Forms of intimate partner violence and associated HIV risk and vulnerability among women in sex work in Karnataka, India

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Context

- Project is implemented in Bagalkot district, Karnataka, South India
- District Population > 1.7 million
- FSW > 4000, 80% are from the rural areas, belong to SC/ST and have been dedicated to sex work as Devadasis.
- HIV prevalence among FSW is 34.3 %, higher than the state average of 5.5 per cent
- 60% of sex workers in Bagalkot have at least one intimate partner, 75% of IPs are married
- 80% of the intimate partnerships had started off as commercial sex partnerships
- Though sexual activity in the relationships is high, condom use is low and violence is high
- Current targeted interventions with FSWs do not address low condom use or intimate violence in these relationships
Background

- Project Samvedana Plus trial addresses violence and condom use within intimate partner (IP) relationships among female sex workers (FSWs) in Bagalkot district, Karnataka, India

- **Trial:** Cluster Randomized Trial

- **Data:** Baseline data collected in 2014

- **Sample coverage:** 620 FSWs in intimate relationship.
Aim of the study

- To understand various forms of intimate partner violence (IPV) that FSWs experience
- To understand the condom use behavior within intimate partner relationship
- To explore the relationship between forms of violence and condom use with IPs
Method

- Two specific outcomes analysed using bivariate and multivariate approaches

- **Outcome 1: Forms of violence experienced from the IPs in past 6 months.**
  - **Emotional** – such as intimidation, constant belittling and humiliating.
  - **Physical** – such as pushing, slapping, hitting, kicking and beating
  - **Sexual** – such as forced intercourse and other forms of sexual coercion

- **Outcome 2: Condom use with intimate partner**
  - **At last sex** – Reported use of condom (male or female) at last sex with the current IPs
  - **Consistent** – Reported using condoms (male or female) every time with the current IPs and does not have any instance of not using condoms with her IPs in the last 30 days.
**Profile of FSWs and their IPs**

### Profile of FSWs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of the sex worker</th>
<th>&lt;=25 Years</th>
<th>&gt;25 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy status</th>
<th>Non Literate</th>
<th>Literate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average monthly income</th>
<th>&lt;Rs.3500</th>
<th>Rs.3500+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration in sex work</th>
<th>&lt; 10 Years</th>
<th>10-19 Years</th>
<th>20+ Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of solicitation</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Public Places</th>
<th>Phone/Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Mean age: 35 years,
- Mean monthly income: Rs.4800 ($72).
- Mean duration of the sex work: 19 years
- Mean clients per week: 3 clients.

### Profile of IPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IP relationship with WSW</th>
<th>Husband</th>
<th>Lover/Boy Friend</th>
<th>Hiriya/Malak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current age of the IPs</th>
<th>&lt;35 Years</th>
<th>35+ Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy status of IP</th>
<th>Illiterate</th>
<th>Literate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPs knowledge of sex work profession</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Mean age of the IPs: 40 years
- Mean duration of relationship: 12 years.
Violence from IPs in last 6 months

Type of violence

- Any violence: 51
- Emotional violence: 49
- Physical violence: 33
- Sexual violence: 7

Overlapping between the different forms of violence (N=620)

- No violence: 304 (49%)
- Emotional violence: 108 (17.4%)
- Physical violence: 8 (1.3%)
- Sexual violence: 1 (0.2%)
- E+S: 1 (0.2%)
- E+P: 159 (25.6%)
- S+P: 37 (6%)
- Physical violence: 8 (1.3%)
Condom use in intimate relationship

Condom use with IPs

Condom use with IPs by experience of different forms of violence from IPs in the last 6 months

- No violence
- Only emotional
- Both emotional & physical
- Experienced all forms

Last sex (p<0.001)

- Consistent (p<0.001)
Relationship between difference forms of violence from IPs and condom use with IPs

(Adjusted Odds Ratio (AOR) and 95% CI)

Multivariate models were adjusted for the following variables: Age of the FSW, average monthly income, place of solicitation, current age of IP, Duration of relationship with IP and IPs knowledge of sex work profession. Odds ratios are in relation to experienced violence vs. not experienced violence.
Conclusions

✓ The study confirms that, women in sex work experience emotional, physical and sexual violence from their IPs.

✓ Both emotional and sexual violence from IPs lower the condom use within their relationship, whereas physical violence from IP also lower condom use with their clients.

✓ It is important to also address intimate partner violence in the HIV prevention programs in order to mitigate the risk of HIV transmission.
The sex workers in Bagalkot district and the intervention and research team of Samvedana Plus
THANK YOU

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