejandro, 2000) different resources that are available in the family and the community that are useful for the cognitive or social development of young people. The main difference between social capital and other forms of capital (financial and human, for example) is that social capital (Alejandro, 2000) inheres in the structure of relations between persons and among persons.

This concept of social capital is extended here to the analysis of sexual behavior. Just as social capital in the family plays a role in the creation of human capital in the rising generation (Alejandro, 2000), so does it for the transition to sexual activity. Coleman proposes several indicators of social capital which include number of siblings, birth order, and presence of both parents, talking about personal matters with the child, mother working outside the home, parental expectations for children's education, and number of times the child has changed school.

In the present context, one indicator- number of siblings - may be used as the index of social capital in modeling female sexuality in Africa (Yanyi, 2008). The number of siblings...represents a dilution of adult attention to the child . This is probably a good measure of social capital (Yanyi, 2008) in societies where divorce rates are low and most mothers do not work outside the home. Moreover, recent work in Africa shows that (Yanyi, 2008), the structure of the family and the occupational status of the parents are not significant determinants of young women's reproductive behavior. This is probably because in these societies, the socialization of young people is realized within the context of the extended family (Yanyi, 2008).

The above argument about the choice of sib-ship size as an indicator of social capital does not (Yanyi, 2008), however, rule out the possibility that the consideration of all types of social capital may also produce good results. In fact, social capital is not confined solely to

the family environment (Alejandro, 2000); it may include community and other families as well. Even the frequency of attendance at religious ceremonies (Yanyi, 2008), which is usually used as proxy for religiosity, can be viewed as a type of social capital. Yet, here and in most previous work, religiosity is usually considered as an individual level variable (Yanyi, 2008).

Social capital can also be considered as a control variable (Alejandro, 2000) to account for the allocation of financial and human capital within the household. Since interaction between adults and children may decrease within larger families, social capital is expected to increase the likelihood of engaging in sexual activity. Although Coleman suggests (Alejandro, 2000) measuring social capital through number of biological siblings, like human capital, in Africa the concept of social capital should include all children living under the authority of the same household head (Yanyi, 2008).

Kinship system should be included in the model of girls' sexual behavior (Yanyi, 2008). The impact of kinship on girls' sexual activity is expected to mediate through the process of marriage. In Democratic Republic of Congo (Yanyi, 2008), for example, patrilineal groups may impose more restrictions over female sexual behavior than do matrilineal populations.

In social demography (Yanyi, 2008), behavioral changes are often analyzed as structural-functional forces induced especially through urban residence and mass media. Under the social disorganization theory, urban residence and mass media are expected to be positively associated with girls' sexual activity. Within the conceptual model proposed here, these exposure variables must be measured as age-dependent covariates (Yanyi, 2008). Usually established by the family, religious affiliation can be considered as a control variable (Yanyi, 2008). In contrast, religiosity is a dynamic factor associated with sexual restrictiveness (Yanyi, 2008).

Contraceptive knowledge and AIDS-related knowledge represent a set of intervening variables useful for policy analysis (Yanyi, 2008). Like other time-varying covariates (Yanyi, 2008), these two factors should be measured for each age. Respondents should be asked to report their age at first contraceptive knowledge and first AIDS knowledge (Yanyi, 2008). Used in conjunction with age at first sexual intercourse and current age, these variables can be very useful. For example, it may be possible to determine the age at which specific intervention programs (e.g., AIDS information campaigns) are most likely to affect girls' sexual behavior. The ultimate goal here is to know what people knew prior to the initiation of sexual activity, and whether such knowledge has an effect on their current sexual behaviors. It should be noted (Yanyi, 2008), however, that such age-dependent retrospective data may be difficult to collect in some cases. Nonetheless, limiting the sample to young girls' such as those aged 14-24 who represent the highest AIDS risk group in Africa (Yanyi, 2008), may reduce the errors of observation.

The dependent variable, sexual behavior (Yanyi, 2008), can include several measurements. Perhaps the most important aspects of girls' sexual activity that should be considered are (Yanyi, 2008): timing of first sexual intercourse, number of sexual partners, and contraceptive use. Initiation of sexual intercourse can be examined using event history analysis (Yanyi, 2008), in the form of discrete-time logistic regression equations (Yanyi, 2008). Such models should treat marriage as a competing-risk event relative to the initiation of sexual intercourse (Yanyi, 2008). By setting a threshold value (Yanyi, 2008), for the number of sexual partners, one can also analyze "partner change" at a given age within an event history framework (Yanyi, 2008).

All arguments and discussions presented up to this point have been made on the implicit assumption of linear associations (Yanyi, 2008) between the explanatory variables and the (three types of) dependent variables. In reality, however, some variables may also

affect girls' sexual behavior indirectly through other explanatory variables. There are three major mediating effects or potential interactions suggested in the literature. The first interaction is sought between financial capital and education. Lloyd and Blanc (Yanyi, 2008), argue that relatively better-off households not only have more resources to invest in their own children, but are also recipients of children from less well-off households. If, unlike what the proponents of rational adaptation theory suggest (Yanyi, 2008), financial capital appears to increase the likelihood of having sexual intercourse and education is associated with sexual permissiveness, then the interaction between education and financial capital will be of a "reinforcement or synergistic" type (Yanyi, 2008).

The literature also provides evidence (Yanyi, 2008), suggesting that household educational level as measured by the household head's education increases the child's likelihood of successful schooling. In line with the reasons advanced above about the conceptualization of family background variables within the African context (Yanyi, 2008), the second interaction term should be the combined effect of human capital and individual educational attainment. This interaction is important in determining whether young people's education "frees" them from elders' control (Yanyi, 2008). The third interaction (Yanyi, 2008), is sought between education and social capital. It is expected that the effect of education on girls' sexual behavior will also depend on the number of children in the household or social capital (Yanyi, 2008).

In general, family background variables are key factors of socialization and social control, especially in the area of girls' sexual behavior (Yanyi, 2008). The conceptual framework proposed here is based on Coleman's work (Yanyi, 2008), which defines three types of family resources, or capital, which are assumed to affect children's socialization: financial capital, human capital, and social capital.

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter presents the research design, description of the study area, the research participants (characteristics, number and selection criteria), the data type, data collection tools, method of analysis and ethical issues.

Study Design

This study was cross-sectional by design. Child (girls) victims of commercial sex work who were receiving different services in a drop-in-center and safe home in Dessie town were selected for this study. My study employs a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research was a choice of my research because the approach enables me to develop concepts which helps to understand social phenomena in a natural settings, giving due emphasis to the meanings, experiences, and views of all the participants. Besides, qualitative research provides an in-depth understanding of the problem to be studied. It enables me to understand the experiences of the research participants. Moreover, it provides a unique insight into the phenomenon being studied and enables me to describe and explain how the research participants live or how they cope with their daily lives.

Besides, qualitative research tells us or describes why people behave in a certain way. In addition to this, qualitative research seeks explanations of social phenomena by answering questions such as why people behave the way they do and how people are affected by the events that go around them. Therefore, my research question attempts to explore why and how child victims of commercial sex work engage in commercial sex work and I believed that this question would be best answered by the qualitative research approach.

Description of the Study Area

The study area is Dessie town, the capital city of South Wollo Zone, Amhara Region. Dessie town is one of the oldest and growing urban centers in the Amhara Region. It is located in the Northern part of the country and is 400 kms away from Addis Ababa. The town

is situated in the main road that leads to Mekelle, Tigray Region whereby many long distance transport buses and trucks spend a night from and back to Addis Ababa. As a result of this, many young girls flock to this growing city (CHAD-Et, 2004) seeking different opportunities.

The study was conducted in a drop-in-center and safe home where child commercial sex workers are receiving different services by a local NGO called Forum on Street Children Ethiopia. Children in the centers were selected partly because it was easy to access these children compared to other girl children who work in bars and streets. Conducting the actual research, I had made a prior visit to the study area. During that visit, I learned from the Dessie town Police, Municipality and Labour and Social Affairs Offices that it was difficult to meet and interview child commercial sex workers because in the first place, they do not have permanent addresses and secondly they could not be available during day time for an interview as most of them would take rest (sleep) after staying late in the evening either waiting for customers or spending the night with customers.

The above mentioned government office representatives and FSCE staff also informed me that, it was not possible to conduct the interview during evenings because the children would either be on the streets waiting to pick their customers and or serving in bars which the bar owners might not allow to carry out the interview. Besides, streets and bars would not be convenient places to conduct interviews as this might deprive the children's privacy and due to lots of distractions (passers by, customers in the bar). Furthermore, because the children were in the drop-in-center and safe home, it was easier for me to get a written consent from FSCE rather than searching for children's parents or guardians to sign the consent letters who might not be around Dessie town.

Research Participants

A total of 17(11-18 years old) girl child victims of commercial sex work and 4 key informants were the participants of my research. The girls who participated in the in-depth

interviews were used to receive different services in the drop-in-center and safe home established by FSCE in Dessie town. However, at the time of this research, the drop-in-center and safe home were closed due to the budget constraint FSCE encountered. The majority of the participant children were involved in commercial sex work while few of them were engaged in other activities such as selling tea and bread in containers built in the street side, selling plastic shoes in an open market and peddling small items like fruits, tissue papers and chewing gum. However, the participant children had maintained their contact with the FSCE office (they report every Friday) anticipating further support.

The key informants were one from Dessie town Police, one from Labour and Social Affairs in Dessie town and two FSCE staff in Dessie project office. The key informants were included in the interviews to look into whether the girls' understanding of the problem differs from the public officials.

Girl children who used to attend the services in the drop-in-centre frequently (at least four days a week) and who were conversant or who could adequately describe or explain their conditions and situations and who were between 11-18 years old were selected for the interview. To identify the study participant girl children, the FSCE staff (house mothers, community workers and the project coordinator) who were all females and who had a day to day contact with the children were consulted. Furthermore, other criteria for selecting participant children were willingness of the children to participate in the interviews. All the names indicated in the case stories are pseudo.

Data Type and Data Collection Tools

Data Types. The data gathered is qualitative and is collected through in-depth interviews from the 17 participant girl children and key informants.

The instruments employed to gather the required data were the following:

Interview Guide. Interview guide were prepared for the in-depth interviews for the participant girl children. The contents of the interview guide focused on self report of personal experiences and the reasons for their involvement in child commercial sex work. The check lists were simple and enabled the participant children to narrate their experiences since their engagement in child commercial sex work.

Interview guide were also developed for the interviews to be held with the key informants. The reason to interview the key informants was to understand the concerned local authorities' views on the factors that push and pull children to become involved in commercial sex work and compare with the views of the children. This might enable the local authorities to design interventions based on the views of the children.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected through in depth interview or discussions with the study participants was analyzed using qualitative methods of data analysis by focusing on thematic patterns. The researcher transcribed tape-recorded field data. Reading and re-reading of the transcribed data helped to understand the text data. This helped to differentiate information that are relevant to the research questions; thereby helped to make sure the quality of the data. After developing a text as per the compilation of the data of each participant, the researcher detailed the research questions and tried to relate the possible response obtained from the study participants. This was done by focusing on the topic/questions so that consistencies and differences of views/knowledge basis would be visibly demarcated for the detailed analysis purpose in a group level. However, it was also vital to link such approach with case/individual responses by maintaining case responses. This helped to look into specific cases that helped for the consolidation of the grouping of responses.

To give meanings to the organized information, categorization was used. This helped me to identify themes (ideas, concepts, behaviors, and terminologies) and to organize them

coherently in a way to give meanings. I preferred to make the analysis as iterative so that combined a preset and emergent classification of theme. Under this rigorous analysis process, I identified patterns and connections among the categories. This paved the way to merge alike categories. Such procedure particularly helped to answer why children engage in child commercial sex work. At last, under indicative headings that directly matched with the answers for the research questions/findings/, I interpreted the data. With regard to the case summaries, such category helped me to see the details of the perceived attitude and knowledge that underpin child commercial sex work. Individual/case summaries were analyzed along with the text.

Ethical Issues

The problem of child commercial sex work is not openly discussed. Children involved in the child commercial sex work are skeptical and are not comfortable to freely express their views whole heartedly for strangers as child commercial sex work, in most instances, is associated with disrespect. This context necessitated to develop a strict ethical guideline for this research.

After I have identified the research participants, I arranged a separate meeting with each study participant and briefed each about the purpose of the research, why they were selected and their views were requested in this regard. Besides, all participants were informed that they would be treated equally and participation in the research was voluntary. Furthermore, I explained to each participant girl that the information they would provide would remain confidential. For instance, they were informed that during the interviews they would not be asked their names. As the result of this, the participants developed trust and were comfortable to freely share their views during the discussions.

I obtained verbal consent from all the participant children prior to their participation in the discussions. Besides, I informed each participant girl that she could end her

participation in the research at any time during the process. Moreover, I also informed each participant girl that she have the right not to answer any question that she would feel not comfortable with (See Annex 1).

Furthermore, I identified places for the interviews in consultation with the study participant girls to ensure the privacy of the research participants. FSCE Dessie project staff availed a convenient room (with no sound, with chairs and tables) for the interviews.

Because the children were under the support of FSCE, the project coordinator signed the informed consent. Furthermore, representatives from the police and labour and Social Affairs Offices in Dessie town signed informed consents. Children were asked to give their consents. Besides, because the participant children were under shelter-based services, their guardians were not required to sign consent letter.

DATA PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS

This section mainly deals with the presentation of data generated from the discussions held with children in the drop-in-center and safe home and the four key informants from Police, Labour and Social Affairs Offices and two FSCE project office experts in Dessie town. To protect the confidentiality of the data obtained from the girls, the raw data was discarded after it was transcribed and summarized. I showed the summarized data to my advisor and after approval the raw data was discarded. Furthermore, when I transcribed the raw data I did not mention specific names and locations which ensured the confidentiality of the data obtained. Besides, I coded all the names in the transcription.

The Socio-demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

Educational Background Most of the study participants had completed primary level education (grades from 1-8), three children completed secondary level education (grades from 9-10) while one did not attend school at all. Besides, one girl completed grade 10, joined college and dropped out from college. Table 1 below indicates the educational status of the study participants.

Table 1. Educational Status of study Participants

Level of Education	Study participants
Can not read and write	1
1 – 4	4
5 - 8	9
9 – 10	2
10 +	1
Total	17

Age of Involvement in Commercial Sex Work The reports of the participant children and the files of the children checked in the drop-in-center and safe home revealed that the lowest age at which these girls started commercial sex work was 11. Seven girls out of the 17 participants started commercial sex work at the age of 14 or younger. Six children started at

the ages of 15, three at the ages of 16 and one girl started commercial sex work at the age of 17. The majority of the participant children (13 out of 17) become involved in commercial sex work at the age of 15 or younger. Table 2 below indicates the ages of children while they entered into commercial sex work.

Table 2. Age of Starting Commercial Sex Work

Age of start	Study participants
Less than 13	2
At age 13	1
At age 14	4
At age 15	6
At age 16	3
At age 17	1
Total	17

Length of Stay in Commercial Sex Work With regard to the length of their stay in commercial sex work, 2 children reported that they have been engaged in commercial sex work for one year, 3 for two years, 7 for three years and 5 children reported they have been involved in commercial sex work for four years.

Table 3. Length of Stay in Commercial Sex Work

Length of stay	Number of participants
For a year	2
For two years	3
For three years	7
For four years	5
Total	17

Where do the Girls Stay? Out of the total 17 children participated in the study, 12 children reported that they were living alone in their own rented rooms, 3 were living in a shared rented room and the remaining 2 girls reported that they were living on the street and with a boy friend in a rented house.

Table 4. Places where girls currently stay

Place girls stay	Number of participants
Rent room alone	12
Rent room with other girls	3
In the street	1
With a boy friend	1
Total	17

Family Background In the discussions held with the participant children, children were requested to narrate about their parents (rural-urban, educational level, whether alive or not, marital status and sources of income). Out of the 17 participant children, 13 reported that their parents/guardians were from the rural areas. Nine of the participant children reported that both of their parents are alive of whom 8 are living together and one divorced. Besides, 4 children reported that their fathers had died and 3 reported that they had lost their mothers. One girl reported that she had lost both of her parents.

With regard to the sources of income of parents/guardians, 11 of the participant children reported that their parents were farmers, 3 children reported they were daily labourers, 2 reported that they were government employees and one participant reported as a petty trader. Furthermore, I learned from the children that the majority of their guardians were not formally educated. Out of the total nine alive parents only two completed primary and secondary level education.

With regard to children's contacts with their parents or family members, two of the children reported that they visit their parents every year particularly during Ethiopian New Year while another three children indicated that they have visited their parents ones in two to three years time. Another two participant children whose parents reside in Dessie town revealed that they visit their parents every week while another two children whose parents reside in nearby places to Dessie town such as in Kutaber areas indicated that they visit their parents at least twice a year.

The reasons why children maintained their contacts with their parents or family members were some children feel loneliness; others support their parents while others want to go back to their places of origin to start their own small businesses like opening small tea houses and shops.

Why Do Girl Children Engage in Commercial Sex Work? –The Perspectives of Children

The Push Factors The participant children reported that they were mistreated (beaten, insulted – called bad names, denied to go to school) by their parents or guardians (by both parents and either by their fathers or mothers, step mothers and step fathers). The table below indicates the groupings of factors that compelled and attracted children to become involved in commercial sex work

Table 5. Factors that Pushed/Pulled Children

Group of factors	Participants	What the girls say
Mistreatment by parents/guardians	12	• Step father bit me • Step mother made me work hard, stopped me from going to school • Mother disapproved my late coming in the evening after selling by bananas, beats me when I disagree with her ideas, she beats me • Father did not like my schooling and wanted me to assist him in the field, father did not like me • Parents(mother and father) did not like my schooling, parents side with my younger siblings when disagreement arises among us and they always beat me because I am the eldest.
Poverty coupled with a large family size	1	My parents were poor and we were eight children in the family. I was the eldest girl in the family
Arranged early marriage	1	I heard from my mother that I was engaged and the marriage ceremony to be arranged soon, then I left.
The desire to live in town as influenced by a peer	1	I was tired of the hard work in the rural life. I envied a neighbor girl who came to visit her parents from Dessie. She told me about job opportunities and about other nice things in the town. I left with her to Dessie
Lack of parental supervision and support	1	I was away from my parents to pursue my education. I rented room in a place where commercial sex workers live. I was threatened and forced to sleep with one of their customers.
Death of parents	1	
Total	17	

As could be seen from Table 5, 12 of the participant children were forced to leave their homes due to mistreatments by their parents/guardians. The children were asked to explain why they were mistreated by their parents. Two of the children reported that they were beaten by their step fathers because one declined to accept her step father's order to quit her relationship with two of her friends who are the followers of protestant church while the other girl was beaten because she could not stop going to school and do household activities.

Furthermore, another two participant children indicated that their mothers disapproved their late coming in the evening after selling small items (cigarettes, sugar cane and tissue paper) in the streets. However, the children would explain that they had relatively good sales at evenings but their mothers would not accept their explanations. When the children could not come early as told by their parents, they were insulted and beaten which caused the children to leave their homes.

Besides, two participant children reported that they were mistreated (insulted and beaten by their parents - father and mother) when they refused to quit school and assist their parents in a field work/ farm work such as weeding, turning soil and gathering residues of crops. In addition to this, three of the participant children showed that the mistreatments by their parents were caused because the parents support the views of younger children or listen what the younger children tells them when fight arise among the siblings and beat the elder ones.

Other contributing factors as mentioned by the participant children that compelled them to engage in commercial sex work were arranged early marriages, death of both parents and poverty of parents aggravated by a large family size and having no one to guide children while they are away from their parents for schooling.

The discussion made with the Project Manager for FSCE in Dessie town, who is a sociologist by profession, indicated that the major push factors for children to engage in

commercial sex work are economic problems in households and low awareness of parents on the rights and needs of children. According to her, parents do not usually pay attention for children's interests and requests which some times result in disagreements. These disagreements, according to the key informant, in many instances result in physical punishment (beatings) and insulting of the children that would contribute for children to flee their homes. She added that other social problems such as family disintegration, divorce, death of parents, loss of income of the bread winner also forces children to involve into commercial sex work. She further elaborated that harmful traditional practices such as early marriage, sexual abuse, rape also push girls to enter into the business.

An interview made with the project officer in FSCE in Dessie town showed that family dispute (fight among parents as well as disagreements with children) harmful traditional practices like early marriage, abduction, domestic labour, family disruption, and the presence of adults who traffic girls from rural areas to towns for sexual purposes contributed for girl children to be engaged in commercial sex work. Furthermore, the information obtained from the two key informants (representatives from the police and Labour and Social Affairs) also indicated that parental disagreements with children as one of the causes that compel children to leave their homes which ultimately expose children to engage in commercial sex work.

The Pull factors One participant girl reported that she was tired of living in the rural area because she used to perform many difficult tasks like cooking meals, cleaning cow dung, fetching water and firewood every morning and look after cattle and assist parents in the farm. Her dislike to the rural area became stronger and her aspiration to live in urban area was lifted when she met a neighbor who used to live in Dessie town. According to the participant, she envied the good looking girl wearing nice and clean clothes, shiny earrings, necklaces and rings.

The information obtained from one of the key informants from the Labour and Social Affairs Office in Dessie town, depicts the same situation. According to her, the influence of peer groups in the rural areas also attracts young girls to join in commercial sex work. She explained that, child commercial sex workers who visit their rural parents with decorative ornaments, relatively better clothing and seemingly modern way of appearances attract the rural children to go to the towns and ultimately end up in child commercial sex work.

The participant children also reported that they migrated to Dessie town because they expected better employment opportunities such as to work in cafeterias as waitresses, to work in construction activities as daily laborers and at the same time to pursue their education in evening classes.

The other factor as reported by the participant children that attracted them to come to towns was that the low level of awareness of children about city life and hope that they get a better life in cities. That is, they get wrong information about city life from their friends.

Furthermore, the living environments around girl children and having no one to guide children while they are away from their parents to pursue their education contributed for children to be involved in commercial sex work. Consider this story as told by Jemila, age 17:

I came to pursue my college education to Dessie town 3 years ago. My parents were able to send me to a private college here in Dessie town. I rented a house in a compound where many commercial sex workers resided. I did not know they were commercial sex workers. Through time, I used to sympathize with them and became a friend to most of them. A customer of one of the commercial sex workers requested to date me but I refused. He insisted to date me and used to follow me on my way to school. One day, he waited for me on my way to school and threatened to beat me if I did not comply with his request. I was afraid of him because I did not have anybody around to protect me as my parents are outside Dessie town. My parents did not come to visit me. Finally, I gave in and dated him. His girl friend – the commercial sex worker heard that I had an affair with her customer and a fight started among us. I fell in love with the boy. The commercial sex worker threatened to kill me. I did not know what to do. I was confused. I did not want my parents to hear about this. I stopped going to school. I did not know how but my parents heard about my situation and came and took me home. But I was ashamed of

what I did and I felt guilty. I could not stay with my parents and came back to Dessie and directly joined in commercial sex work.

The above case story depicts that after the girls involved in commercial sex work, they would initially be frustrated, feel guilty, hate themselves and become ashamed of what they are doing. This transition from (student or house made) to commercial sex work make children to temporarily halt their relationships with people who are close to them.

The Processes How Children Entered in Commercial Sex Work?

The participant children reported that once they decided to leave their homes they would wait for certain convenient times and conditions such as when parents/guardians are away from home. Other girls would wait till market days so that they could leave with traders who come for rural markets. Children also reported that they would discuss with friends who had similar plans to leave their homes and would fix dates to leave together. Then they would sneak out from their homes and move to nearby small towns.

According to some of the participant children, some would hitch- hike and others would travel on foot till they arrive at small towns. Most of the girls reported that they would stay in the small towns and would work as daily labourers, cleaners in small tea houses and as domestic servants. Others reported that they would try their best to go to Dessie town as soon as they arrive at small towns by asking bus and truck drivers to take them to Dessie town. After their arrival at Dessie town, the girls would directly go to the bus terminal where they would find street girls or brokers to find them households to work as domestic servants.

The participant children revealed that in most instances they fall on the hands of brokers who would wait at the bus station and try to convince the girls to involve in commercial sex work so as they would get money out of it. However, when the girls resist to become involved in commercial sex work, the brokers would help them to be employed as house maids.

Hana, a 15 year old girl relates:

One day, my parents and siblings left to a wedding of my step mother's relatives. I sent a message to my friend whom we used to go to school about my plans to leave. We left to Akesta town and met a person who used to be our neighbor. He facilitated our trip to Dessie town. I have been here in Dessie town for two years. Soon after I arrived in Dessie, I met a broker in the bus station and started work as a housemaid. The lady I was working for mistreat me. She complained that I did not do things properly (did not wash clothes cleanly, cook well and clean the house neatly). She had me do tasks beyond my capacity. I met a girl whom I knew and told her about my situation. She used to work in a bar. She advised me to work with her. She informed me that I could earn more money in a night than which I was earning in two or three months as a domestic servant. I did not know the type of work but I was eager to give it a try when I heard the amount I would earn. Then I joined her and started to sleep with men for money.

The story of Mesret, age 18 years old, discloses the following:

I came from Kemmisie area to Dessie town after I had a disagreement with my aunt who brought me up. I have been here for quite over two years. I directly went to a girl whom she used to be our neighbor. I asked her to find me a place to work. She advised me to go back to my home. I refused and told her that I would rather prefer to beg on the street rather than going back. She was shocked and she linked me with a woman whom she knew to work as a domestic servant. The lady whom I worked for had a small bar but I was working in her residence and I used to cook for her and took her breakfast, lunch and dinner to the bar where she was working. In the mean time, she asked me to assist her in the bar and she promised to increase my salary. Initially, I used to clean the bar and wash glasses but later on I resumed to work as a cashier in the bar. The lady could not pay my full salary on the pretext that she had incurred a loss because I could not record the accounts properly. A girl who was working as a waitress in the same bar advised me to sleep with men and pay my debt. I agreed and started to work as a commercial sex worker.

Perceptions of Girl Children about themselves and Commercial Sex Work

How Do the Girls Feel? Stories of what these children feel about themselves and commercial sex work are surprisingly similar. They regard commercial sex work as shameful and demeaning. Genet, a 16 years old girl who had been in commercial sex work for the past three years recounted as follows:

I found the work to be ugly, shameful and risky. I began to curse partly my

friend who misled me to engage in commercial sex work and partly myself for accepting her offer. Now, I had terminated my relationship with my girl friend. You earn a lot of money when business is fine (when you meet customers regularly for four days a week and some times for a week) but you lose it the next day. You waste it for alcohol, smoking and chewing *chatt* (a green stimulant leaf). The money you earn through commercial sex work is not blessed money. It is sin money. That is why you do not save it. The expectation that you would earn it tomorrow makes you to spend it unwisely and this makes you stay in the business and finally could not get out of it. Hence, we stay in the business even though we despise it.

Another girl, Senayit, age 17, relates;

I have been in commercial sex work for last three years. I feel like I am drowning in an ocean. I tried several times to get out of it but was a futile exercise. Once you are in, there is no way out. Some times I feel like empty and lonely. No parents, siblings and other relatives. I do not want to meet them because they would hate me if they knew what I am doing. I am ashamed of what I am doing. Men want to meet me at evenings but turn their backs during day time. This scares me. I am lost. I do not have a future.

The above case story indicates that commercial sex work is despised, degrading and shameful activity not only to the public but also to themselves. The majority of the participant girls discussed that they would decline to establish relationships outside their circle for fear of being discriminated or stigmatized. In addition to this, these children also revealed that they did not want their parents/guardians to know about what they are doing. When some of them visit their parents/guardians they would lie to them as working in a cafeteria either as a sales girl or as a cashier or work in construction sites as a daily labourer. There is a great concern among the majority of the participant girls that if their involvement in commercial sex work is disclosed to their parents/guardians or relatives, they might not want to receive them or might ex-communicate with them. Some of them reported that they believed that they have already spoiled the good reputation of their parents/guardians or relatives.

It was learned from the children that they feel ashamed of by being involved in commercial sex work because their parents may ex-communicate or discriminate them when they hear about it, they are treated by the community they live in differently (they do not want them to be members of their *ekubs*, neighbors do not want to drink coffee with them and

land lords do not want to rent them rooms) and the community members also consider them as misfits of the society. Children's fears of ex-communications from their parents or relatives coupled with the negative treatment they receive from the community contributed to the low self-esteem, lack of confidence, self hate, and self-isolation, a sense of unworthiness, shame and humiliation among the children.

However, the discussions held with the participant children revealed that the majority of them think that their involvement in commercial sex work is a temporary activity. They think that one day they will quit commercial sex work and start their own small businesses or find jobs in cafeterias. Most of the children indicated that they joined the drop-in-center and the safe home because of their firm convictions to quit commercial sex work.

Furthermore, I learned from the participant children that some have married and leading a life with their husbands while others have quitted commercial sex work and started selling plastic shoes(two girls) in an open market, employed as a hairdresser(one girl) and opened small tea house(one girl).

What do the Children Understand about HIV/AIDS? The participant children reported that they were aware of the risks of HIV/AIDS. Ten of the participant children reported that they got the information about HIV/AIDS while they were at school, two reported from parents and the rest five reported from their peers. All of the participant children reported that the moment they entered into commercial sex work, their peer commercial sex workers and bar owners would caution them about the disease.

All of the participant children indicated that they were told by their peer commercial sex workers about customers who did not like to use condoms and were advised not to go out with such customers unless they make sure they had carried condoms. Eight of the participant children reported that they were provided with condoms by bar owners during their first time and the rest were advised by the bar owners to request the customer to buy the condoms.

The participant children also reported that FSCE and Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE) had provided them with trainings on how HIV/AIDS is being transmitted, how to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS and provided them with condoms free of charge.

The participant children were asked to describe how HIV/AIDS is transmitted. The children identified sexual intercourse, using sharp items (razor blade, knife, needle) in common and deep kissing and breast feeding. All the participant children reported that they regularly use condom during sexual intercourse.

However, three of the participant girls disclosed that they did not use condoms when they sleep with their 'boy friends' and persons who promised to marry them which resulted in unwanted pregnancies. Three of the participant girls had children aged from eight months to one year at the time of this research. Both the children and the mothers were tested negative for HIV/AIDS.

Challenges Encountered by Child Victims of Commercial Sex Work

The major challenges or problems encountered as reported by the study participant girl children are presented below.

Threat to Perform Intercourse without Condom The participant children reported that their customers did not want to use condoms. According to the children, their customers would bring different excuses or justifications for not using condom. Some would say they are married and free of HIV/AIDS, others would tell they had never had sex before with commercial sex workers and they should not be suspected of HIV/AIDS.

The reports from the participant children indicated that they had encountered customers who resisted to use condom after they promised to use it, some of the customers would took it off after they wore it and while others would tear or pierce the tip of the condom. Information obtained from the children also disclosed that children had encountered

customers who did not like to put on the light at the time of intercourse so that they could take of the condom without being noticed.

All the participant children had more than one encounters of customers who offered more money to perform sex without condom. It was also learned from the participants that some of their customers forced them to take too much alcohol (beer) so that they could be drunk not to resist to perform different styles of intercourse and particularly to perform sex without condom. Though the participant children reported that they regularly use condom during sexual intercourse, there is a risk of being exposed to HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases if their customers use force to perform sex without condom while they are alone in the rooms of their customers.

Physical Abuse Participant children reported that they had experienced beatings because of different reasons. Nine participant girls reported that they were beaten because they refused to perform intercourse without condom. Six girls reported that they were slapped on the face when they refused to perform sex more than what they considered was beyond normal for a night (not more than four times per night). Another two participants disclosed that they were beaten when they refused to perform ‘abnormal sex’ or different positions. During the discussions, the participant girls disclosed that they were beaten when they protested that they were not paid the agreed price. Abebech, a 17 year old child victim of commercial sex work reported her encounter as follows:

A customer paid me Birr 100.00 and took me to a hotel room he rented. He ordered me (did not request me) to perform ‘unnatural’ act in a manner which I had never heard of. I refused to do that. He told me that he paid me that amount and I should comply with his demands. I declined to comply with his orders. He slapped me on my face. I screamed and the hotel guard came and knocked at the door. He could not open the door. The guard threatened that he would call the police. Fortunate enough, I was saved and left the room. Most of the customers did not treat us like human beings. They consider us like any other items they purchase.

High Cost of Room Rent The participant girls revealed that landlords charge them relatively higher room rents compared to other ordinary citizens. According to the girls, for a room which might be rented for Ethiopian Birr 60.00-70.00(sixty to seventy) for civil servants or other tenants, they would be requested to pay Ethiopian Birr 120.00 - 130.00(hundred and twenty to hundred and thirty). The girls were asked to explain why they were charged more than the other tenants. Their responses were similar. The landlords assumed that they were earning much more money than the other tenants. One girl reported that, the landlords considered that we are earning 'fast money' without putting much hard work or effort on it. The participant children also indicated that the landlords might want to avoid renting their rooms to them but they allowed them to stay because they paid relatively higher prices than the other tenants. These same children reported that the landlords used to tell them that because they always come late in the evening, gangsters might follow them and one day they would rob the properties of the landlords.

Inadequate Income The participant children indicated that when they started commercial sex work, they used to have four to five customers on average per week. During the discussions held with the children, three girls reported that they only had two customers for the past week, ten children had one customer and four of them did not have a customer for the past week at the time of the discussion. The children reported that they did not have enough money to buy food, pay for house rents and get medical treatment. According to these children, they borrowed money from their friends, requested their land lords to extend the due date to pay the rents and decided to live in one room to share costs.

Furthermore, as the result of the declining income children were an able to pay their rents and were forced to move to the periphery of Dessie town where they would be away from their customers. Furthermore, the types of housing units in such areas were also without

the required facilities such as windows for ventilation, dust floors and above all there were no clean pipe water which might affect their health.

The reasons the children assumed for their declining income was that “*bezu ye miyamamiru ena ye ketema lejoch ye mimeslu hitsanat be buna bet sira tesemartewal*” (Many beautiful, very young and seemingly urban girl children are joining the commercial sex work or are working in bars) which made the competition fierce. The children also reported that their customers who used to pay Ethiopian Birr 80.00(eighty) to Birr 100.00(hundred) per night are not willing or could not afford to pay that amount to day. According to the children, today, their customers are offering prices between Ethiopian Birr 40.00(forty) to Birr 60.00(sixty) per night. The girls felt that the income of their customers might have reduced.

In the in- depth discussions held with the girls, it was reported that the regular and frightening messages being transmitted about HIV/AIDS through the television and radio might have decreased the number of their customers. The participant children reported that as the result of the diminishing income, they were not able to pay their room rents and could not fulfill their subsistence such as food.

Negative Attitude of the Community The participant children reported that even their customers did not want to talk to them in other places but bars. Their neighbors and landlords refused to allow them participate in their coffee ceremonies and ekubs (voluntary money saving among group of people or close friends or neighbors) for fear that this participation would give the landlords and neighbors a bad name. The youth, men and women who knew their activities (commercial sex work) point their fingers at them and discriminate against them. They treat them with suspicion and antagonism. Participant children described that men and women who disapprove of the girls life styles spat upon and insulted them. The children also indicated that they are not able to establish meaningful relationships with other

members of the community. According to the girls, even people whom they knew very well try to avoid them in the presence of others. Furthermore, children also reported that some members of the police did not want to handle their cases when reported to them.

Sexual Harassment and Abuse The other problem children encounter as reported by them was an attempt of group sex. Some clients pretend to be alone and took a girl to a hotel room where his friends would wait and rape the girl.

Why do Children Stay in Commercial Sex Work?

The participant children reported that commercial sex work is not their choice. All the girls expressed desire to change their lives if given proper support/chance. They have the feeling that anything is better than sex work. They have realized that they are running a lot of risk by doing what they do. They understand that they are exposed to HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and abuse by clients. Children are willing to take part in any program that aims to empower them and change their lives for better. It was learned from the children that many of them have attempted to change their lives by involving in small activities such as petty trade. However, they do not have the required qualification and skills to get other employment opportunities.

Are there Positive Aspects of Child Commercial Sex Work?

Participant children were asked if there is anything they consider as positive being engaged in commercial sex work. Very few children (two girls) explained that they liked the freedom or independent life they are leading with out adult's control. They also reported that they liked earning their own money. Some of the girls also indicated that they enjoyed the music and dancing in bars and establishing relationships with other similar girls involved in commercial sex work.

How Do these Children Cope?

Change Work Places and Commercial Sex Work. The participant children reported that they changed their work places and some times took up activities other than commercial sex work. According to the participant girl children, they particularly moved to places where there were many construction activities such as to the Afar Region- Assayita town and worked as daily labourers in the construction sites. Three of the participant children reported that they had ones moved to Assayita area and worked as daily labourers in construction sites, one moved to Kombolcha town and took up a job as domestic servant, two girls sold cigarettes, fruits and tissue papers on the streets while four other girls worked as waitresses (two) and as dish-washer and cleaner (two) in cafeterias in Dessie town. Besides, one girl reported that she took up a job to wash clothes for households. However, six of the participants changed their work places (mainly bars within Dessie town) but stayed in the commercial sex work at the time of the discussion.

It was learned from the participant children that two of the girls who moved to Assayita town and who were employed in construction sites quitted commercial sex work, married and are living with their husbands. According to the participant children, the change of place and work in construction sites enabled children to quit commercial sex work and find their husbands. Besides, the participant children reported that the daily payments in the construction sites in Assayita area ranges between Ethiopian Birr 20 to 25 per day depending on the nature of the work. In addition to this, the children indicated that house rent in Assayita town is much cheaper than in Dessie town which enabled children to relatively save better than they were in Dessie town.

The participant children who changed work and took up other jobs like dish and cloth washing explained that they were treated with respect and were able to participate in *ekub*

activities and drink coffee with their neighbors. This enabled children not to be ashamed of themselves and helped them to develop self-confidence.

Establish Social Ties The participant girl children reported that they tried to maintain and reinforce relationships with their fellow child commercial sex workers through updating of their addresses such as where they are residing, working and how to find each other in times of adversaries. By maintaining such contacts, they tried to keep in touch and support each other through borrowing money when one does not earn an income and contribute money for medication, if one gets ill.

Selamawit, a 15 years old girl explained:

One of our friends, Asnaketch, 16 years old, suddenly fell ill. She was living alone. She used to visit different clinics for her treatment but she could not recover. We gathered and discussed about her situation. We finally agreed to contribute money for her medication and also decided that four of our friends should move to her place to take care of her. Her situation got worse and she was admitted to a Hospital. She stayed in the Hospital for a week and passed away in the Hospital. We rented a car and eight of us took her body to her parents' place – Kutaber area which was 30 kilo meters away from Dessie town. We facilitated and paid all the costs related to her burial. We stayed the night at her parents' place and paid our condolences. The next day we expressed our condolences and gave her parents Birr 200.00 to support the mourning activities.

It could be learned from the above case that participant children assist each other in times of illness and sorrow through their established links and networks. According to the girls, they do not have access to free medical treatment from government clinics and hospitals because they do not have kebele identity cards. That is, to be entitled to free medical treatment they require to produce kebele identity cards. The majority of the children reported that the identity cards issued by the FSCE office in Dessie town enabled them to get access to medical treatment in clinics and hospitals. Most of the clinics or hospitals in Dessie town require a sort of identification card to be registered as a patient.

According to the girls, their established relationships also helped them to share information on their experiences, particularly on how to manage difficult customers so as to take the necessary precautions to protect themselves from such difficult customers. This information sharing enabled children to use condoms regularly during intercourse, make sure that their customers are willing to buy condoms and wear them during intercourse.

Furthermore, the girls also reported that they had maintained relationships with the bar owners whom they felt had treated them well and supported them while they were working in their bars. According to the girls, the relationships they maintained with their former employers (bar owners) was mainly to find them other employment opportunities such as domestic servant when they decided to quit commercial sex work. Maintaining and reinforcing the relationship with bar owners had also served for the girls to have the bar owners as collaterals or guarantees when they found other employment opportunities.

The other group of people the girls had established and maintained relationships were their customers. These particular customers sometimes called ‘boyfriends’ or ‘husbands’ would regularly visit the girls. These customers are very sympathetic to the girls and provide the girls with financial supports other than the fees they pay for the services rendered to them. The girls reported that these customers would sometimes provide them with different opportunities in the process of getting the girls out of child commercial sex work and some times offer to marry them. Among the participant girls, one girl was provided with money, quitted commercial sex work and opened small shop selling items like soaps, matches, oranges and tissue paper. Besides, the girl is living with her customer or “boy friend” in a rented house. According to the girl, her “boy friend” has promised to marry her.

Sharing Single Rooms. The participant girls reported that they rent single rooms and live in groups so as to share the costs of room rents. Three participant girls were sharing one single room at the time of this study.

Purchase of Items in Big Quantity The participant children explained that they purchased food items such as flour, macaroni, spaghetti, cooking oil, salt, sugar, cleaning materials like soaps and milk and food items for their kids in large amount which could be used for three to four months when they earned adequate income.

Register by the Police. The participant children reported that, they would submit a kind of petition to secure a license or identity cards to work as street peddlers during evenings. Five of the participant girls indicated that they had secured the identity cards from the police. However, according to the girls, they were required to show at least not less than Ethiopian Birr 100.00(hundred) to start the activity. It was indicated by the girls that, once they secured the identity cards, they might not sell the so called small items due to lack of money to start the activities. According to the participant girls, the identity cards helped them to get the protection of the police from difficult customers and gangsters. The girls described that, the girls who secured the identity cards could report to the police when they encounter beatings and other mistreatments by customers. The police would in turn present the cases to the court of law and the perpetrator would receive the appropriate punishment and girls were also compensated depending on the severity of the harm sustained. The case of Semira, a 13 year old street peddler at evenings and a commercial sex worker is depicted as follows:

I started selling cigarettes, chewing gum, candies and condoms during evenings two years ago. I also work as a commercial sex worker. I got the identity card from the police as an evening street vendor. One evening, a customer approached me to go with him. He was drunk and struggling to walk as if he was not drunk. He was murmuring ugly words about sexual intercourse. I was afraid of him and refused to go with him. He caught me on my neck and tried to get off him. But all my items were off my hands and were spread all over the floor and robbed by the gangsters. A few of my friends came and we reported to the police. The police requested me to submit my identity card. I showed them. They asked me and my friends a few questions related to the incidence. Finally, they requested us to show the direction where the abuser had left. We showed them. Then they left. The next morning, I was summoned by the police. I learned that the police had caught the man during the evening and was brought to the court of law the next day. My friends and I were in the court to testify. He was penalized and I was also compensated a total of Birr 500.00 for the items I lost as well as

for the minor harm (minor bruise on my face) the perpetrator had inflicted up on me.

Initiating Ekubs The research participant children also reported that they attempted to save money through *ekubs* (traditional way of collecting a certain amount of money from each participant on monthly or weekly basis depending on the agreement of the parties involved and receive it as a sum turn by turn) and supplemented their incomes. The children reported that they participated in the *ekubs* either to start their own small businesses such as selling small items like plastic sandals, cigarettes, fruits, soaps and tissue papers either to supplement their income or totally to quit commercial sex work.

Six of the children have joined the *ekub* and are *regularly* paying at the time of this study. Four children dropped out because they could not pay the *ekub* money due to the shortage of income they encountered. According to the children, out of the six regular participants of the *ekub*, two of them had started their own small businesses such as selling plastic sandals/shoes at an open market in Dessie town and totally quitted commercial sex work.

Joining Projects All the participant children have joined the FSCE project (drop-in-center and safe home) in Dessie town to get some services such as education, health, shelter, food and different skills training like life skills training (assertiveness, decision making and resistance to peer pressure) and vocational skills trainings such as hairdressings as coping mechanisms and eventually leave commercial sex work.

Do these Children Aspire for the Future?

The aspirations of the participant children were surprisingly similar. They had the desire to get out of commercial sex work.

The majority of the girls do have their aspirations to quit commercial sex work and involve in other activities. It was learned from the children that some of them, with the support provided (financial, awareness raisings about the risky behaviors involved in commercial sex work and skills training as mentioned above) by the FSCE project, have quitted commercial sex work and started their own small businesses such as selling plastic shoes in an open market, employed as a hairdresser and moved to other places and took up other activities like working in construction sites as daily laborers.

Furthermore, some of the participant children reported that the awareness raising sessions rendered in the drop-in-center and safe home have enabled the children to understand that commercial sex work exposes them to HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. As the result of the continuous awareness raising sessions organized, they were able to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases by using condom regularly during intercourse.

Some participant children reported that they quitted commercial sex work and started selling small items like cigarettes, chewing gum and oranges on the streets but could not succeed because they incurred losses and again started commercial sex work. However, these children still aspire to quit commercial sex work and would like to start other small businesses if they get financial support. They explained that they have learned a lot from their previous failures.

Participant children were asked how they can save money if they have not saved so far. The children explained that when they start commercial sex work, they were not fully committed to quit commercial sex work. But at this moment they are afraid of the dangers they are facing such as exposure to HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases and above all the beatings and discriminations they encounter in the communities they live in.

DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the findings in Chapter V. Major findings generated through discussions (in-depth interviews) with the study participant children, case stories of the children and discussions with the key informants and observation of the reports in the drop-in-center and safe-home are analyzed, discussed and cross-checked with the main research questions the study intended to answer.

Why do Children become Involved into Commercial Sex Work?

This section presents the analysis of the findings that pushed and pulled girl children to become involved in commercial sex work.

The Push Factors. Research suggests(e.g. James, Selamawit & Rahmet, 2006) that child commercial sex workers generally come from economically disenfranchised and unstable families. However, though the impacts of poverty as a push factor might not be underestimated, my research found out that the majority of the study participant girls in the drop-in-center and safe home in Dessie town left the security of their homes to escape abusive home environments.

As indicated in the thematic groupings of push factors in chapter IV, my study revealed that the study participant girls were mistreated (beaten, insulted and called bad names) by their parents when they refused to quit school and work on the fields to assist their parents, when the girls come late at evenings after peddling their small items in the streets and declined to terminate their relationships with their friends whom their parents do not approve. Furthermore, the parents are not willing to listen and respond to children's requests that created a misunderstanding among children and their parents which compelled the girls to leave their homes and ultimately exposes them to engage in commercial sex work.

Therefore, the literature reviewed (James, Selamawit & Rahmet, 2006) and the economic theory discussed in this study indicate that child victims of commercial sex work

come from poor families. However, my study showed that the girls leave their homes primarily when they are mistreated or abused (physical and verbal). Besides, poverty accompanied by domestic violence (beatings and insulting) might aggravate the situation of children that might lead children to leave their homes and become involved in commercial sex work.

The idea of other compelling factors other than the economic (poverty) ones is emphasized in Yanyi, 2008. Yanyi, in his article in the theoretical perspectives on female sexual behaviour in Africa indicated that while it is true that girls have limited access to economic resources in many African countries, their entry into commercial sex work may not be merely the result of poverty. This perspective is inline with my findings and contravenes with the perspectives of the economic theory. The findings of my research revealed that the majority of the study participant girls come from households that can relatively afford to feed their families(parents/guardians were able to produce an amount that can sustain the family), send their children to school and fulfill the medical requirements of their families.

Common to few of the existing literature findings in Ethiopia (for instance, SCD 2005; FSCE 2003), my study indicated that parents(mostly rural) of the study participant girls particularly fathers (both biological and step-fathers) who were not educated did not like their children, particularly girls to go to school. The consequences of not allowing children to go to school created conflicts or disagreements among the girls and their fathers that compelled children to leave their homes which contributed to the girls' involvement in commercial sex work.

Furthermore, Coleman's human capital associated with parental education as a measure of influence on girls' sexual behaviour is not relevant to my study findings. My research findings revealed that neither the parents' nor the girls' education has an impact on the girls' involvements in commercial sex work. In addition to this, according to Coleman,

family background variables such as educational background of parents and financial resources are considered as key factors for socialization and social control that influence girls' sexual behaviors that might lead to their involvement in commercial sex work. However, my study showed that there has not been any link between family background (educational status and financial resources) and the involvement of the study participant girls in commercial sex work.

Furthermore, in contrary with the Coleman's theory of the influence of parental financial resources on girls' sexual behaviours, my research indicated that the participant girls were both from poor and relatively better- off families. Besides, my research participant girls were both from uneducated and relatively educated parents (those who completed primary and secondary level education) which indicated that neither the parents' financial nor the educational background has an impact in the involvement of the girls in commercial sex work. Moreover, my study findings also revealed that children's socialization (as opposed to Coleman's socialization theory) has nothing to do with their involvement in commercial sex work.

Other contributing factors that compelled children to become involved in commercial sex work were arranged early marriage, death of both parents and poverty of parents aggravated by a large family size. In addition to this, it was found out that the participant children were tired of the rural life due to routine work load such as cooking meals, cleaning cow dung, fetching water and firewood, look after cattle and assist parents in the farm which they always desire to avoid. Furthermore, lack of parental guidance and support for children who were away from their parents to pursue their college education in Dessie town had contributed for girls to be exposed to commercial sex work.

In addition to this, the information obtained from the key informants in Dessie town regarding the law awareness of parents on the rights and needs of children coupled with

parental disputes including disputes/disagreements with children has been one of the contributing factors for children to leave their homes which make them vulnerable to involve in commercial sex work.

The Pull factors. The major factors that attracted children to involve in commercial sex work were the desire to live in urban areas expecting for better employment opportunities. The desire of hoping for better opportunities would reach at its peak when they meet girls who come to rural areas to visit their parents. Furthermore, the participant children envied the good looking girls who wore nice clothes, earrings and other ornaments like necklaces and rings when they came to visit their relatives in the rural areas.

I also learned that the participant children have wrong information from peers who were in Dessie town and came back to their place of origin. Those children who came back to their place of origin would tell the girls about the beauty of city life including the good opportunities for employment. Moreover, the participant children's awareness about the city life was very low prior to their migrating to Dessie town. The children migrate to Dessie town hoping that they would get a better life.

The Processes of Entry into Commercial Sex Work

The process of how girl children become involved in commercial sex work, as reported by the children, was more or less similar. Initially, children would wait the right moments such as absence of parents from home, the coming of market days and getting friends or acquaintances to leave together. Children would then leave to nearby towns and then to their final destination namely Dessie town. After the children arrived at Dessie town, most of them initially took up a job as domestic servants.

It was found out from the discussions made with the participant children that brokers who waited the children at bus stations or adult women whom the children become in contact with either as co-workers in bars or cafeterias convince children to engage in commercial sex

work. The brokers would convince the girls that they would earn more money if they work in bars as waitresses than as being domestic servants. The co-workers in bars would try to attract these girls by wearing nice clothes and earrings. However, the fact is that the brokers did not inform the girls that they have to sleep with men if they work in bars.

Furthermore, it was learned that if the children resist to join commercial sex work, the brokers would find them jobs as domestic servants. However, the brokers would frequently visit the girls and ultimately succeed to convince children to work as commercial sex workers. The long hours of hard domestic work, mistreatments by women who employ the girls as domestic servants coupled with the brokers interferences made the children to become engaged in commercial sex work.

Children's Perceptions about themselves, Commercial Sex Work and HIV/AIDS

Child commercial sex work is regarded as shameful and demeaning; this was affirmed by each of the girls who participated in the in-depth interviews. None of them wanted to be sex workers by choice. Nor did they claim to enjoy the work. The participant children indicated that they have been suffering from the stigma associated with the work. The most prevalent complaint of children engaged in commercial sex work is not that society despises the work, rather the fact that society looks only at their involvement in commercial sex work without taking into consideration the compelling reasons that drive them into it.

The stories told by the participant children how they feel about themselves and commercial sex work is surprisingly similar. Children involved in commercial sex work have low self-esteem, lack confidence, there is self hate, and self-isolation, a sense of unworthiness, shame and humiliation.

The participant girls feel that commercial sex work as degrading or humiliating activity because the community they live in has negative attitude towards them. That is, people discriminate and stigmatize them. Neighbors do not want to establish relationship with

them and do not like to drink coffee with them. Many people consider them as children who are not well mannered and that the society does not understand their situations and why they are involved in commercial sex work. Society does not understand that it is not their choice or preference but have no option. Moreover, child commercial sex workers as a group have been portrayed as social misfits with attitudes and behaviors described as inimical to society.

For the children, child commercial sex work is shameful because it is a life of abuse and exploitation and that the children do not have other options or choices because they do not have the education or the skills to be employed in activities other than commercial sex work.

What do the Children Understand about HIV/AIDS?

All the girls who participated in the study do have good understanding of how HIV/AIDS is transmitted and reported ways of protecting themselves from HIV/AIDS. Children understood that HIV/AIDS is a deadly disease with no cure. Besides, children were aware of the risks of unprotected sex and its consequences including exposure to HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy.

Children preferred to lose the expected income from a customer rather than going out with a customer who did not like to wear condoms. Besides, the participant girl children would only go out with a customer when they confirmed that the customer had carried condoms, or would be willing to buy condoms before the girl leaves with him and the customer promised to use the condoms during sexual intercourse. It was learned from the girl children that there were customers who would promise to use condoms but did not keep their word. This shows that children have the information and do their best to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS.

Furthermore, quite a good number of children have managed to convince their customers that they would not go out with them unless they put condoms on the customers'

genitals. However, it was also noticed that three study participant girl had performed sex without condom with their 'boyfriends' or with the would be husbands. These same participants gave birth and their so called 'boyfriends' or 'promised husbands' deserted them after the girls gave birth to their children. Fortunately, all of them tested for HIV/AIDS and the results were negative. It was also understood from the girls who gave birth that two of the 'boyfriends' or 'promised husbands denied their fatherhood and disappeared. This indicates that the children make wrong decisions due to either lack of maturity or lack of guidance from adults.

The sources of information about condom utilization for the girls were mainly from bar owners, adult commercial sex workers and girls who were working as commercial sex workers. The bar owners would initially provide the girls with condoms while the girl and adult commercial sex workers would orient them about the proper usage of condom and how to manage difficult customers. Furthermore, non-governmental organizations such as Forum on Street Children Ethiopia and the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia which operate in Dessie town were involved in the provision of trainings for the girls on how to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS, voluntary testing and counseling and provided them with condoms for free.

Is there Positive Aspect of Commercial Sex work?

The study participant girls consider commercial sex work as degrading and shameful activity. However, the freedom the girls are exercising that is managing their own lives without adults interference or domination and earning and managing their own income is considered by the girls as the positive aspect of child commercial sex work. Furthermore, some children also reported that they like the music, drinks and establishing new relationships with similar girls involved in commercial sex work as positive aspects.

Challenges Encountered by Child Victims of Commercial Sex Work

This section deals with the major challenges or problems child victims of commercial sex work are encountering.

The major challenges or problems children encounter as victims of commercial sex work are many and varied. The threat from their customers to perform sexual intercourse without condoms, beatings that arose as a result of girls not complying with a request of certain customer to perform sex without condom or complying to different styles or positions during sexual intercourse which the children would consider not normal and arguments that arose related to payment of the fees of children(few customers declined to pay after intercourse), high costs of room rent, food, health services, declining income, threat of group sex(rape) and negative attitude of the public about the girls.

With regard to the threat to perform intercourse without condom, it is also identified in literatures in Ethiopia (Betelihem, 2005; FSEC 2004), as a threat not only for the children but also for adult commercial sex workers. However, the threat becomes more worrying when it is perpetrated against powerless children. Though the participant children are well aware of the risks of performing intercourse without condom, the threat from their customers had been immense. There are two types of customers who do like to perform sex without condoms. Those who tell about themselves that they are married and try to convince the girls that they should not be suspected of HIV/AIDS and the others who offer 'generous' prices. However, the threat becomes very risky and may be an avoidable when it occurs in a single room with a threatening customer where the girls might not get any support.

Child victims of commercial sex work suffered frequent beatings when they refused to have sex without condom, when protested that they were not paid the agreed price, when they refused to allow a client to have an intercourse more than the 'agreed' single time in a

night and they were beaten by their reluctance to engage in sex which they considered were not normal.

Another challenge encountered by the child victims of commercial sex work was the high cost they were paying for a single room. The assumption that the children were earning much more money, as perceived by their landlords, made them to pay relatively higher prices than other tenants. Their landlords also misunderstood that the girls were earning more money without being involved into hard work like daily labour and domestic work. In addition to this, it was learned from the children that another reason why they were requested relatively higher room rent was that the landlords might wanted to avoid them because they always disapprove when the girls come late at evenings. This some how indicate the negative attitude of the community towards child commercial sex workers and how they are treated differently from others because of their engagement in commercial sex work. Furthermore, to avoid the high costs of room rents children were moving to the periphery of Dessie town to rent low cost houses which exposed them to communicable and other diseases.

The attributing factors as discussed by the participant children for their declining income were fierce competition among young and fresh looking girls coming to work as bar attendants, the information disseminated to the public through the television and the radio about HIV/AIDS and the high cost of living(customers unable to pay).

The negative attitude of the community towards child victims of commercial sex work has been reported by the children as one of the major challenges they encountered. Children are convinced that society has neither tolerance nor sympathy for them. The children discussed that how the community treats them with suspicion and antagonism. Due to this, the children might also have negative attitude to the society because they are being treated differently and also might contribute to the feeling of worthlessness, low self esteem and hopelessness among the children.

It was learned that the landlords and neighbors of child commercial sex workers refuse to allow them to participate in their ekubs (voluntary money saving among group of people or close friends or neighbors) for fear that this participation would give the landlords and neighbors a bad name. Furthermore, men and women who disapprove of the girls' life styles spat upon and insulted them. As a result of this, the children do not have and do not want to establish meaningful relationships with other members of the community. Furthermore, even people whom they know very well try to avoid them in the presence of other people. As the result of this avoidance or discrimination, children are alienating themselves from the community and develop negative attitudes (do not trust adults) towards the community in which they are living that would negatively impact on the girls' rehabilitation and reintegration into the society at large.

The other problem children encountered was an attempt of group sex. Some clients pretend to be alone and took a girl to a hotel room where his friends would wait and rape the girl. Children also reported that some members of the police did not want to handle their cases when reported to them. Due to this, the children feel that even the police who is supposed to protect them from abuse betray them. They feel that there is no one who is concerned for them.

Why do the Children Stay in Commercial Sex Work?

Many of the girls involved in commercial sex work have the desire to exit the activity and lead other ways of life. However, most of the girls have low educational levels and few skills and qualifications. As a consequence, they will find it difficult to secure alternative forms of employment. Furthermore, the children have encountered different forms of abuses such as physical abuses like beatings by their parents and customers and sexual abuses like rape by their customers. As result of this, the children might have difficulty in trusting others, particularly men to seek the required support from their relatives as well as customers.

Therefore, these children might need guidance and support from adults to quit commercial sex work.

How do these Children Cope?

This part of the paper deals with the coping strategies employed by the girl victims of commercial sex work after they have entered into commercial sex work.

Children, in their capacities, have been devising or attempting to either quit commercial sex work or to survive the different challenges and stay in the activity. The coping strategies identified by the children included change work places and attempt to get out of commercial sex work, establish relationships and support mechanisms, sharing single rooms, registered by the police, establishing ekubs and bulk or advance purchase of materials necessary for their living.

Change Work Places and Get out of Commercial Sex Work One of the coping strategies identified by the children was that they changed their work places and attempted to quit commercial sex work. The change of work places had dual purposes. First, by moving to new places, the children might be considered as new comers or ‘fresh girls’ which would attract more customers, secure more income and stay in their activities. The second reason behind changing new places was that children would look into other employment opportunities like daily labourers in construction sites and attempt to get out of commercial sex work without being recognized as commercial sex workers.

In an attempt to get out of commercial sex work, children not only changed different work places within Dessie town but also traveled to neighboring regions like Afar Region and took up activities like working as daily laborers in construction sites. I was informed by the participants that two girls who used to work as commercial sex workers moved to Afar Region, got employed in a construction site as daily laborers and were married and living with their husbands. These two girls decided to quit commercial sex work and wanted to

change their places as well commercial sex work. They learned that a huge construction was undergoing in Afar Region where many daily laborers were required with a relatively higher (Ethiopian Birr 20.00 to 25.00 per day) payments than in Dessie town. They girls went to Afar Region, got employment as daily laborers, met their boy friends while working in the construction site and married.

Furthermore, as a result of the different interventions (vocational and business skills trainings) by FSCE in Dessie town, children who joined the safe home were also struggling to alter their ways of life through engaging into other activities such as starting their own small businesses by selling small items like fruits, cigarettes, socks, chewing gum and plastic sandals in an open markets. It was observed that one girl had opened her own tea room in a small container house while another two children were employed as hairdressers in women's hair salon in Dessie town. However, it was observed that most of their attempts to quit commercial sex work through such businesses failed because they incurred losses.

Establish Social Ties. For many of the participant girls, commercial sex is tough work that involves insecurities and risks of all kind. However, it is also a kind of work that brings the girls into contact with a wide range of people on a daily basis. In an attempt to cope with the different problems they encounter, the girls try to maintain and or reinforce relationships with certain group of people. There are three categories of people that are particularly noteworthy for this daily contact with child commercial sex workers: other child commercial sex workers who work and/or live with them, the men who come to them as clients, and bar owners whom they had once employed them.

Through maintaining contacts and reinforcing the relationships with their fellow child commercial sex workers, they support each other by borrowing money among each other and contribute money for a severe treatment when one falls ill. The participant children also revealed that exchange of experiences among themselves helped them to cope with some of

their challenges and obstacles. It seems that children mainly rely on each other for help or getting information. This indicates that they do not have much adult support or guidance to make informed decisions about their life.

Men who come as clients present the girl commercial sex workers with different opportunities. I learned from the girls that men who come to get sexual services could be generous, kind, civil and caring individuals. Some clients bring different degrees of opportunities to the girl commercial sex workers such as paying generous prices, provide advises, encourage the girls to seek alternative employment and some actually set the girls in another field of economic activity (provide them with financial support to start their own small businesses such as opening small shops). Some times, the relationships with such customers may mature in which the girls call 'boyfriend' or 'husband'. At this stage, the emotional attachment between the girl and her client is so strong that the relationship is not any longer perceived in commercial terms.

The 'boyfriend's access to the girl would be exclusive to the extent that his presence would make the girl totally unavailable for other men. A relationship with a 'boyfriend' might also involve a flow of resources from the girl to the man and vice-versa apparently without an accounting of flows. It might also involve an arrangement in which the 'boyfriend' resides with the girl, and runs a household with her. While most relationships eventually breakup, some do graduate into successful marriages and represent an exit for the girls from commercial sex work.

The other social circle in the context of which child commercial sex workers in Dessie town become into contact with are bar owners. These could be their former employers in a bar. From interaction with bar owners, children seek to establish channels through which they could have access to supports that cannot be provided to them by other individuals (customers and other child commercial sex workers). The support that the girls stand in need

of mainly was to use the bar owners as collaterals or guarantees when the children got opportunities like to be employed as domestic servants, cleaners in cafeterias and to get access to credits to start their own small businesses(such as selling fruits, cigarettes, chewing gum). In addition to this, the girls also obtained money (borrowing) from their former employers.

Sharing Single Rooms. As a mechanism of mitigating the problems they encountered, girl commercial sex workers used to live in groups in single rooms. In addition to reducing their costs for room rents, the girls were also able to minimize their costs in food and sanitary related materials.

Sharing singles rooms, in addition to reducing costs of the girls, has enabled the girls to establish strong social ties and engaged into active social relationships among themselves as part of their daily life. This has benefited the girls to share their experiences, discuss about their day to day encounters or problems and devise ways to minimize them.

Initiate Ekubs In their attempt to change their ways of life, the girls employed a strategy of initiating *ekubs* as a way of saving money among girls who are involved in commercial sex work. The collection of *ekub* money for some of the groups was interrupted because some members could not contribute due to the financial constraints they encountered. This shows that their income is inconsistent. On the other hand, this mechanism had enabled for members who persistently contributed to start their own small businesses and quit commercial sex work.

Register by the Police. One strategy devised by girls engaged in commercial sex work to protect themselves from the abuses (beatings, threat to perform sex with out condom) they daily encounter was that to secure a kind of protection from the police. However, for the children to get such kind of protection from the police, they were required to carry a kind of license or identity cards to be issued by the Police Department of Dessie town. But for the

girls to receive the licenses or identity cards, they should present a kind of guarantee or collateral. Furthermore, the girls were also required to submit a letter of application indicating that they would work as street peddlers during day and evening times. Children were represented by FSCE as collateral because they were targeted for the services in the drop-in-center and safe home

Once the girls secured the identity cards, many of them were not working as street peddlers because they did not have the required money to do the business. The girls use this opportunity to get protection of the police from difficult customers and gangsters. It was learned from the study participant girls that the identity cards not only served as a protection from perpetrators but also enabled them to present their cases to the court of law.

However, as it was reported by the participants, the identity cards or licenses were not easily secured. The girls were required to show some amount of initial capital (money to start the activity) to the police.

Purchase of Items in Big Quantity Another coping mechanisms employed by children engaged in commercial sex work was purchase of major food items and other necessities in a large amount which would take the girls through a couple of months(for 2-3 months) when the girls earned a better income (at four customers a week).

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE, RESEARCH AND POLICY

Social work is a helping profession that promotes social change. Social work in its various forms addresses not only the multiple, complex social interactions among people but also the interactions between people and their environments. Social work intervention serves large and varied group of population, addresses multifaceted social problems and is being practiced in various social settings such as individuals, families and communities.

Child (girls) commercial sex work is primarily a symptom of societal disorder. Consequently, it is unrealistic to think of its eradication in a short period of time. My research identified that girl children are victimized and compelled to become involved in commercial sex work as a result of the insecure environments prevailed within their homes which rather should have been their shields of protection. To alter this societal malfunctioning, it may require to carry out a thorough research to clearly identify the causes for such problems. However, my research has implications for social work practice, research and policy which may alleviate the most acute manifestations of this societal disorder.

Practice My study revealed that children(girls) become involved in commercial sex work due to the hostile environments within their households. Hence, social work intervention within the family system could be paramount. The capacity of parents/guardians or families could be enhanced through educating them on parental skills and conflict resolution among the families. Furthermore, the children could also be provided with the required information about urban life, life skills training to resist peer pressure and conflict management skills.

Girl children involved in commercial sex work have been victims of different forms of violence (such as beatings, rape) and were discriminated and stigmatized by the community members. This might have an impact on the psycho-social make up of the girls. Most of the study participant girls considered themselves as misfits to the society and have low self-esteem and are isolated and distressed. This also affects the society at large because

it is a waste of human resource and productive citizens. Therefore, this could be an ample area for social work practice to implement the variety of skills of the profession such as psychosocial support including counseling skills.

Girl children involved in child commercial sex work have been initially attempting to survive by means of other work. That is to say, involvement in child commercial sex work is a measure of last resort. This internal resistance or strength of the girls not to join commercial sex work could be used as an asset for social work to devise appropriate interventions to prevent the girls from involving in commercial sex work.

Research My research acknowledges that reliable data on the magnitude, prevalence and causes of commercial sex work is lacking both at the National and Regional levels.

Therefore, this could be an area for social work research to carry out more in-depth research on the root causes of the problem. The results could be used for designing appropriate social work interventions at the individual, family and community level. Furthermore, the research results could also be used to develop advocacy strategies to influence the government to change existing practices, policies, laws and develop new policies.

Policy Ethiopia has ratified the UN CRC and the ACRWC. A National Plan of Action for Children and a National Plan of Action against Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation have been developed. In addition to this, inter-ministerial committee has been established at the national level with its structures(branches) established up to kebele level(the lowest government structure) to implement the provisions of the UN CRC and the ACRWC in particular and the NPA for children in general. Furthermore, a National Steering Committee against Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation has been established for the implementation of the NPA against CSAE.

The existence of such policy frameworks would be a basis for social work to lobby or advocate to influence policies for the practicality and implementation. Furthermore, the

policy environment would also enable social work to lobby for the accountability of the different relevant actors such as the government, the local and international NGOs in protecting the rights of child commercial sex workers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The victimization of girls to engage in commercial sex work in the study area is fostered by the extreme mistreatment of parents/guardians coupled with the pressures of peer influences as a major pulling factor. The research has indicated that though the impact of poverty as a push factor should not be underestimated, children(girls) were mainly compelled to leave the security of their homes due to hostile environments within their homes.

Child victims of commercial sex work are employing different strategies either to exit from commercial sex work or to stay, survive and maintain the activities they are engaged in. However, the coping strategies devised by the children are not supported by financial resources and technical competencies. Hence, initiatives or programmes devised to support children to quit commercial sex work need to be holistic(such as protection of the girls from violent customers and brokers through establishing safe homes, skills trainings, formal education support and counseling services) and tailored to individual vulnerabilities and should be done through the coordination of different stakeholders.

The literature reviewed (James, Selamawit & Rahmet, 2006) and the economic theory discussed in this study indicate that child victims of commercial sex work come from poor families. However, my study showed that children leave their homes due to abusive environments in their homes. However, poverty accompanied by domestic violence (abuses in households) could make children more vulnerable to leave their homes and ultimately exposes them to become involved in commercial sex work.

Furthermore, Coleman's human capital associated with parental education as a measure of influence on girls' sexual behaviors whether to involve or not in commercial sex work is not relevant to my study. My study showed that neither the parents' nor the girls' education has a direct impact on the girls' involvement in commercial sex work. In addition

to this, according to Coleman, family background variables such as educational background of parents and financial resources are considered as key factors for socialization and social control that influence girls' sexual behaviors that might lead to their involvement in commercial sex work. However, my research revealed that there has not been any link between family background (educational status and financial resources) and the involvement of girls' in commercial sex work. Besides, my indicated that the participant girls were both from poor and relatively better- off families. Moreover, girl children both from uneducated and relatively educated parents (those who completed primary to secondary level education) were engaged in commercial sex work. Moreover, my research also showed that girls' socialization has nothing to do with their involvement in commercial sex work.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions arrived at the following recommendations are given.

Research. There is lack of reliable quantitative and qualitative data on child commercial sex work in Ethiopia. More in-depth research is needed on the magnitude and prevalence of child commercial sex work in all parts of the Country. The results could be used for advocacy and for designing child protection programmes in the framework of the National Plan of Action against Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation.

Prevention. Educate the public through awareness raising on the problems and rehabilitation of child victims of commercial sex work. Furthermore, educate parents on parental skills. Awareness and education on life skills (negotiation skills, assertion skills, resisting peer influence, decision making etc.) and sex education will help in the prevention of abuse and exploitation and the development of protective behavior among children. Furthermore, the Media in its multiple forms should educate the public to eliminate the stereotypes

surrounding child commercial sex work. It should inform the public about the plights of child victims of commercial sex work.

Rehabilitation Child victims of commercial sex work have passed through different forms of abuses such as physical abuses like beatings and sexual abuses like rape which might have traumatic effects on the children. Therefore, the children should be provided with psychosocial support services such as guidance and counseling.

The majority of child commercial sex workers have dropped out from school and those who would like to continue their education should be supported to go to school. In addition to this, it was learned that many of the child commercial sex workers have attempted to quit commercial sex work by taking different jobs. Hence, these children should be provided with marketable vocational skills trainings depending on their educational level and interests that would enable the children to secure their own income in such competitive market.

Advocacy Ethiopia has developed a National Plan of Action against Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation. The Ministry of Women Affairs is mandated to implement the National Plan of Action (NPA). However, the Ministry is constrained by shortage of resources (trained human power and adequate budget) and does not have structures at the community level. Hence, an advocacy is required for the implementation of the NPA through the allocation of adequate resources (skilled human power and budget). Furthermore, the problem of child commercial sex work requires a concerted effort from the different stakeholders such as the government and non-governmental organizations that work in the prevention and rehabilitation of child commercial sex workers. Therefore, one advocacy issue could be for an enhanced collaboration or coordination among government organizations such as the Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education and key stakeholders in the NGO (FSCE, CHAD-ET, OPRIFS) sector, as well as with children and young people.

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Appendices

Annex 1

Verbal Consent Form for Participants of the Study

Informed Consent

My name is Dargie Teshome. I am from the Addis Ababa University, the Graduate School of Social Work. I am currently gathering data for the fulfilment of my Thesis on the Push/Pull factors that derive girl children to become involved in commercial sex work. The research is purely for an academic purpose. I will use the information for the fulfilment of the Thesis requirement and if necessary a copy of the research report may be submitted to pertinent bodies, which might use the information to plan interventions that might address the problems of child victims of commercial sex worker.

The information obtained will not be disclosed to others. Some of the questions are personal and some of you may not like to answer or respond but you are not obliged to. Besides, you may end this interview at any time you want to. However, your honest answer will have a great benefit to the researcher for better understanding of the issue. I will also ask your consent to use tape-recorder to help me fully engaged in the interview and to get full information without alteration.

To ensure confidentiality, your name and other personal information will not be needed and recorded. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour. I would appreciate your cooperation in responding to the interview. Would you be willing to participate in the interview?

Signature of interviewer-----

Informants have given informed consent verbally-----

Annex 2

Interview Guide for Child Victims of Commercial Sex Work

Introduction and explaining the purpose of the interview. Ask personal consent

I. Address

1.1 Ask about a Kebele where she lives

1.2. Ask with whom she is living (with friends in a rented house, number of people living in the Same house).

II. Socio-Demographics Characteristics

2.1. Age _____.

2.2. Ask about her religion

2.3. Ask about a housing unit she lives (rented house, on a street)

2.4. Ask about her place of birth (rural/urban, place of up bringing, Region if outside Amhara)

2.5. Ask about her educational background (literate, attending, if drop-out reasons fro drop-out)

III. Information on their families

3.1. Can you tell me about your families (probe more are both mother and father alive? If not which one is alive, if both are alive, do they live together, her age when her parents die if not alive, and level of education of parents etc)

3.2. Ask about income of parents (this could be very difficult if parents are not employees but ask about the source of income in the family, Occupation of parents)

3.3. Can you tell more about other relatives if any (probe about existence of other close siblings/ relatives(younger, elder siblings above 18 years who live with the family or who are on their own, aunts, uncles etc)

3.4. Can you explain to me how you separated from your family? (Probe more about Parental relationships before separation, eg. How she was treated in the family?

Her closeness to her parents? Parents relationship among themselves, her relationship with her siblings- talking about personal matters with parents, elder sisters, parents' follow up on her schooling how she left home)

3.5. Ask whether her families or guardians are well aware of her current way of living (if they do know, what was their reaction, whether she visits her families)

IV. Reasons for involving in commercial sex work

4.1. Can you tell me how you first heard/ learned about sexual intercourse? (Probe more

how, where, from whom, at what age she first heard or learned about sexual intercourse)

4.2. Can you explain to me how you first started sexual intercourse? (probe more about

her age at first sexual intercourse, where she was living , what she was doing before involving in commercial sex work)

4.3. Can you tell me how you become involved in commercial sex work? (Probe for detailed information and reasons, the factors that pushed her within her family, community; pull factors in the present place of residence; were not there other alternatives for her? Where did she go first? For how long she been in this activity, age she started commercial sex work)

4.4. Ask her whether she has heard about commercial sex work before she joined in commercial sex work; from whom she heard about it.

V. Perceived understanding of HIV/AIDS

5.1. Can you explain to me what you understand about HIV/AIDS? (probe more about sources of information, modes of transmission , measures she take to protect herself from contracting HIV/AIDS, ask if she performs sex with out condom and in what condition)

VI. On Situations and coping strategies

- 6.1. Can you tell me how you are managing your living?
- 6.2. Can you explain to me the major challenges/problems you encounter as a commercial sex worker. (Probe more if she has ever been abused (beaten, raped, insulted, robbed etc. whether she is in habit of alcohol, chat, and cigarette)?
- 6.3. Can you explain to me how you meet your customers? (Where she gets her customers, kind of people she meets, average number of customers in a month ?)
- 6.4. Ask how she use the money she is earning (probe if she is supporting parents or any other relatives)
- 6.5. Can you explain to me how you feel about yourself after you become involved in commercial sex work
- 6.6. Can you explain to me how you manage the challenges/problems you encounter? (probe more what she is doing when she fall sick, when there is a competition regarding customers, when she does not earn income, the attributes of difficult customers, ask if she gets any support when she is in trouble, from whom she gets the support, when is the support offered, ask if she had friends and who are they)

VII. On future directions or plans

- 7.1. What do you think about your future? (Probe if she has the desire to quit commercial Sex work, what strategies are she developing to exit from commercial sex work, the difficulties she is facing to quit commercial sex work)
- 7.2. What do you think should be done to take child commercial sex workers out of sex work?
- 7.3. Do you want to rejoin your family now and start living with them? (for separated children)

Thank you.

Annex 3

Check lists for KII on Child Victims of Commercial Sex Work

1. Could you tell me what you know about child commercial sex work in Dessie town?
What is the situation of child commercial sex work in Dessie town?
2. What do you think are the factors that push (within the family, their community) girl children to become involved in commercial sex work in Dessie town?
3. What do think are the factors that pull /attract girl children to be engaged in commercial sex work in Dessie town?
4. How do you describe the challenges/problems child commercial sex workers in Dessie town are encountering?
5. Can you tell me how these children are coping in the environment of CCSW?
6. What do you suggest should be done for these children to get them out of CCSW? By whom?

Thank you.

Annex 4

Check lists for Expert on Child Victims of Commercial Sex Work

1. Could you share me your views about the situation of CCSW in Dessie Town?
2. What are your views/perspectives on the factors that push (within the family, community) girl children to be come involved in commercial sex work in Dessie town?.
3. Can you specifically share me your views on the factors that push these girls to engage in child commercial sex work in Dessie town?
4. What do you think are the factors that pull these children to become involved in commercial sex work in Dessie town?
5. How do you think these children are coping in such environment (their coping strategies if any) in Dessie town?
6. What do you suggest should be done to get these children out of such activities?
7. What do you think should be the role of the different stakeholders (Government, communities, parents, NGOs) to enable these children to get out of CSW?
8. What preventive measures, do you think, should be taken for more children not to join in the CCSW? By whom?
9. Do you have any comments about the research?

Thank you.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, proclaim that this study herein entitled as “The Push/Pull Factors and Coping Strategies of Child Victims of Commercial Sex Work: The Case of Dessie Town” is original, and any material used in this study is dully acknowledged.

Name: DARGIE TESHOME ABERA

Signature: _____

Date: June 2009