# Understanding the Influence of Income Generating Activities on Women's Empowerment: A Case Study of JASMAR Human Security Organization's Project for Female Sex Workers in The Republic of the Sudan

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#### This dissertation titled

Understanding the Influence of Income Generating Activities on Women's

Empowerment: A Case Study of JASMAR Human Security Organization's Project for

Female Sex Workers in The Republic of the Sudan

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#### **Abstract**

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Understanding the Influence of Income Generating Activities on Women's

Empowerment: A Case Study of JASMAR Human Security Organization's Project for Female Sex Workers in The Republic of the Sudan

Director of Dissertation: Emmanuel Jean-François

The main goal of this study was to understand the perceived influence of the Income Generating Activities (IGAs) on women's empowerment in The Republic of the Sudan. The study raised questions about the empowerment process, the project output and the impacts of JASMAR project for Female Sex Workers FSWs in White Nile State in The Republic of the Sudan. To address the research questions, the study utilized a qualitative inquiry combined with a multi-disciplinary theoretical framework. The data were collected using multiple methods including observation, document analysis, and qualitative interviewing. The data were analyzed using manual coding. The results show mixed influence of the JASMAR (IGAs) program on the sex workers status of empowerment.

# **Dedication**

To my mother: Sakeena Ismail Abugarja, the most powerful and brave women I have ever encountered.

# Acknowledgments

Special thanks to all who supported me during this journey at Ohio University; faculty and staff. My thanks extended to my amazing professors; Dr. Emmanuel Jean-Francois and my research committee members. From far, thank Dr. Francis Godwyll who helped me started this journey. A special thanks to my editor Patricia Black, who edited and revised my work.

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#### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This introductory chapter develops a narrative around the influence of Income
Generating Activities (IGA) on women's empowerment. The purpose of this study was to
explore the level of involvement of female sex workers in Sudan in the JASMAR Human
Security Organization project for women empowerment and the perceived influence of
such a project on their individual empowerment. Voicing out grassroots women is a
central focus of the research. The chapter sheds light on the different aspects of the
women's empowerment process through Income Generating Activities (IGAs) in
Human Security Organization project for Female Sex Workers (FSWs) in the Republic of
the Sudan. The chapter includes three basic sections. The first section focuses on
introducing the study context, where the Sudanese profile is introduced. The second
section focuses on the concept of women's empowerment and IGAs as a tool for
empowering women. The third section introduces the research problem, its significance,
the research questions, and delimitation and limitation of the study. The chapter is ended
with a summary.

#### The Republic of the Sudan Profile

Malhotra, Schuler, and Boender (2002) noted that the role of gender and women's empowerment status cannot be fully understood without knowing the cultural, legal, political, and socio-economic contexts in which the study is taking place. Therefore, this section introduces the context of the study. It provides a description of the demography, geography, history, as well as the socio-economic context of the Republic of the Sudan. A special focus is devoted to women's status in the context of the Republic of the Sudan.

It includes an exploration of the experience of the Republic of the Sudan regarding the implementation of IGA projects and their influence on women's empowerment. As the participants of the study are one of the Most-at-Risk Populations (MARPs).

This section includes information about the HIV/AIDs in the Republic of the Sudan. The section also provides a detailed description of the JASMAR Organization project for FSWs in the White Nile State.

#### Demography, Geography, and History

The Republic of the Sudan is located at the crossroads of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. The country is bordered on the east by the Red Sea and by seven other African countries. The neighboring countries include: Egypt on the north, Eritrea and Ethiopia on the east, South Sudan on the south, Central African Republic and Chad on the west, and Libya on the northwest (see Fig no: 1 & 2). The Republic of the Sudan's total area is 728,200 mi². It was the largest African country before its separation into two countries: The Republic of the Sudan and South Sudan in 2011 (Berry, 2015; Sudan Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS], 2008).

The Nile is the dominant natural feature of the country. This river system flows from south to north across the central part of the country. Most of the ancient civilizations in the Republic of the Sudan had evolved around the great Nile and its branches and attributes. The Nile enters the country as two separate branches, the White Nile from the southeast, about 60 miles south of Kūstī, and the Blue Nile from Ethiopian highlands. Then, the two major branches of the great Nile conjoin in Khartoum forming the Nile. Khartoum, is the capital of the Republic of the Sudan and is located approximately in the

center of the country (see figure number: 2). The Republic of the Sudan is comprised of 15 states, including the White Nile State (Berry, 2015).

Figure 1

The Republic of the Sudan Location in the Globe

**Country Profile** 

# EUROPE A SIA AFRICA OROSO OROSO

#### Country

Formal Name: Republic of the Sudan / Republic of South Sudan

Short Form: Sudan / South Sudan

Term for Citizen(s): Sudanese / South Sudanese

Capital: Khartoum / Juba

Other Principal Urban Centers: Sudan: Omdurman, Khartoum North, Port Sudan, Kassala, Al-Obeid, Nyala; South Sudan: Aweil, Benfiu, Bor, Malakal, Rumbek, Wau

YY

Note. Adopted from Berry, L. (Ed.). (2015). Area handbook series: The Sudan: A country study (5th ed.). Library of Congress Washington DC Federal Research DIV

The Republic of the Sudan was the home of several ancient civilizations, including the ancient Nubian kingdoms of Kush (early second century B.C.) and Meroë (sixth millennium B.C.). Therefore, it was known by the lands of Nubia and Cush in the

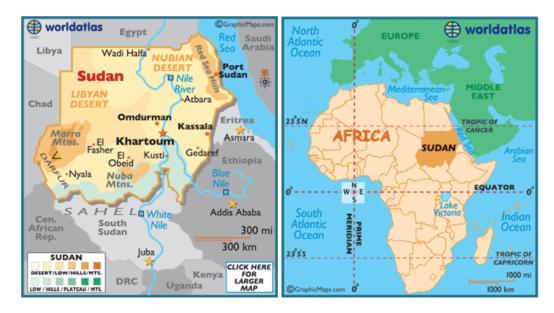
ancient era. At some points of time in history, Christianity was the official religion of the northern Nubian Civilizations. However, Islam entered the Republic of the Sudan in its early days in the eighth century from the Arab peninsula, and gradually it spread throughout the country (Berry, 2015).

Arab migrants mixed with the indigenous groups, such as the Nubian in the north, the Beja groups of the East, and the Darfur of the West resulting in the identity of the of the Sudanese. Eventually Arabic language dominated and became the official language in the country. It is noted that the Republic of the Sudan has been an arena for interaction between the traditions of Africa and Mediterranean cultures. This interaction resulted in rich ethnic and cultural diversity.

The Republic of the Sudan's population is 30,504,166 divided into around 600 ethnic groups or tribes and more than 400 spoken languages (Berry, 2015; The Republic of the Sudan Central CBS, 2008). The annual growth rate of the population is 2.3 percent, which is relatively high compared to the global average. Women constitute 50 percent of the total population. The Republic of the Sudan's climate is arid in the north and tropical wet-and-dry in the southwest, with a short rainy season and high temperatures all year (Berry, 2015; Human Development Report [HDR], 2016).

Figure 2

The Republic of the Sudan Location



Note. From Worldatlas website

#### The Republic of the Sudan's Socio-Economic Status

Throughout its history, the Republic of the Sudan has experienced colonization twice, the first by the Turks and Egyptians and the second by the British and the Egyptian. The Sudanese Mahadist revolution was able to conquer and end Turkish-Egyptian rule in 1885 and free the Republic of the Sudan from the colonizer through a series of wars where thousands of the Sudanese were killed during those battles. In the second colonization, the Republic of the Sudan gained its independence from the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in January 1956 as the first sub-Saharan country to gain independence (Ali & Elbadawi, 2004; Berry, 2015).

Since its independence in 1956, the Republic of the Sudan has endured a vicious circle of civilian and military rule. However, the Sudanese were able to remove the first two dictators Abbud and Numayri regimes through peaceful revolutions. As cited by Sherwood (2012) "Before the Arab Spring, The Republic of the Sudan was the only country in the Arab world to publically revolt and oust two military dictatorships. In 1964 and 1985, the Sudanese citizens took to the streets and made their voices heard" (p. 78). The latest phase in this cycle is the third military regime led by Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir that took power from the democratic regime in 1989. Since his arrival, Al-Bashir aimed to establish an Islamic government with his Islamic party alliance, the National Congress Party (NCP) (Berry, 2015). This conservative Islamist government advocates for the so-called "the Islamic Cultural Scheme". Before the arrival of Al-Bashir to the government, the Republic of the Sudan experienced economic and political disarray as result of uneven development since its independence (Ali, 1985). However, the situation is worsening under the current regime. In addition to developmental deterioration, corruption, denial of basic human rights, high youth unemployment, and political unrest have led to the eruption of conflict, with new regions joining the war zones (Sherwood, 2012).

The Republic of the Sudan is also one of the most heavily indebted countries in the world (World Bank [WB], 2017). According to several Sudanese economists, the Republic of the Sudan's economic deterioration is worsened by the intervention of the International Monitory Fund (IMF) and the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) that depend on the devaluation of the local currency as a major policy

to boost the country's exportation and improve the trade balance (Ali & Elbadawi, 2004; Arabi 2017; Awad, 1992; Hassan, 2012). Since the implementation in 1979 of the economy of the Republic of the Sudan, it has "continued to slide further downward throughout the period from 1978 to 1984, which witnessed very active adjustment operations. As Ali and Elbadawi (2004) stated; "Growth collapsed during this period to an average annual rate of -1.7% per capita" (p. 25). The current government has continued implementing the economic stabilization programs suggested by the IMF with the hope to obtain financial support. Since its arrival in 1989 the al-Bashir government implemented successive devaluations and trade liberalization measures that shift the economy to the free market until the government completely adopted the floating of the exchange rate policy.

Traditionally, the main economic activity is agriculture and livestock. Agriculture used to be the leading sector in the economy, but now the service sector is the leading sector with 58 percent of The Republic of the Sudan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with agriculture contributes 39 percent, and the industry sector contributing three percent of The GDP of the Republic of the Sudan. Even though The Republic of the Sudan's GDP per capita is low, the rate of growth in GDP is high at 4.7 percent compared to the neighboring sub-Saharan countries. Due to the poor economic performance, the Republic of the Sudan's external debt is 26 percent of the Gross National Income (GNI) in 2016 and per capita income is low (5.7). Therefore, it is not surprising that the Republic of the Sudan is ranked at the bottom (165) as one of the countries with low human development with Human Development Index (HDI) performance of 0.490 in 2014. Accordingly, the

poverty ratio and its severity are high among the population. According to the best estimate, the headcount ratio at national poverty lines is 46.5 of the population with high income inequality, according to Gini Index (35.4). Gender Development Index reading (GDI) is one of the lowest with only 0.84 and the country is one of the lowest ten countries in the world regarding to this index (Human Development Report 2016; World Bank 2016; UNDP, 2016).

It is argued by several Sudanese economists that the implementation of the neoclassical political economy and the economic policies have led to the chaotic socioeconomic status in the Republic of the Sudan where according to government reports almost half of the population is under the 1.9 \$ poverty line (Ali, 1985; Ali & Elbadawi, 2004; Arabi 2017; Awad, 1984; Awad, 1991, Awad, 1992; Elryah, 2014; Faki et al., 2012; Hassan, 2012). Arabi, 2017 summarized the magnitude of structural imbalances in The Republic of the Sudan due to the following policies

Imposition of SAPs on Sudan led to increased unemployment, rise in number of poor, widening saving-investment, and export-import gaps, frequent devaluation of the local currency, continuous internal and external deficits, shrinking role of manufacturing sector manifested in sharp decline in utilized capacity, increased import of consumer goods, continuous rise in consumer and general prices, depletion of middle class, decline in total factor productivity, increased share of services at the expense of agriculture. (p.38)

In addition to economic deprivation that resulted from the inadequate governmental economic policies, the government Islamic Cultural Scheme and its strategies that are

based on the imposition of Islamic law, the Shari'a, on the Republic of the Sudan has excluded and marginalized many Sudanese, regardless of religion. (Berry, 2015; Hashim, 2006). This situation has negatively affected the Sudanese people regarding development issues, as well as personal freedom and political rights. Conflicts spread throughout the country, leading to the separation of the southern part of the country, while other parts of the country are still struggling with the wars. For instance, the conflict in the Darfur region that began in 2003 led to a catastrophe regarding development and human rights. Based on the result of President Al-Bashir's policies in Darfur between March 2003 and July 2008, the International Criminal Court ICC accused him of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. Accordingly, the ICC issued an arrest warrant in 2009 for President Al-Bashir on five counts of crimes against humanity that include extermination, forcible transfer, murder, rape, and torture, in addition to two counts of war crimes, which involved attacks against civilians and pillaging (Okeke, 2011). As a result of the unstable humanitarian status in the east and the south and the western parts of the country, there was a mass displacement of people. It is estimated that 2.3 million people have been displaced by a decade of conflict and insecurity which began in 2013 (Berry, 2015).

An extremely negative aspect of the Islamization experiment in the Republic of the Sudan is represented by the international concern regarding the county's links to terrorism. As Berry (2015) reported "Sudan's links with international terrorism expanded significantly after al-Bashir and the NIF came to power in 1989" (p. 53). The government had earlier developed close relations with the Saudi terrorist Osama bin Laden. Bin

Laden and his family were invited to live and to pursue activities in the Republic of the Sudan in 1991 with the hope that he would financially support the government Islamic Cultural Scheme in order to help spread Islam across the globe. Even though Bin Ladin was asked to leave the country later due to international pressure, the country's links to the international Islamic scheme, placed it under suspicion. Later in 1998 the United States launched a cruise-missile strike against one of the pharmaceutical factories in the Republic of the Sudan that was suspected to be owned by Osama bin Laden, claiming that the factory had been producing some sort of VX nerve gas (Berry, 2015).

The Republic of the Sudan has suffered more than two decades of civil unrest. Struggles in different parts of the country have cost the lives of about 1.9 million people. The war had a devastating impact on the well-being of The Republic of the Sudan's citizens (World Peace Foundation, 2015). The ramifications of the economic and political instability are enormous and severe. Not only is poverty widespread according to the high head-count ratio, but the severity (according to estimates of the poverty-gap ration that measures the depth of poverty in a community) is one of the highest in the world.

Moreover, several rigorous nongovernmental reports and studies found that the poverty statistics are higher that the official reports. For instance, the Ali (1990) study found that more than 75 percent of the population lives in extreme poverty, i.e. living on less than US \$1.08 per person per day, according to the calories consumption "food basket" of the Sudanese households. Also, Nur and CBS (1992), as cited in Hassan (2012) reached a similar conclusion where he estimated that the headcount index of poverty based on household expenditures is 83 percent in urban areas and 87 percent in rural areas in The

Republic of the Sudan. Also, CBS (1992) and Nur, as cited in in Hassan (2012) reported a similar conclusion that the headcount index of poverty based upon household expenditures is 82 percent in the urban areas and 87 percent in the rural areas in the Republic of the Sudan. Based on salary calculations, Nur (1996), as cited in Hassan (2012), found that the 93.8% of middle-class population working at the public sector can be considered poor according to international poverty line.

The Millennium Development Goals set an international goal for countries to decrease poverty by 50%. Ali (2003) conducted a study to investigate the feasibility of achieving that goal by the end of the year 2015 The Republic of the Sudan. He concluded that this goal is unattainable under the current GDP growth rate and that the Republic of the Sudan needs to achieve a 7 percent growth rate with adequate income distribution polices to reduce the poverty rates by half as planned by the MDGs. According to the best estimate of 2016, the official reports show that 46 percent of the population is under the poverty line, which indicates that more than fifteen million persons are living below the poverty line (CBS, 2009).

In addition, and occasionally due the spread of poverty, a range of related diseases such as Anemia, Malaria, and Tuberculosis have been recorded at high rates of prevalence. For instance, prevalence of anemia among women of reproductive age is 37 percent. Average life expectancy is low (63.7), while the national maternal mortality ratio is high (216 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births). The mortality rate among children under five years old is extremely high: 66 per 1,000 live births (HDI, 2016). Improved access to safe water source is only available to 56 percent of the population and access to

electricity is only available to 31 percent of the population. The health care infrastructure is of low quality and the availability of delivery services in Primary Health Care facilities (PHC), specifically in rural areas, is extremely limited, where less than 30% of PHCs are able to provide the essential service package (UNFPA Sudan, 2015). According to the National Health Sector Strategic Plan 2012-2016, the overall hospital/population ratio is 1: 80,000. The same situation prevails in educational service, as the statistics show that around 2,712,568 children were not enrolled in primary school in 2012 (HDR, 2016).

#### Women's Status in the Republic of the Sudan

The Republic of the Sudan is a Muslim country, and the majority of the population is Muslim. Moreover, the current government is a conservative Islamic government that prioritizes the application of Shari'a in the Republic of the Sudan through the Islamic Cultural Scheme (Brey, 2015). It is cited that Shari'a imposes restrictions and limitations on women's rights (An-Na'im, 1988; Sherwood, 2012; Taha, 1979; Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index [BTI], 2016). In addition, the situation of women in the Republic of Sudan are closely linked to the socio-economic status of the country in general. As cited above, the Republic of the Sudan's economy is deteriorating, and the country is ranked at the bottom of the least developing countries according to all Human Development Index indicators (HDR, 2016). Combined with political disarray, these circumstances have affected the women's rights situation disproportionately (BTI, 2016; Dworkin & Blankenship, 2009, Faki et al, 2012). This section is focused on economic, legal, political, and social status in relation to gender equity and women rights and in The Republic of the Sudan.

Generally, the human rights record of the Republic of the Sudan reflects a poor record of a government that constantly violates international humanitarian and human rights laws (Amenesty, 2017). However, the current politically closed authoritarian government laces several restrictions on access to information for the public (Diamod, 2002). A Notransparency approach is used by the government to cover its violations of human rights. Since no freedom of information act exists, no one in the Republic of the Sudan can compel the authorities to release the relevant data (RESDRESS and The Republic of the Sudanese Rights Monitor, 2012). Therefore, there is no consistent information available for some of the international institutions that evaluate issues related to gender or human rights. For, instance, the Republic of the Sudan is not included in the Gender Inequality Index Report [GII], (2016) because no consistent data is available for previous years. In addition, no data is available about the application of whipping punishments on females. This corporal punishment is a legitimate punishment according to the current Sudanese Criminal Act of 1991, but is considered a violation of human rights (RESDRESS & the Sudanese Rights Monitor, 2012). Despite the hindering factors, the researcher has made a strong effort to document and cite the available data regarding different aspects of women's rights and gender issues.

Regarding the socioeconomic status of women, gender inequality remains high.

For instance, an overall literacy rate of 73.4 percent is low, however; the male literacy rate is 81.7 percent, which is higher than the literacy rate among females of 65.3 percent (Human Development Report, 2015). For example, most of the females in higher education come from urban areas, and that opportunities for women at all levels are fewer

in rural areas. Overall, records reflect no gender differences regarding job opportunities or payment (BTI, 2016). Historically, the Sudanese women had actively participated in public affairs and enjoyed equal political rights since independence. For instance, the elected Sudanese Women General Union (SWGU) succeeded in obtaining the right to equal payment for equal work in 1968, during the second democratic regime (Abdalla. 2009). In the same year, the SWGU succeeded in gaining the right for women to vote and to be elected to the parliament. Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim was the first women to be elected to the parliament in 1968 (HDR, 2008). However, with the general deterioration of human rights in the Republic of the Sudan, women's rights have severely impaired. Sherwood (2012) noted that "Since President Omar Al Bashir came to power, women's rights in The Republic of the Sudan have been significantly eroded" (p. 80). The director of the Khartoum-based Salmmah Women's Resource Centre, as cited in (Adeba, 2007) commented that during Al-Bashir regime the rights that the Sudanese women had gained during the 1960s and the 1970s were drastically diminished.

Even though the Sudanese women are pioneers in gaining economic and political rights in the Arab world, the current situation places the Republic of the Sudan at the bottom of the list regarding women's status in the Arab World. According to the Thomson Reuters Foundation Poll (2013) concerning the Republic of the Sudan is ranked number 17 at the bottom of the 22 Arab countries regarding women's rights. Thomson Reuters Foundation, which assessed women rights based on stat on violence against women, reproductive rights, treatment of women within the family, women's integration into society, and attitudes towards a woman's role in politics and the economy

The legal status of women is one of the most controversial issues in contemporary Islamic debate in the Republic of the Sudan. There is an ongoing debate exist regarding women's civil rights and Muslim family law and their compatibility with human rights (Sherwood, 2012). The conservative Islamic regime stipulates crimes and punishment based on Shari'a while opponents believe that these punishments involve human rights violations. As the Sudanese laws are based on Shari'a, the entire package of limitations that Shari'a imposes on women applies to the Republic of the Sudan. These limitations include women's right to divorce, the right of husbands to chastise using corporal punishment, restrictions on women's mobility outside the home, restrictions on participation in public affairs and leadership roles, inequality in inheritance (two females count as one male) and inequality in the court (the same rule applies to women's capacity in court where two female witnesses are equal to one male) (An-Naim, 1988; Taha, 1979). Moreover, there are many cited violations of the officials that targeted women with harassment in order to discourage women from participating in public affairs and frighten them into complying with the mobility restrictions (BTI, 2016).

Some articles of the Muslim Family Law (1991) and other laws such as the Criminal Code (1991) and the Public Order Act (1996) discriminate against females (BTI, 2016, Sherwood,2012). Sherwood (2012) wrote: "The Public Order Act, for instance, is framed so widely that it allows almost any mixed social gathering to be considered a setting for fornication and enables the virtual exclusion of women from the public sphere" (p. 81). The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) observed "articles 151–156 of the 1991 Criminal Code "criminalize the personal behavior

of women and their basic personal freedoms such as their dress code, their presence in the private sphere, and their right to work" (2015, p. 7). Glassborow, et al., (2011), as cited in Sherwood (2012) noted that women in Sudan "are being increasingly beaten and flogged under unclear laws" (p.81). Specifically, several incidents were cited by activists and international organizations, such as article 152 of the Sudan Criminal Act 1991. This article states that:

Whoever commits, in a public place, an act, or conducts himself in an indecent manner, or a manner contrary to public morality, or wears an indecent, or immoral dress, which causes annoyance to public feelings, shall be punished, with whipping, not exceeding forty lashes, or with fine, or with both; (2) The act shall be deemed contrary to public morality, if it is so considered in the religion of the doer, or the custom of the country where the act occurs." of the Public Order Act (1996) violate human rights. (Sudanese Criminal Act 1991, P. 43).

Also, article 154 of the SPC that provides for "Practicing Prostitution", defines the "place of prostitution" as "any place designated for the meeting of men and women between whom there is no marital relationship, or kinship, in circumstances in which the exercise of sexual acts is probable to occur." SIHA noted that "the law is extremely vague and broad in scope and could be hypothetically used to prosecute any woman in the same room as an unrelated man" (SIHA, 2015, p. 7).

Amnesty International launched several campaigns to support women who were arrested and sentenced according to Public Order Act. For example, Amnesty

International launched a campaign in 25 November to support Amira Osman Hamed, a Sudanese women's rights activist, who was facing a trail and expected to face 40 lashes for refusing to wear a headscarf (Amnesty, 2013). The public Order Act appears to be intentionally stated in a vague manner, which allows the officers of the public police officials to evaluate and judge an incident with harassment (Glassborow et al., 2011; BTE, 2016). Specifically, article 152 Criminal Act of 1991 which is concerned with the dress code and social mixing, is the most cited among incidents of harassment and human rights violations. Amnesty International reported that women in the Republic of the Sudan "face a daily risk of being arbitrarily arrested in public or private places for 'indecent or immoral behavior or dress. Public Order Police Officers in Sudan have the power to decide what is decent and what is not." (Amnesty International website, N.D., para 8).

When a woman is arrested for wearing pants, the punishment can be up to 40 lashes according to article 152 of the Sudanese Criminal Act of 1991 (BTI, 2016; Glassborow, et al., 2011). In practice, several violations have occurred, and judges have sometimes exceeded the legal limit and women have been punished with up to 50 lashes (BTI, 2016). According to the law the whipping should be in public, thus the punishments in addition to being harsh is also humiliating (BTI, 2016). There are some incidents where the public videoed the punishment and the videos were posted to the public see (figure number 3 below).

Some practices by officials are even worse, and some rape incidents were reported where the powerful Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Service

personnel raped women after they were arrested for participating in a demonstration against the government or participating in a public event (BTI, 2016; Sherwood, 2012). It has been claimed that rape is systematically used by the National Intelligence and Security Service to discourage women from effectively participating in public affairs. For instance, the Human Rights Watch documented a mass rape in the war areas; however, the government completely ignored the evidence. According to REDRESS and the Sudanese Human Rights Monitor report (2011), arresting and whipping appeared to be applied particularly against female tea-sellers, for alcohol related offences, and for alleged adultery. It should be noted that tea-selling jobs are associated with impoverished women and women from marginalized ethnicities, such women from Dar fur and the Nuba Mountains. The most famous documented case of public whipping is the published video that fueled rage among activists and international human right institutions.

Figure 3
Flogging in Public



*Note*. The photo is derived from Aljazira TV website (2010).

Likewise, systematic rape is alleged to be used against displaced women in Dar Fur as a form of punishment for alleged support of the rebels. As cited in Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (2016), the U.N. source in 2014 that the Sudanese troops had raped more than 200 women in one village in Darfur. The government responded by conducting investigation, but no further action was taken. Even though women usually try to conceal their lashing incidents, for fear of shaming their families, there has been a vast number of reported incidents. One of the recent cases was reported by the CNN in 2015, where a teenager Christian woman was sentenced to 20 lashes and a fine for "indecent dress". The young lady was arrested outside the church, where she was intending to attend the service. The news went on to describe how the judge sentenced her to more than ten lashes, claiming that the clothing she was wearing in court was indecent. The young woman was wearing pants and even a scarf (See figure 4 below).

This review of the legal and human rights status as well as the economic status of women describes the stigma and threat that women workers in the sex industry are experiencing. Empowering FSWs is a very complex task in such an environment.

According to Shari'a, adultery or "Zina" is one of the Hudud, which are crimes that have fixed punishments either by the Quran or "Sunna" (the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Mohammed). Zina is defined as "any act of illicit sexual intercourse between a man and woman" (Mir-Hosseini, 2010, p. 1). The stipulated punishment for Zina as mentioned in Quran is flogging (Mumisa, 2015). The text from Quran is read as "The [unmarried] woman or [unmarried] man found guilty of sexual intercourse - lash each one of them with a hundred lashes, and do not be taken by pity for them in the religion of Allah, if

you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a group of the believers witness their punishment" (Verse 2 of Sura 24; Al Nur). The punishment for married persons who commit *Zina* crime is "*rajm*" or stoning, a punishment that is based on *Sunna* (Alasti, 2007). These severe punishments and the generally intolerant environment make testing the effectiveness of microcredit and IGAs in the context of the Republic of the Sudan of a great value for the IGAs and empowerment studies and literature. The following sections focuses on the status of HIV/AIDs in the Republic of the Sudan and effort to empower women through IGAs in The Republic of the Sudan.

Figure 4

Lashing for Indecent Dressing Example



*Note*. Credit goes to CNN photo, Fri August 14, 2015, retrieved from:

https://www.cnn.com/2015/08/14/africa/sudan-women-indecent-dress-case/index.html

#### HIV/AIDs in the Republic of the Sudan

The HIV epidemic among the Sudanese population is still low (Sudan National AIDS Program [SNAP], 2013). However, reliable statistics regarding HIV/AIDs have only recently become available. For instance, according to the United Nations, in 2009 an estimated 260,000 of the Sudanese were living with HIV, and 12,000 had died. According to the Global AIDS Response Progress Report 2012 – 2013, the percentage of young people aged 15-24 who are living with HIV of a sample of 3,524 is 0.31 and 0.11 percent in 2012 and 2013 respectively. The prevalence rate among population ages 15-49 is 0.2 percent in 2016 (HDR, 2016). Despite the low prevalence level of the disease generally, it is observed that the rates are higher among MARPs groups, and specifically that the Female Sex Workers (FSWs) are disproportionately affected by HIV. The available statistics of 2002 show that HIV prevalence among FSWs is 4.4 percent, which is relatively high and a little shy of 5 percent the threshold of the epidemic for HIV (Kenyon & Buyze, 2014). The low HIV comprehensive knowledge among MARPs (11 percent), combined with low consistent use of condoms, may signal potential for an HIV epidemic in The Republic of the Sudan (SNAP, 2013).

Abdelrahim (2010) conducted a study to measure the prevalence of HIV and related risk behaviors among FSW in Khartoum State, the Republic of the Sudan. The study used a sample of 321 FSWs. The participants were interviewed and asked to complete a cross-sectional survey. In addition, a blood test for HIV was conducted for all participants. The study found that HIV prevalence was 0.9%, which is lower than the estimated national level mentioned above.

#### JASMAR Project for Female Sex Workers (FSWs) in White Nile

In concert with the global effort and strategies to prevent the spread of the HIV/AIDs, Sudan National AIDS Program (SNAP) has recently prioritized working among the MARPs, with special emphasis on FSWs in the Republic of the Sudan. Among these efforts, the program developed partnership with international and national Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to implement interventions that targeted FSWs. The major partners in the field are the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). One of these joint projects is the JASMAR Project for FSWs in White Nile State. In the following sections, background information of the context of the project is provided, then detailed information about the JASMAR FSWs project is presented.

#### White Nile State: Background Information

White Nile State is located between latitudes 120 and 13.30 N and longitudes 310 and 33.30 E. The state is bordered by South Sudan on the south. White Nile State is populated by 2.731 million inhabitants that are distributed over a total area of 39,704 km2 divided into eight localities, including Kusti where the JASMAR project is situated. The state lies in the center and connects other parts of The Republic of the Sudan with roads, rivers, and railways. White Nile State lies in the semi-desert zone, where temperatures are high year-round, with annual rainfall ranges from 300 mm in the north to 600 mm in the south. The main economic activities are agriculture and livestock husbandry (64 percent of the population). However, there is always a risk of crop failure due to the erratic

rainfall. The World Food Program (WFP) reported successive food deficits in the state for the years and 2008 and 2009. Nonetheless, the state has recently witnessed the establishment of some industrial production facilities, such as cement, dairy production, oil, and sugar, (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO]-The Republic of the Sudan Integrated Food Security Information for Action [SIFSIA], 2010; NSDDRC-SC/ UNDP, 2010).

Nevertheless, the state is considered one of the poorest areas in the country. An assessment of food security in 2010 revealed that food deprivation is significant (FAO and SIFSIA, 2010). Furthermore, since 1983 White Nile has been a large recipient of displaced persons fleeing the second civil war in the South and recently from wars in Darfur and South Kordofan. Therefore, the State has become a home to considerable numbers of refugees which were estimated in 2006 at 153,000, which is almost 10 percent of the population in the state. Most of the refugees and displaced persons camps are established around the Kusti locality (Joint mission NSDDRC-SC/UNDP, 2010). It is reported that currently there is a conflict at the border of White Nile State with Upper Nile State in the Republic of the Sudan. However, the government official declared that the conditions are under control (NSDDRC-SC/UNDP, 2010). This chaotic socioeconomic status makes the White Nile State an open arena for the spread of the HIV/AIDs. The state is selected by the UNFPA and its partners to implement a pilot project for FSWs, providing awareness training and microcredit for the beneficiaries. The following section provides more details about the project.

#### Description of the JASMAR Female Sex workers (FSWs) Project in White Nile

This section provides description of the JASMAR project for FSWs in White Nile State. All the information provided in this section is derived from the JASMAR Organization website. No information is available online regarding this project other than this source.

JASMAR Human Security Organization was registered in 2001 with the Humanitarian Aid Commission as one of the national NGOs. The name reflects the first letters of the organization name in Arabic (الجمعية السودانية لمكافحة الالغام الارضية); transliterated to English as: Al Jm'eyh Al Sudanyh Li Mkafhh Al Algham Al ARdyh. The mission of the organization includes advocacy for inclusion of vulnerable groups, empowering women, as well as ensuring political and Human Rights of all the Sudanese. JASMAR has engaged in a variety of humanitarian work including working in the field of controlling HIV/AIDS in The Republic of the Sudan. The main source of funding of the organization is through project implementation partnerships. JASMAR developed partnership with DFID, DANIDA, US State Department, the EU, the UN, and Western embassies in The Republic of the Sudan.

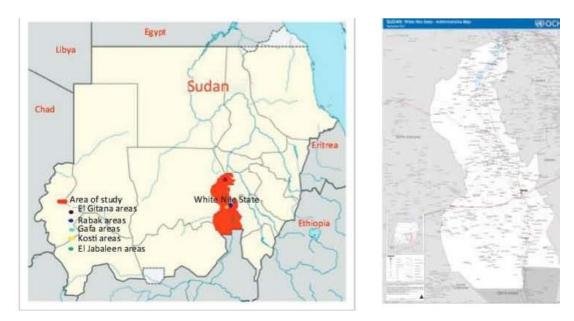
JASMAR Income Generating Activities (IGAs) project is a fruit of a collaboration between JASMAR, SNAP and UNFPA. The UNFPA is the first institution to implement a pilot of RH/HIV integrated models in the six states in The Republic of the Sudan, including White Nile. The organization was selected by UNFPA to serve as Umbrella NGO (UNGO). Criteria were set for the selection of the implementation organization, and three organizations in White Nile State were selected to implement the

project based on assessment by JASMAR. These organizations include the Sudanese Environment Conservation Society (SECS), the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS), and the Sudanese Women General Union (SWGU).

The integrated package includes awareness through peer education activities and IGAs for FSWs. The projects are aimed to equip Most-at-risk Populations (MARPs) with knowledge on HIV/AIDS prevention while the IGA project works to change the behavior of FSWs as well as implementing HIV/AIDS risk reduction among these groups. The main goal of the project is to reduce the risk behavior among the target group through economic empowerment. The project is expected to decrease marginalization and stigmatization. In addition to the awareness program, the participants received testing and counseling sessions. Training and capacity building are also extended to the staff of the implementing Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in order to improve the technical and financial capacity.

Ten beneficiaries were selected from Kusti locality. The criteria that was used for the selection process included age, risk behavior, and the socio-economic status. After a short training process in project management, the beneficiaries selected their own projects with the support of the economic consultant of the project. Funds were provided, and the beneficiaries started their business in March 2012 (JASMAR website, 2017).

Figure 5
White Nile State Map



Source: Ishag, Osama M., Saeed, Intisar K., & Ali, Yahia H. (2015). Peste des petits ruminants outbreaks in White Nile State, Sudan. *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Research*, 82(1), 01-04. https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/OJVR.V82I1.897

After this elaborate introduction about the context of the study, the next section provides an overview of the relationship between the Income Generating Activities (IGAs) and empowerment. In this overview, the evolution of the "empowerment" concept is traced. Then, literature around the relationship between IGAs and women's empowerment is reviewed. The rest of the chapter is devoted to the introduction of the statement of the research problem, explaining the significance of the study, elaborate research questions, objectives, and proposing the delimitation and limitations of the study.

# **Women's Empowerment: The Evolution of the Concept**

The history of evolvement of the concept of empowerment has seen bench-marks that supported and enhanced women's empowerment. The international community has made global efforts, including incorporating the concept of women's empowerment in the Millennium Development Goals MDGs in 2000. Researchers and activists have participated effectively to promote the concept. Development institutions, NGOs, and development practitioners have created approaches and tools to support the movement. The final product is a hug increment and recognition of women's issues around the globe. Empowerment, however, is a continuous process. This research stands as one of the efforts to understand and support women's empowerment.

Women's empowerment has been the focus of researchers and practitioners in the field of socioeconomics development in the recent millennium (Lord & Hutchison 1993; ECOSOC 2010; Mishra 2013; Oldekop et al., 2016; Dop, Depauw, Kristel, & Driessens, 2016). Advocating for women's empowerment is to advocate for sustainable human development, because development can only be achieved if the entire community participates in it to its full capacity (Huis et al., 2017; Lee & Hudson, 2017; Sen 1990). As Sen (1990) stated, "the limited role of women's active agency seriously afflicts the lives of all people-men as well as women, children as well as adults" (p. 191). Global efforts have been made to promote women's rights.

In a serious effort for recognition of women's social and economic issues, the UN called for the celebration International Women's Year in 1975 (Srivastava & Austin, nd).

In 1984 the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) established the United

Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (Sweetman, 2002). These initiatives were followed by the Beijing Platform for Action, a call for action to recognize women's rights as an important element of human rights and to take actions to empower women in all dimensions: economic, social, political, and cultural (UN, 1996). In 2000, the United Nations developed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals revolved around improving the quality of life of the most vulnerable people, with a focus on women's issues. The third goal of the MDGs was to promote gender equality and empower women (Kabeer, 2005).

Despite continuous efforts that have been made, women's empowerment still faces great challenges in a variety of places, and these struggles affect women regardless of their economic or social status. Therefore, documentation of each individual or a group's experience of empowerment remains critically important. These struggles need to be documented to add to the accumulated knowledge and the effort to understand why and how empowerment programs work for women.

# Emergence of Feminist Empowerment Approach

As a result of the gaps in the conventional human development model regarding gender issues, the feminist empowerment approach emerged to provide alternative strategies that enhance women's empowerment (Cornwall, Gideon & Wilson, 2008). The feminist approach argues that empowerment is a process used to transform the condition of being vulnerable and fragile to the outcome of being powerful, from "ill-being" to "wellbeing", from dehumanized to being treated as an equal human-being (Kabeer, 1999; Mosedale, 2003; Muni, 2006; Muro, 1994; Sen, 1990). Batliwala (2014) articulated this

idea clearly saying women's empowerment is "the process and the outcome of the process by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources and challenge the ideology of patriarchy and gender-based discrimination of women in all the institutions and structures of society" (p. 961). As cited in Makombe, Temba, and Kihombo, (1999) empowerment is defined by Mondros and Wilson, (1994) as a "psychological state, a sense of competence, control and entitlement that allows one to pursue concrete activities aimed at becoming powerful" (p. 5). Women's disempowerment is thought to be a phenomenon that exists in almost all communities since early human history (Muni, 2006). However, its severity tends to vary according to the level of socioeconomic advancement present in the community (Rogers et al., 2011). Disempowerment negatively affects women's entitlements regarding economic, sociocultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological rights, (Castellani, 2014l Malhotra et al., 2002). Therefore, empowering women requires working with the multi-layers and with the sources of powerlessness (Kabeer, 1999; Mishra, 2013; Yount, 2017). As cited in the literature, the most common sources of disempowerment in developing countries are socioeconomic and cultural barriers. The components of economic vulnerability, such as poverty and gender inequality, are identified as the greatest source of vulnerability among women (Moghadam, 2005).

#### The Neoclassic Economic Empowerment Approach

The neo-classical economic model or the neoliberal approach focuses on economic growth (Arnsperger & Varoufakis, 2006; Lawson, 2013) The neoclassic economic institutions, such as The World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary

Fund (IMF) statistics reflects weak contribution of females on economic activities as compared to males. Therefore, the neoclassical approach for women's empowerment is based on economic efficiency which needs to be utilized to address untapped resources in order to boost the efficiency of economic growth. The approach is based upon the premise that the efficient use of resources that efficient use of resources by enhancing women economic participation will automatically enhance gender issues (Tasli 2007). One of the tools that is promoted by the WB and IMF to enhance women economic contribution in in non-household activities, is the IGAs initiative (Batliwala, 1994; Kabeer, 1999; Oxaal & Baden, 1997). However, the IGAs approach was largely criticized for focusing on one dimension of women's empowerment, which is the economic dimension of disempowerment. Also, the assumption that participation in economic activities will automatically result on women's empowerment was seen as unrealistic.

However, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have embraced the concept of women's empowerment and developed several community mobilization (CM) strategies to empower women in disadvantaged situations (Forrester, 2012). Based on CM strategy, NGOs have adopted approaches that facilitate community mobilization and empowerment (Hanak, 2000, Thomas & Sinha, 2009). Microfinance projects have gained popularity, and as Abdalla (2009) described them, stating that they "are subscribed to by most donor agencies and non-government organizations focuses upon micro-credit delivery and marginalization of issues concerning women's empowerment" (p. 7). One of the more popular approaches used by NGOs is microcredit, specifically Income

Generating Activities (IGAs). More specifically, Income Generating Activities (IGAs) are created by the NGOs as a microcredit tool to overcome the deficiencies of conventional commercial finance.

Microcredit has the ability to expand the outreach and operate as a largescale provision of funding for the poor (Leikem, 2012). This model of microcredit focuses on the poverty approach, and it works on reaching the poorest of the poor to provide them with microcredit to start income generating projects (Mayoux, 1998; Rahman, 1999; Woller & Woodworth, 2001). However, some studies, such as Das and Pulla (2014) found the claim that microcredit approach reduces urban poverty is not realistic. Among their review of qualitative and quantitative studies in Bangladesh, they found that this approach is misleading and misguided and that poverty reduction through microcredit cannot be attained.

The Microcredit Summit in (1997) set a goal to reach 100 million of the world's poorest families with a special focus on women. In 1999, the campaign extended its focus and included women's empowerment as one of the four main goals of the Micro Credit Summit campaign (Micro Credit Summit, 1999). These consistent global efforts inspired institutions that work with women to create tools to enhance women's empowerment. And since then, donor agencies such as NGOs oriented their IGAs around empowering women's situations (Littlefield et al., 2003). Working on empowerment programs reveals the existence of a vicious circle that links poverty and vulnerability to disease. Specifically, poor women are at a high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases (Rayhan, 2004).

Calves (2009) indicated that empowerment has become an essential element in Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers (PRSPs) and that "In 2005 more than 1,800 projects financed by the World Bank mentioned 'empowerment' in their documentation' (p. 19). In effect, the NGOs that work with Most At-risk Populations (MARPs) have embraced IGAs as an influential tool for empowerment and community mobilization in the field of HIV prevention (Dworkin et al., 2013). Research asserted that poverty affects females disproportionately compared to males regarding unsafe sex, and that "economic independence for women is an important predictor of being able to negotiate safer sex" (Dworkin & Blankenship, 2009, p. 463). Studies indicated that many female sex workers started working in this industry for economic reasons (Manopaiboon et al. 2003; Tan Minh et al., 2004). Dworkin and Blankenship (2009) mentioned that research found that: Economically disempowered or dependent women and girls are more likely to be constrained into sexually risky situations: less able to negotiate safer sex with partners, less likely to be able to leave an abusive or violent relationship (which also increases HIV risks), and much more likely to exchange sex for material goods or assets. p.463

The World Health Organization (WHO) has promoted this model to empower Female Sex Workers (FSWs) where poverty forced them to make risky choices that jeopardized their lives and increased the probability of HIV infection. The UNAIDS Guidance note on HIV and sex work (2002) defined sex workers as "female, male, and transgender adults and young people who receive money or goods in exchange for sexual

services, either regularly or occasionally, and who may or may not consciously define those activities as income-generating." (p. 3).

Recently, WHO collaborated with national and international organizations to fund projects that empower FSWs to decrease the spread of HIV/AIDS. Several projects have been executed in some developing countries, including The Republic of the Sudan (Elhadi, et al., 2013; Moret 2014). The UNAIDS guidance recommended that HIV intervention projects should be based on community empowerment, which is "a process whereby sex workers take individual and collective ownership of programmes in order to achieve the most effective HIV responses and take concrete action to address social and structural barriers to their broader health and human rights" (2012, p.4). However, in The Republic of the Sudan the experiment is limited to one pilot project that targets FSWs in four states in The Republic of the Sudan, including the White Nile State project.

# IGAs and Women's Empowerment: The Republic of the Sudan Context and Experience

Studies from similar countries showed mixed results about the impact of Income Generating Activities (IGAs) for women's empowerment (Huis et al., 2017; Weiss & Montgomery, 2005). However, few studies were conducted on the impact of IGAs on women's empowerment in The Republic of the Sudan. This study is the first research on the impact of IGAs on FSWs in The Republic of the Sudan.

This case study aims to examine the impact of the JASMAR Human Security Organization IGAs program in the White Nile State in The Republic of the Sudan. It focuses on the impact on the empowerment of the targeted group: female sex workers

(FSWs). The study describes and analyzes empowerment status and behavior change among beneficiaries of the program. The study focuses on hearing the voices of these women, and how they perceive and experience empowerment in relation to their participation in IGAs programs. As Batliwala (2014) indicated, "grassroots women's experiences, voices, analyses and strategies were as vital as sources of learning about empowerment as were the ideas and theories of the world's great philosophers, political scientists, historians, economists and sociologists" (p. 281). Roa and Roa (1999) as cited in Boraian (2008), classified empowerment dimensions at three levels: personal/household, community and organization, and national levels. The focus of this study is on the first two areas, the personal/household and community and organization levels. The study is guided by the feminism approach of empowerment with the intent of hearing the voices of the participants and to understand their perception on their empowerment in relation to the JASMAR program. In addition, to grasp the effectiveness of the program input and to produce an effective output that enhances women's participation in the empowerment process and to achieve the ultimate outcomes by impacting women's personal empowerment, the study uses the logic model of the program theory to capture personal, community, and organizational aspects of the project. In the following section, an extended discussion about the conceptual framework of the study using the logic model will be generated. A conceptual framework graph of the study will also be developed

After this detailed elaboration of the study's context and theoretical bases, the next section addresses the statement of the problem in the context of The Republic of the

Sudan. This is followed by the significance, the objectives, and the research questions. Finally, delimitation and limitation are included, as well as an explanation of the terms that are used in the study.

#### Statement of the Problem

Efforts to support women's income generating activities in The Republic of the Sudan started prior to the 1970s (Albee, 1994). IGAs evolved over time to gain the attention of NGOs. Several organizations, including UNIFEM, PLAN Sudan, IFAD, ASSIST, FAR, UNICEF, and WHO that work/worked in The Republic of the Sudan adopted IGAs as a tool to improve women's status. Specifically, IGAs have been used with the goal to empower women (Hanak, 2000). Empowerment at an individual level is defined as a "process of increasing control and transition from a state of powerlessness" (Anyebe, 2014, p 23). The term is usually associated with changing the power dynamic between individuals and groups in communities (Batliwala, 2014). The term empowerment entered the discourse through feminist engagement in the NGOs in the 1970s and 1980s (Biewener & Bacqué, 2015; Calvès, 2009; Tasli, 2007). Since then, women's empowerment has been an important component of the NGOs' strategies and approaches to improve people's quality of life in developing countries. IGAs were implemented in developing countries, including the Republic of the Sudan to reduce poverty. However, with the growing global understanding of women's empowerment, the NGOs incorporated the concept into their projects (Schuler et al., 2010), and IGAs in The Republic of the Sudan were not an exception.

Despite the popularity of IGAs as a tool for women's empowerment among NGOs, their impacts on women's empowerment remain controversial (Awaworyi, 2014; 1999; Kabeer 2005; Makombe et al., 2010). The approach generates a living discourse in the developmental arena concerning its viability and efficiency to impact empowerment. Even though studies show mixed results regarding the effectiveness of IGAs in alleviating poverty, empowerment programs are using IGAs to empower women, assuming there is an automatic link between economic status and empowerment (Abdalla, 2009; Hunt, et al., 2001; Jerinabi & Santhi, 2012; Kabir, 2015). The IGAs programs have not been fully successful in reducing poverty among poor women. In addition, the mechanisms and assumptions were not fully examined. Therefore, the following critique involves two layers: one regarding the efficiency and viability of IGAs as a tool for generating incomes, and the other questions the validity of the claim that economic wellness is automatically transformed into empowerment (Batliwala, 2014; Calves, 2009; Khan, 1999).

Since its early days, the IGAs' success in reducing poverty among beneficiaries has been considered suspect by some researchers. For instance, some studies suggested that this claim is invalid, and that the success stories have been promoted by NGOs to attract donors (Kabeer, 2005; Zand 2011). Albee (1994), in her evaluation of the UNICEF's microcredit and IGAs programs, said, "Despite recent progress, systematic and comparative evaluations of the impact of credit on women is uneven and thus inadequate." (p. 1029). Referring to the UNICEF's programs in North Africa, including those in The Republic of the Sudan, she indicated that the impacts are clearly not evident.

Other researchers and authors claim that there is a data gap that makes it difficult for impact studies to evaluate the success or failure of these projects (Buechler, 1995). Mayoux (1997) asserted that "We know very little about the relative numbers of women within most programs who benefit or fail to benefit, who these women are, or the contextual or organizational factors influencing this." (p.1). Even recently, ambiguity surrounded the success and effectiveness of these projects. Several studies found no evidence of efficiency of IGAs (Awaworyi, 2014; Banerjee & Jackson, 2017; Duvendack et al., 2011; Duvendack Palmer-Jones & Vaessen, 2014; Stewart et al., 2012; Yang & Stanley, 2012). Others have even detected negative impacts on women's empowerment (Mayoux, 2010; Bateman, 2010; Dichter & Harper, 2007; Karim, 2011; Roodman, 2011). The second layer of critiques regarding the mechanism between economic wellness and empowerment is based on their ideological foundation, as well as from the on-the-ground experience. The first line of critique was initiated by the feminists, while the second line of critique stemmed from researchers and practitioners who examined the assumption of the NGOs model of empowerment on reality in their field work and found no evidence for automatic transformation of economic wellness to empowerment. Therefore, the issues this research investigates pertain to the effectiveness of IGAs as a tool for economic empowerment and the relevance of IGAs as a tool for empowerment. This research intends to shed light on the Sudanese experience, and to investigates the success and sustainability of the IGA program and its impacts on women's empowerment of the JASMAR project in the White Nile State.

# **Significance of the Study**

The aforementioned discussion regarding the efficiency and viability of the Income generating Activities (IGAs) as a tool for women's empowerment is based on the findings of a rich body of research work on the Asian, Latin American and African experiences. However, little evaluation and discussion of the impact of the IGAs on empowerment have been conducted on the Sudanese experience. A keyword search of "women's empowerment in The Republic of the Sudan" in the Social Sciences Citation Index of the Web of Science returned only five articles. After almost five decades of IGA work in the country, this experience appears to need to be studied and explored. As argued "initial groundwork through qualitative and exploratory methods, conceptual analysis, and stakeholder consensus through participatory process is essential to establishing parameters that define empowerment in specific country and development project contexts" (Malhotra, Schuler, & Boender, 2002, p.18). As elaborated earlier, The Republic of the Sudan is a country that combines complex socioeconomic, political, and cultural features, which makes studying the IGAs' experience in The Republic of the Sudan an interesting and unique case under the chaotic economic and political status in The Republic of the Sudan.

Most studies that are done regarding the impact of IGAs on women's empowerment are from a top-down perspective (Banerjee & Jackson, 2017). This study aims to raise the voice of women who experienced these intervention programs and to document the manner in which they perceive the impact. This case would then allow the rest of the world to study, in depth, factors that affect the success and sustainability of

economic, cultural, and political situations. Also, this micro interpretation of the experience of FSWs in The Republic of the Sudan may help policy makers and practitioners to enhance women's empowerment in s country to get a better sense of the important functions in a complex situation, even if the situation in their targeted group is not as complex as that of female FSWs in The Republic of the Sudan.

Furthermore, the case selected is a pilot project for a new tool in the arena of empowerment, where the targeted groups are the Most-at-Risk Populations (MARPs), which make working for empowerment more challenging (Batliwala, 2010). Studying the impacts of IGAs on the empowerment of FWSs workers in The Republic of the Sudan would likely enrich the knowledge and the all-around efficiency of IGAs as well as the discourse around viable tools for empowerment. The study will almost certainly add to the accumulated knowledge in the field that will be useful to governments, policy makers, practitioners, and other advocates for women's empowerment.

IGAs for one of the most vulnerable groups, namely FSWs, under severely unfavorable

# **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the extent to which the Income Generating Activities (IGAs) have influenced women's empowerment. Specifically, the study will investigate the contribution level by women in the planning, execution and evaluation of the projects. Additionally, the study aims to examine factors influencing the sustainability of IGAs projects under study. The study explores the influence of the IGAs' projects on FSWs individual empowerment, with a focus on the perceived influence on women's core-self-evaluation.

# **Research Questions**

This study addresses the following questions:

RQ1.: What is the level of involvement of female sex workers in Sudan in the JASMAR project for women empowerment?

RQ2.: What are the perspectives of the participants about the perceived sustainability of their income generation activities (IGA) implemented by the JASMAR project for women empowerment?

RQ3.: What are the perspectives of the participants about the perceived influence of the JASMAR project on their individual empowerment?

Research sub-questions are:

- How do the beneficiaries perceive the impact of the intervention on their sense of generalized self-efficacy?
- How do the beneficiaries perceive the impact of the intervention on their sense of self-esteem?
- How do the beneficiaries perceive the impact of the intervention on their locus of control?
- How do the beneficiaries perceive the impact of the intervention on their sense of emotional stability?

# **Delimitations and Limitations of the Study**

The delimitations of the methodology used include the following: The case study design by its nature does not involve a control group; therefore, it is difficult to discern whether the changes are attributable to the interventions alone. Also, the design allows

only for a posttest or post examination. However, the researcher plans to depend on the pre-evaluation and documented observation that is sued by the JASMAR Human Security Organization for the beneficiaries' selection. Another ramification worthy of consideration is that ongoing surveys and evaluations were administered during the course of the project, which were besides the monitoring mission reviews and reports. The choice of the FSWs case study is an extreme example of powerlessness; as it includes the most fragile and most-at-risk stratum of the poorest of the poor communities. Even though the aim of the study is to understand the impact of the IGAs on women's empowerment through understanding the experience of the participants of the study, understanding the process of the empowerment will be extremely limited, and will pertain only to women of a similar status. However, as a qualitative study, generalization is not one of the targets of the study.

The limitations of the study include the following. First, the researcher is a Sudanese citizen. Unfortunately, according to new regulations regarding the banning of citizens from six Muslim countries from entering the U.S. by the United States' Government, including citizens from The Republic of the Sudan, the researcher cannot travel to The Republic of the Sudan to conduct interviews herself. However, the researcher's knowledge about the context of the Republic of the Sudan is an asset that helps to overcome this limitation. The interviews were conducted via WhatsApp, which is unreliable because it depends mostly on the status of the unreliable internet connection in The Republic of the Sudan. Some important information might not be communicated due to this shortcoming.

Second the beneficiaries are poor, illiterate women. They do not keep clear records for their business; therefore, the only available source of information is dependent upon the memories of the beneficiaries. Unfortunately, there is a prevailing culture among poor people who have been subjects for NGO surveys and interviews to give inaccurate information. For decades participants have given information based on expectations instead of facts. For a new project agency, the interviewees may give information, which reflects that they are part of the targeted population in order that they might become beneficiaries. For an existing project they may tell stories to please the donors in order that they increase the amount of funding that is being received. However, the researcher will use triangulation techniques for data collection in order to gain a deep understanding of the experience.

# **Terminologies and Definitions**

Term	Definition
Agency	"Capacity to act independently and make choices
	(Hennink, Kiiti, Pillinger & Jayakaran" (2012,
	p.206)
Empowerment	"Is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people
	gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters
	power in people for use in their own lives, their
	communities and in their society, by acting on issues they
	define as important" (Page & Czuba,1999, p1).
Feminism	It is defined as the movement against the cultural and

historical relegation of women and the struggle for economic, political and social liberation (Mahavidyalay, 2021).

Gender

Is the social assignment of meaning to biologically-given sex differences (Wallach, 2010).

Neoclassical economics "Refer to the third of the identified groups of economists of non-dogmatic taxonomists or non-dogmatic deductivists" (Lawson, 2013, P. 979).

# **Chapter Summary**

This chapter introduces the research topic. The first section lays out the chapter organization. The second section provides a review for the study context. The Republic of the Sudan geo/socioeconomic status is previewed. The preview reflects that The Republic of the Sudan is a rich country in term of endowment but is experiencing socioeconomic difficulties and troubles resulted from inadequate planning and policies. According to the review The Republic of the Sudan is ranked at the bottom of least developed countries using development, gender, and human rights measures. Women status in The Republic of the Sudan is identified as one of the downsides of the general deterioration in the overall aspects, pertaining to economic, political, humanitarian and legal conditions. The section also includes a description of the JASMAR Human Security Organization project for FSWs in White Nile Sate in The Republic of the Sudan.

JASMAR and partners are implementing the pilot project for empowering FSWs in The Republic of the Sudan. The project provides microcredit to the beneficiaries as well as

training. The third section of the chapter discussed the concept of empowerment focusing on two empowerment models, the feminism model and the neoclassic economic approach of women's empowerment. The discussion includes the use of IGAs as a tool for women's empowerment. Empirical studies from different countries are reviewed. The fourth section introduces the research problem, its significance, the research questions, and delimitation and limitation of the study. The chapter ends with a summary of the chapter's contents.

# **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This chapter lays out a theoretical foundation of the study. This theoretical and empirical literature review is centered on the influence of Income Generating Activities (IGAs) on women's empowerment. The review is organized according to themes. A theoretical review is provided and is complemented by a summary of empirical studies, which contribute to the discussion. The review attends to two areas. They include the concept of empowerment, along with the IGAs as a tool for empowerment. Although empowerment, as defined in the first section, is a multidimensional concept, the focus of the literature review is on the indicators of individual empowerment. A variety of theories that include the neoliberal framework, the feminism theory, and the capability framework are included. The inclusion of the theoretical framework helps to conceptualize empowerment and the manner in which it works at the grassroots level. A conceptual framework of the study is developed and illustrated in the third section. The chapter ends with a brief review of the chapter contents.

# **Understanding Women's Empowerment**

This section includes a theoretical presentation of the concept of empowerment, including its definition and dimensions. Additionally, this section includes a review of the sex work and its definition pertaining to empowerment/disempowerment. The review focuses basically on the feminism empowerment approach. However, the discussion also includes various ideologies and theories. The discussion is supported, as needed, with empirical studies.

#### Empowerment: Definition and Origin

Women's empowerment is gaining increasing attention among researchers and scholars. The term *empowerment* draws the attention of researchers from interdisciplinary and multidimensional theories. A keyword search of the Social Sciences Citation Index of the Web of Science, using the search terms "women empowerment" returned 3,410 articles. However, defining the term is still challenging. Some scholars claim the term has no unified definition (Jbara, & Darnton, 2019), some believe it is a mercurial term (Archibald & Wilson, 2011), while still others argue that the term has been hijacked and deviated from its original meaning (Rahman, 2013). Chamberlin, 1997 developed a working definition of empowerment where he defined empowerment as "having a number of qualities, such as having decision-making power...having access to information and resources... having a range of options from which to make choices...assertiveness... feeling that the individual can make a difference...learning to think critically (p.44). Included in this section is a synthesis of different arguments about the term *empowerment*, including language and historical background of the term. Empowerment, as defined by the Merriam-Webster online dictionary (2006) means "to give power or authority to or to enable". A secondary meaning is "possession of control, authority, or influence over others". The term originated from the word *power*, the ability to act or produce an effect. Thomas and Wilson (2011) commented that "You can't spell "empowerment" without "power" (p. 25). Boulding (1990), in his theory of power, suggested that power has three forms--threat, exchange, and love. An analogous classification is the Rowlands's Framework that identifies various levels of power, which

are "power over", "power to", "power with", and "power within" (Oxaal & Baden 1997; Rowalands, 1997; Lekoko & Nthogo, 2015). Power over is the traditional meaning which refers to the ability to influence others, while other levels of power are those recognized by radicals who aim to give power to powerless groups in the communities. Rappaport (1981) as cited in Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) defined empowerment as a "construct that links individual strengths and competencies, natural helping systems, and proactive behaviors to social policy and social change" (p. 569), which indicates that empowerment involves three levels, individual, family, and community.

Through history, the notion of power over was dominant in the external and internal relationships in societies. At international levels countries invaded and colonized and exploited human and natural resources of less powerful countries (Walter, 1973; Goucher, LeGuin, & Walton, 1998), At the individual level stratification was a common feature within most communities (Rowlands, 1995; Calves, 2009). Lenskil (1984) commented that, "The fact of inequality is almost surely as old as the human species. No known society has ever had a completely egalitarian social system. From primitive Stone Age communities to complex industrial societies, inequality has always been present" (p. 3). However, throughout course history, men have had more access to power (Huis et al., 2017) and women represented the more oppressed and marginalized stratum (Taha, 1979). As Muni stated, "For centuries women have been relegated to a secondary status in the family and the society. For Thus in [sic] true for all societies across the world and is not a modern phenomenon. It is as old as civilization itself" (Muni, 2006, p.24).

Traditions, norms, and rules have mostly favored of males from ancient civilizations to

modern societies. Thakur (2009) commented, "Historically the world over, either by law or by custom the status of women is undermined by asymmetrical power relationships in decision making and personal and social rights, access to resources and entitlement." (p.81).

# The Feminism Empowerment Approach

The feminism women's empowerment approach emerged as an alternative human development approach that ensures inclusion of women in the development process (Friedmann, 1992). The approach was developed in the mid-1980s as a natural evolvement of successive human development frameworks and approaches (Tasli, 2007). Previous human development models, including the classic economic one, have been largely criticized for their approaches and strategies that have aggravated the already deplorable situation of women around the world. For instance, the neoclassical economic reform approaches such as the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) were criticized for increasing poverty and unemployment among women (Tasli, 2007; Ali, 2012, Faki, et al., 2012). The approach originated in the Western countries (Moser, 1993), but was eventually advocated by women activists and scholars from the third world.

# Women's Empowerment: An Alternative Vision from Islam

Mahmoud Taha, 1909-1985, a Muslim thinker and a pioneer Islamic figure, is an advocate for women's empowerment. He provided insights within Islam that differ from the prevailing understanding of Islam (Howard, 1988). Basically, he argued that the Islamic Shari'a law can only be understood in the historical context and should be developed to be compatible with the advanced current situation. Nonetheless, Taha paid a

high price for expressing for his views. He was charged with apostasy and hanged in 1985 (Al-Naim 1988; The Republicans Thought Website).

Taha (1975) suggested that the origin of women's disempowerment can be understood from human history. He explained that at the beginning of human life at earth, in the harsh circumstances; women were the most valuable source of reproduction of the human species. Communities realized the only way to power was by increasing their numbers. Therefore, as each community tried to protect the valuable source of life reproduction, women were kept safe at home while men faced the danger of losing their lives. However, with the advancement of civilization, obtaining a living became easier, men grew powerful, and women lost their competence and remained naïve (Taha, 1975; Taha, 1979).

Taha (1975) beliefs that fear was the formulating mechanism for societies in early eras, because of fear people created rules and punishment to save and keep their properties, including women. For Taha (1979), oppressing women enhanced the development of the societies. Because of fear, people resorted to rules that allowed them to live in groups or communities. Therefore, Taha (1979)'s vision for empowering women is based on fighting fear by spreading awareness among women as a mechanism for them to regain their power. The key for understanding Taha (1979) is to consider using the couple or the family as the unit of analysis instead of using male or female individuals as the unit of social analysis. According to Taha (1975), his integrational approach transforms the nature of the relationship between male and females from competition, conflict, and struggle to integration (Taha, 1976; Taha, 1980). The following

section of this chapter is a preview of the literature of power dynamics and community stratification, with a focus on women's disempowerment.

# The Discourse over Empowerment: Two Conflicting Strands

Two conflicting strands can be identified regarding the term *empowerment* with a review of the discourse of empowerment among activists in the field. Some scholars and practitioners believe the term has no unified meaning while others claim it was co-opted and no longer means what its creators had in mind, that is the term has become a buzzword (Batliwala 2014; & Zand, 2011; Rappaport, 1984 Troyna, 1994; Zimmerman1990; ). Bringing the analysis of power and stratification to the discussion appears to be useful for understanding both strands and the ramification of empowerment practice.

Lenski (1984), in his book *Power & Privilege: A theory of Social Stratification* tried to answer the influential question of the deferential position of human beings: "Who gets what and why?" He traced human history "from ancient time to present" (p. 5). To examine the existence of inequality, Lenski studied inequality over the course of history and found two basic answers that dominated people's thinking; "One is essentially supportive of the status quo, viewing the existing distribution of rewards as just, equitable, and frequently also inevitable. The other is highly critical, denouncing the distributive system as basically unjust and unnecessary." (p.65). The first thesis is the conservative one, represented by capitalism and the neoliberal system which seem to represent the mainstream in today's systems governing the world. Adam Smith (1776) wrote the foundation principles of this economic system in his book *The Wealth of* 

*Nations* in which individuals' interests under free competition will naturally regulate the market systems with no need for government interference. Karlberg (2005) commented that the western-liberal societies' discourses of power are usually associated with competition domination.

The other theory is the antithesis of the above and can be represented, at least theoretically, by socialist systems. This idea came from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels writing (1884) The Communist Manifesto. Lenski (1984) commented that all subsequent theories or ideologies fall into one or the other of these major categories. They include the conservative fundamentalism tradition, which with explains inequality common interests shared by individuals. On the other hand, its antithesis, conflict theories, see inequality is a result of the struggle for scarce resources. The two conflicting strands on empowerment can be explained by Lenski's analysis, where the neoliberal model represents the conventional and the feminist approaches, the empowerment approach, represents an alternative development aimed at changing the status-quo. The disagreement is at the fundamental and practical levels, where the two parties disagree about the vision and strategies used to achieve empowerment. The main disagreement is on the vision and the ultimate goals of empowerment. The feminists' vision is that empowerment alters the power dynamic through structural change in all social, cultural, political, and legal dimensions. The neoliberals aim to improve women's competence while maintaining the same system that has produced inequality. In addition to, and as a result of the conflicting visions, strategies and tools for achieving empowerment differ largely between the two strands. As Wong (2003) noted, there are huge differences

among feminists regarding theorizing about power, but the key feature among feminists is the emphasis on the relational concept of power. Additionally, feminists stress that one of the main characteristics of empowerment is that it is a complex, multifaceted process, while the neoliberal institution is usually centered mostly on long-run developmental goals with a special focus on the economic dimension of empowerment. Feminists believe that empowerment should work from the bottom up, based on grassroots efforts. Collective work is a common feature of empowerment efforts to change the power dynamic within the system. Neoliberal work, on the other hand, does not consider grassroots perspectives when planning, executing, or evaluating their programs. Instead of the initiative being led by the grassroots element, humanitarian organizations lead the initiative which from the antithesis point of view will lead to more dependency and reproduce the imbalance power between communities.

The first area of conflict between the neoliberal and the feminist empowerment approaches is the vision and ultimate endeavor of empowerment itself. Historically, the UN is dominated by the western countries Werker (2016), and thus represents the conservative thesis (Chomsky, 2011). UN institutions, such as the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have shaped the economics of most of the developing countries today. The WB and the IMF interfered in the economies of the developing and least developed countries by imposing specific economic policies as conditions for offering funding for these countries. Economic packages such as Structural Adjustments Programs (SAPs) and Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) were widely imposed upon these countries, including The Republic of the Sudan (Ali & Elbadawi,

2004). The UN programs were criticized for maintaining the status-quo. The feminists and the antithesis claimed that UN and WB policies and programs were based on the neoliberal economic theory with the intent of maintaining the notion of "power over" through imposing economic policies based on a free international market and globalization.

The feminists and leftists maintain that these developmental efforts consolidate marginalization and dependency at international national and individual levels. Lindio-McGovern, and Wallimann (2009) commented that "neoliberal globalization is not a neutral process, it is gendered, and has exacerbated domestic and global social inequalities." (2009, p. 1). The feminists promoted empowerment in the seventies in response to the conventional development approach. Empowerment came as an alternative approach that to challenge the status-quo and to obtain power to women, with women, and other marginalized groups. It aims to radicalize the notion of power over to "power to" to give power to the marginalized groups (Wallerstein & Bernstein, 1988). Therefore, the power dynamic has been the center of the argument between the neoliberal and the feminist. Calves (2009) signifies that "The history of the word 'empowerment' in the field of development is rooted in a philosophical vision that gives priority to the viewpoints of the oppressed and in a radical critique of the vertical development model in the 1970s" (p. 29).

As a result of the numerous critiques and concerns raised by scholars and practitioners in the field of development, the UN institutions incorporated empowerment in their visions and missions. It is noted that after it had been accused of evading any

mention of power in its discussion on poverty issues the World Bank tends to unambiguously recognize and use the concept and the political dimension of power (Wong, 2003; Calves, 2009). Amartya Sen led the effort to integrate an empowerment approach in the WB programs (WB, 2012). He developed the capability approach that sees development as freedom. Sen's capability framework coincides with empowerment, as it seeks to empower poor and marginalized groups, it also considers change as a comprehensive process and it has adopted the bottom-up strategy of advocating for development for people, by people, and with people. Development is seen by Sen as "a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy." (1999, p. 3). The World Bank's introduction of the capability framework to the developmental work marked a historical change in the WB vision. A structural change of developmental work occurs at the planning, execution, and evaluation levels at the institution. However, there is still a difference between the capability approach and the empowerment approach that the focus of analysis in Sen's framework is the marginalized people centered on the poor while the feminists favor a gender-based analysis (Cornwall, Gideon, & Wilson 2008; Bastos et al., 2009).

Following the UN institutions, western Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) adopted empowerment in their visions and missions. Increasing numbers of humanitarian agencies integrated empowerment either explicitly or implicitly into their programs and projects in developing countries (Calves, 2009). Parpart, Rai & Staudt (2002) commented, "From being an alternative approach to development, the empowerment approach has been widely adopted by mainstream development agencies, more to achieve

immediate development objectives than to engender widespread social transformation."

(p. 3) However, with the WB and western development agencies having integrated the term into their programs the definite aim of empowerment has shifted, and some scholars claim the term is being used differently by many different organizations (Simon, 1994; Oxaal, & Baden, 1997; Biewener & Bacqué, 2015; Tasli, 2007). Calves (2009) noted that, "For many authors, especially feminists, the word "empowerment" has been "taken hostage" by development agencies—whether multilateral, bilateral, or private—and stripped of its original emphasis on the notion of power." (p. 23).

A second area of disagreement between neoliberals and feminists is the mission. The feminists perceive empowerment as a process of "consciousness-raising" and "material change" that develops over time to transform the unbalanced social, cultural, economic, and political structure (Freire, 1970; Ellsworth, 1989). Empowerment is defined by the feminists and the radical activists as a multidimensional process of transformation. However, the base premise of the western organizations is to make women more competent in the markets. Tools such as microfinance and income generating projects are popular among these organizations. This situation is paradoxical from the feminists' point of view because feminists assert that empowerment is a complex process for structural change, while tools such as microcredit reduce it to a short-term developmental goal.

The strategies promoted by the two strands are different. The empowerment approach basically assumes that the oppressed people are capable of gaining their rights, individually and collectively. Friedman (1992) wrote, "Empowerment begins with the

mobilization of civil society around local issues, before the movement gains ground and takes on oppression at the national and international levels." (p.31). The empowerment strategy, unlike conventional development agencies, is a grassroots movement that works from the bottom up. Tasli (2007) claimed that "The empowerment approach argues that this transformation should begin at grass-roots level in a 'bottom-up' manner in that women increase their socio-economic and political powers" Tasli (2007, p I).

According to Karl (1995), Rowlands (1997), and (Lekoko & Nthogo, 2015) "power to" is having the skills to do and the capacity to create power which is about partnership and a sense of solidarity between women, and power within is about self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-respect, and self-confidence (Calves, 2009). A citation from Batliwala (2014), a prominent contemporary advocate for women, captures the comprehensive definition of empowerment, as it grasps the three basic features of the empowerment approach:

Today, when I speak of empowerment, and of key steps in the process of empowerment, I always start with the self— the inner transformations that must occur— as well as the external engagements for a more collective form of empowerment. And I will pay more attention to resourcing and supporting these internal transformations— in both women and men— as much as I would focus on organising women to struggle for the resources, services, rights and entitlements essential to rearranging the social power structures in which they transact their lives. (p. 4778)

As a result of the contradiction between the theoretical foundation of empowerment, which the feminists originated, and the practice which is dominated by the neoliberal organizations, the definition of *empowerment* becomes controversial. Some scholars believe that the term has become a sort of fashion in development work, i.e.; it is vague and loosely defined which makes it impossible to implement in the reality, (Oxaal & Baden, 1997; Sen & Grown, 1987; Bebbington, et al., 2007). Wong (2003) noted that the concept of empowerment remains mixed by the neoliberal and international institutions and agencies that they dominated, such as the World Bank. For instance, the World Bank has continuously confused the empowerment concept with other approaches such as democratization, decentralization, political participation, and economic involvement. In his article "Empowerment as a Panacea for Poverty – Old Wine in New Bottles? Reflections on the World Bank's Conception of Power"; Wong (2003) questioned the motivation of the "sudden transformation" in the bank's notion of power. He believes the bank has deliberately selected two powers -- power-to and power-within to incorporate in its strategies and projects, which seem by neoliberal development thinking to strengthen the overall economic efficiency of the poor and disempowered segments of society. Wong, as well as some feminists (Batliwala, 1993), believe the international institutions and the bank concept of power are narrow and instrumental and merely aim to promote economic efficiency, as an ultimate goal. Thomas & Wilson (2011) also noted that "the concept's ubiquity is troubling, largely because power has often ironically been omitted from discussions of empowerment." (p.22). Therefore, several scholars refer to the term

*empowerment* as a "buzzword" with different meanings for different people (Batliwala, 2007).

Feminists and leftists claim that the term has been co-opted by the neoliberals (Ellsworth, 1989; Gore, 1992; Troyna, 1994; Halfon 2007; Sardenberg, 2008; Batliwala, 2007). Rowlands (2017) has taken the same direction and stated, "Some of the confusion arises because the root-concept - power - is itself disputed, and so is understood and experienced in differing ways by different people" (p. 101). Even though the term emerged in the early 1970s, it is still controversial at the theoretical level and in practice and has thus received criticism from both sides of the discourse.

However, guided by the feminist framework, this study adopts a simple, yet a comprehensive definition that was developed by Kabeer (1999). Kabeer (1999) defined empowerment as the ability to exercise choice. This definition includes the three characteristics of women's empowerment, which are preconditions for empowerment, the process, and outcomes, and is largely adopted by the late researchers in the women's empowerment field (Kabeer, 1999; Malhotra, Schuler, & Boender, 2002; Batliwala et al., 2010; Mishra 2013; Yount, 2017).

One concept that seems to be agreed upon by a wide range of researchers with a variety of ideologies and frameworks is that empowerment is a complex phenomenon that varies with each unique circumstance, time, and space. Since this study is conducted in an Islamic country, it is useful to shed light on women's status under Islamic law; the following section elaborates on this topic.

# Women's Empowerment/disempowerment under Islamic Shari'a

Shari'a is the Islamic law which regulates all life aspects of Muslims (Mumisa, 2015). An-Na'im (1987) defined Shari'a as "the Muslim comprehensive religious law derived from the basic sources, namely the *Qur'an*, the Muslim holy book, and *Sunna*, the traditions of the Prophet Mohammed." (p. 318). The position of women under Shari'a is a controversial issue not only for non-Muslims, but among Muslims themselves. Genderbased restrictions that are imposed by Shari'a are seen by some as unjust (Moghadam, 2003). An-Na'im (987), a Sudanese Muslim scholar, argued that under Shari'a basic human rights are at serious risk, therefore the "principles of public Shari'a, as distinguished from private Shari'a of family law and devotional rites, are both morally indefensible and practically impossible to maintain today." (p. 318). According to An-Na'im, all the subjects of Islam are classified according to gender and religion, by which Muslim men are situated at the top of the hierarchy and have the highest level of civil and political rights, followed by Muslim women with limited rights, then "tolerated" non-Muslim minorities who have restricted civil and political rights.

The debate about the situation of women under Shari'a law is very relevant to women's empowerment. In relation to the concept of women's empowerment, it is argued that Shari'a treats females as the wards of males and, therefore, stipulates unequal rights for females compared to their counterpart males (An-Na'im, 1987; Mahmoud, 2013). One main Shari'a principle is the one that addresses women's right to lead a community. According to An-Na'im (1987), Shari'a justifies the hierarchal ranking according to gender and the ramification is that women cannot hold high-ranking general

executive or judicial offices. This understanding is based on an interpretation derived from Sunna and implies that women's mental and physical capacity is limited.

Moghadam, an Iranian scholar, claimed that Muslim countries have the worst record of women's legal social positions in the entire world and that "Through the Shari'a, Islam dictates the legal and institutional safeguards of honor, thereby justifying and reinforcing the segregation of society according to sex." (p.4). Several verses in the holy book (Quran) that put men in charge of women have been cited by scholars. Opponents claim that Shari'a subjects Muslim woman to several legal, social, and political constraints summarized by Taha (1979) as follows:

- She [a female] can neither marry nor divorce herself, while the Muslim man can
  not only marry and divorce himself, but also marry up to four women at the same
  time.
- A husband is legally entitled to chastise his wife in a variety of ways, including beating, and she is legally bound to submit to the treatment.
- A woman is bound to stay at home at all times and not to leave it except for absolute necessities, which do not include general civil education.
- She [a female] is not entitled to participate in public life, or to hold responsible
  office.
- In inheritance, she [a female] is entitled only to half the proportion of the man who has the same degree of relationship to the deceased.
- In the administration of justice, her [the female's] testimony is regarded as half the testimony of the man, so that it takes two women to make up a single witness,

regardless of the intelligence, experience and personal integrity of such a woman. (p.3)

From the above-explained women's profile under Shari'a, it is legitimate to think there is a contradiction between Shara'i laws and human rights, specifically, using corporal punishment, which is legitimate according to Shari'a and has been widely criticized (Mumisa, 2015). Two conflicting theories govern the way of thinking, the universalism and relativism theories. The following includes a description of the manner that these schools of thought relate to the discourse about Shari'a.

According to the Universalism approach, all countries, including Islamic countries, are obliged as members of the United Nations, to protect human rights as stated in the Human Rights Declaration (REDRESS and the Sudanese Human Rights Monitor, 2012). Article 2 of the Human Rights Declaration states that "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status" (p.2). In addition, Article 12 states, "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home, or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation" (p.3). Additional women's rights have been declared in the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Article 7: "All provisions of penal codes which constitute discrimination against women shall be repealed" (UN, 1967, p.36). However, several Islamic countries, including The Republic of the Sudan, refused to endorse the agreement despite calls from women activists in these countries (Pippa, 2009). However, all countries that sponsored

Shari'a, have increasingly pressured women to stay at home in accordance with Shari'a regulations. Sherwood (2012); noted that "the state-sponsored Islamic organizations increasingly pressure women to stay at home and follow "Islamic" roles" (p.81).

In contrast to universalism, cultural relativism is based on communal autonomy (Donnelly, 1984). Harman (1975) said of cultural relativist philosophy, "Something that large makes sense only in relation to one or another comparison class....the judgment that it is wrong of someone to do something makes sense only in relation to an agreement or understanding" (p, xvii). According to relativism, "Truth is the expedient in the way of believing and to those who agree with" (Rorty, 1999, p xvii), and hence, there are some cultural values that should be exempted from criticism by outsiders (Woodward and Barbour, 2009). Based on this philosophy, advocates for Shari'a argued that it should not be judged according to universal values (An-Na'im, 1987). Shari'a proponents have always been skeptical, declaring these values reflect only western culture (Mumisa, 2015). Therefore, seculars who criticize Shari'a have always been accused by the law's proponents of being affected by western culture and working as paid agents to promote westernizing Muslim communities (Mumisa, 2015).

The Islamic world witnessed several executions of Muslims who were alleged to have committed apostasy (Mumisa, 2015). According to Shari'a apostasy is classified among the hudud crimes which according to Islamic guidance, the Muslim state does not have the right to pardon, prosecution is compulsory (Virgili, 2015). Even though not agreed upon, in several Islamic countries, including The Republic of the Sudan apostasy is a capital crime (Mahmoud, 2013; Mumisa, 2015; Virgili, 2015). Mumisa (2015)

stated, "In most Muslim countries, therefore, the death penalty can be applied by courts as punishment for the 'most serious crimes' as set out in Shari'a law" (p. 10). The most recent case occurred in The Republic of the Sudan in 2014, when Merriam Yahya Ibrahim, a 27-year-old pregnant Christian woman was accused of apostasy and sentenced to death. According to Shari'a Merriam was given three days to renounce her faith or be hanged. During her days in prison, she was denied all her rights, the authorities even refused to allow her to give birth to her child in the prison hospital.

According to her story as reported by Fox News, she gave birth to her child with her ankles chained. However, in the face of a huge outcry and intervention by the international community, including the Pope and the USA, the woman was allowed to leave the country for the USA (Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index [BTI], 2016; Fox News, 2014; *The Telegraph*, 2014).

Furthermore, some incidents occur in countries where the Islamic rules are not strictly enforced and extremist individuals taken it upon themselves to apply Shari'a laws. A typical example is the killing of the Egyptian secularist Fraj Foda in 1992 following the issuing of fatwa against him (Saeed and Saeed, 2016). The Foda incident is documented in the report of the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain (2013): "after the al-Azhar Scholars Front declared his writings blasphemous. Two weeks after a senior al-Azhar sheikh declared him an apostate, Foda was assassinated in his office by Islamists" (p. 43). It is observed that throughout Islamic history Shari'a has been used against anyone who advocates any idea different than the Islamic main-stream thinkers (Mahmoud, 2013, Virgili, 2015).

This accusation intimidates people, especially uneducated people. It is an approach that has been used by religious men to prevent people from listening to the views of seculars or to become involved in discussion with them. Intellectual terrorism negatively affects efforts to empower women who face social and cultural marginalization and to alienate them from participating in the debate. For instance, in 2001, Nawal al-Saadawi, an Egyptian feminist writer was charged with apostasy. A separate lawsuit was filed, demanding that she, as an apostate, be forced to divorce her Muslim husband (Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain, 2013).

Among contradictions concerning human rights, women's rights, specifically, is an ongoing source of debate. However, the discourse is part of the empowerment process. In the following section the discussion is extended to include the capability approach and discuss its potentials to provide insights on women's empowerment.

### Is sex Work Disempowerment? The Capability Framework's Insights

The most cited indicator of women's empowerment is the ability to control and, specifically, to make decisions that are the empowerment features most frequently cited (Rowlands, 1997; Kabeer, 2005; Batliwala, 2014; Rowlands, 2016). However, it makes a significant difference when making informed or uninformed decisions. Sex workers, as some argue, are free women who make decisions that they feel good about (Good sex project), while others see them as victims and powerless (Cavalieri, 2011). The capability approach provides important insights about capability and entitlement. It was developed by Amartya Sen with a developmental focus. It deals with issues of choice and the capability of the poor. This approach is essential for this study in particular, not because

all sex work associates with poor persons, but because the participants in this study were selected according to, among other things, their economic status, i.e. poor active female sexual workers were selected.

It is obvious that in all other reviewed frameworks, including liberalism and feminism, issues of choice have been central to empowerment. Control of one's own body is seen as an empowerment. However, trading one's body for sex has been a controversial issue even among feminists (Batliwala, 2010; Shrage, Laurie, 2016). Sex work is an illegal activity in most countries and is defined as a crime with designated punishment that varies among countries (Abdelrahim, 2010). Batliwala (2010) indicated "sex work and sex workers presented a unique challenge to the feminist discourse and resulted in several positions (or divides) in feminist approaches to sex work." (para.5). Is sex work a manifestation of agency and freedom of choice or it is enslaving and selling of women's bodies and sexual capacities? Is it empowerment or disempowerment? Are sex workers victims and helpless or rebels who change the status quo on their own terms? Opinions differ, but generally they can be classified into two strands:

The abolitionist perspective, having grown out of dominance feminist theory, perceives sex work as inherently exploitative. In contrast, a second group of theorists adopts a liberal notion of individual choice and draws on the poststructuralist rejection of gender essentialism to envision a theoretical model of sex-worker rights (Cavalieri, 2011, p. 1409).

Few studies have addressed this complex situation (Swendeman et al., 2015). Several researchers perceive sex work as degrading or abating women's autonomy (Anderson,

2006). There is a call for reconsideration of the paradigm that degraded female sex workers by stigmatizing and portraying them as powerless victims. (Agustin, 2007; Swendeman et al., 2015).

On the other hand, others find sex work is empowering (Pateman, 1988; (Schwarzenbach 1990; Nussbaum, 1999; Almodovar, 2002; Tuana & Shrage, 2003; Leigh, 2004). (Swendeman et al., (2015) found that "Sex work in the context of Durbar's resources and transformations of power relations is described as an empowering experience by the sex workers in this study" (p. 1020). A statement jointly signed by 86 sex worker rights, women's rights, and human rights organizations in 2016 called for decriminalization of sex work "While we would agree that sex workers of all genders face discrimination, harm, stigma, and violence, there is ample evidence showing that decriminalization of sex work is the best remedy to empower sex workers to advocate for their rights and to engage with the state and non-state actors to secure their rights." (p. 1). A third position has emerged that does not see sex work as a dichotomy of women's liberation and disempowerment, but as spectrum defined by the context (Batliwala, 2010). This approach can find support from the capability approach. This section briefly introduces Sen's (1990) capability approach, then reviews the literature on the potential of this view to support the choice framework as a prospective for operationalizing the capability approach in the field of women's empowerment.

In his popular book *Development as Freedom*, Sen defined development as "a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy to lead their lives they have reason to value" (1999, p.3). His definition considers that development is a notion that

goes beyond the measurable aspects of progress. Fukuda-Parr (2003) pointed out that Sen's approach contains two central theses about people and development which are the evaluative aspect and the agency aspect. Sen emphasized the importance of evaluative aspects as an instrument for the agency aspects. He criticized the neoliberal model that focuses only on wellbeing and provided a broader understanding that incorporates the role of the women's agency. Sen wrote, "No longer the passive recipients of welfare-enhancing help, women are increasingly seen, by men as well as women, as active agents of change: The dynamic promoters of social transformations that can alter the lives of both women and men" (p. 191).

As several scholars have mentioned, the intrinsic value of Sen's capability approach is the focus on freedom of choice (Fukuda-Parr, 2003; Robeyns 2003). However, as noted, this robust framework did not provide a specific policy to promote women's empowerment (Kleine, 2010; Fukuda-Parr, 2003; Robeyns, 2003). Nonetheless scholars pointed out that the capability approach has real-time potential for addressing issues and concerns of women's empowerment (Kleine, 2010; Robeyns, 2003; Woodward and Barbour, 2009).

Woodward and Barbour (2009) reviewed the experiences of women with empowerment in four case studies from India, Bangladesh, Turkey, and South Africa. They concluded that the capabilities approach "offers a framework for assessing quality of life in a cultural context" (p. 79). They further noticed that the capability approach, in contrast to the universalism framework, has helped those empowered women in their

cultural context and enhanced women's agency with no contradiction or trade-off of their norms and values.

These potentials suggest that the capability approach can provide prospective to empowerment concerns regarding the pivotal question about sex work. Robeyns (2003) explained that Sen's (1990) capability approach is based on free choice, and emphasizes the need to abolish "unfreedom". The approach asserts that individuals are free to make rational choices based on personal preferences and evaluations. Freedom entails individuals who are free to choose the life that they value, to undertake any activities or enjoy positive states of being (Walker, 2006). Therefore, based on the capability approach, the question would be whether criminalizing sex work is a deprivation that limits FSWs' achievable functioning? Is the prevention of sex work disempowering? The answer may lie in the key word "capability" of a person to make an informed decision. The capability approach provides a framework for enhancing women's agency at personal and collective levels and helping to remove deprivation, as a necessary condition for being capable. After words individuals are free to choose any state or activity. There is a general agreement around health concerns and work relationships in the field of prostitution (Shrage, Laurie 2016). Working in the sex industry exposes workers to HIV/AIDS virus transmission (Qiao et al., 2014). In particular, FSWs have been regarded as one of the most high-risk populations MARPs (Buvé et al., 2001; Ahmed, 20783; Lafort et al., 2010; SNAP, 2014).

Likewise, work rights activists raised the issue of vulnerability among female sex workers. Laurie (2016) argued, "These markets tend to exploit the social vulnerabilities

of others, lack informational transparency, pose unacceptably high risks for some participants, or contribute to the social marginalization of some groups" (p.12). Sex workers' rights activists such as Scarlet Harlot (2004), and Elizabeth Anderson (1995) developed this argument to raise the voices of sex workers. Extending the capability approach to the field of empowerment can provide a framework to correct the situation of vulnerability and enhance the ability of FSWs to make informed decisions regarding their choices in life. To complete the identification of empowerment, the following section reviews the literature around dimensions of empowerment with focus on women's individual empowerment.

### Dimensions of Empowerment

The World Bank (WB) defined empowerment as "the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes" (Peter, et al., 2009, p.129). Additionally, most of the reviewed definitions from other studies, particularly the feminist researchers, emphasized that empowerment is a comprehensive concept that requires preconditions such as resource availability that enable a person to exercise freedom of choice and to achieve the required outcomes at multifaceted dimensions and levels, (Kabeer, 1999; Schuler, Islam & Rottach, 2010; Mishra, 2013; Batliwala, 2014; Yount, 2017).

From the reviewed frameworks and definitions of empowerment, dimensions and level of women's empowerment can be identified. As expressed in several studies, women's empowerment is a multidimensional construct with social, economic, political, cultural, and legal dimensions (Rappaport, 1987; Varekamp et al., 2009; Mishra 2013;

Yount et al., 2015). Change can occur at multiple levels of aggregation, which are the macro and micro levels. Malhotra, Schuler, & Boender, 2002; Sadan, (2004) noted that these dimensions can be studied at different levels of aggregation. In Sadan's words:

For the individual – the micro level – the empowerment process is a process of increasing control and transition from a state of powerlessness. Community empowerment – the macro level – is a collective social process of creating a community, achieving better control over the environment, and decision making in which groups, organizations or communities participate. (2004, p. 137)

Developmental projects can target women's empowerment at national, community, and individual levels (Huis et al., 2017). Therefore, women's empowerment can be measured at macro levels, such as at national levels, or community levels which involve a political dimension, as well as at individual or micro levels. Therefore, the nature of each project specifies the nature of the indicators to be explored or examined (UN Women, 2015). In their study, (Dop et al., 2016 defined empowerment at three levels, individual, organization and society levels. According to the authors of the study, the individual level, empowerment involves "the acquisition of personal control and critical awareness of the sociopolitical environment" (p.3). The study also stated that empowerment at the level of the organization, involves "developing a voice, being consulted, and participating in decision making processes" (p.3). At the society level, Dop et al. (2016) states that empowerment "relates to enhancing the quality of life with space for autonomy and cooperation, in addition to combating mechanisms of structural exclusion" (p.3).

Further, some researchers made additional classifications of change at the individual level and separated internal and external change. Internally, the change occurring to the person's consciousness and sensations is called psychological empowerment and externally it is political empowerment, which enables a person to take part in the making of decisions that affect his or her life (Zimmerman, 1990). Yet, external and internal levels are inseparable because of the organic ties between individuals and community (Sadan, 2004).

To examine the change in empowerment at the macro level, the World Bank (WB) developed a Gender Index (GI) to capture the multidimensional empowerment at the collective level. On the other hand, there is no agreement on measuring women's empowerment at the individual level (Spreitzer, 1995; Dop, Depauw, & Driessens, 2016); rather, there are several approaches and frameworks which were developed to capture the personal dimensions of empowerment. As Malhotra, Schuler, and Boender (2002) noted, previous evaluation studies did not identify an operational definition of the psychological dimension of empowerment.

It is noted that the individual or a blend of individual and household situations with institutional structures has been noted as the focus of qualitative studies (Kabeer, 1997; Mayoux, 2001; Hashemi et al., 1996; Malhotra, Schuler, & Boender, 2002). Since this qualitative study focuses on the impact of JASMAR income-generating activity on women or at the individual level, the focus of the literature review is on the psychological empowerment concept. Thus, various scopes for exploring individuals' empowerment in

relation to women's agency and their influence on their households and local communities has been explored.

Personal or Psychological Empowerment, a Literature Review. The construct of "empowerment" in relation to individuals is originally found in social psychology literature (Rappaport, 1981; Anczewska et al., 2013). According to Zimmerman (1990), psychological empowerment is a "contextually oriented conception of empowerment that embraces the notion of person-environment fit. It includes, but is not limited to, collective action, skill development, and cultural awareness; and incorporates intra-psychic variables such as motivation to control, locus of control, and self-efficacy" (p. 174). Various research methods were applied to study women's empowerment at the individual or personal level. As Stake (2010) stated, qualitative focus is on personal experience, intuition to examine a phenomenon, while quantitative studies usually focus on linear attributes, measurements, and statistical analysis. In empowerment studies at personal levels, qualitative studies tend to explore and document women's individual experiences, while most quantitative studies focus on comparing individual women with other women in different communities and societies (Malhotra & Schuler 2005; Schuler, Islam, & Rottach, 2010).

Quantitative research focuses on developing measurement and scales of the construct, which include the common and general features of the construct, while qualitative tends to study perceptions and experiences in more detail. Ironstone-Catterall et al. (2011) indicated that "Part of the commitment to make research useful, to have research reflect the lived experiences of women and, in turn, to change women's lives,

comes to us through successive generations (or waves) of feminism" (p. 3). In the following section, the literature covers both types of research, as well as some mixed-method studies. First, this section provides a review of some of the qualitative studies of individual women's empowerment, followed by a review of some quantitative studies.

**Women's Personal Empowerment.** Sheilds (1995) conducted a qualitative study to understand the manner in which women perceive their empowerment. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews to explore the perceptions of 15 females. The participants identified empowerment as a "multifaceted expansive process with three central themes: the development of an internal sense of self, the ability to take action based on their internal sense of self, and a salient theme of connectedness" (p. 15).

Schuler, Islam, and Rottach (2010) conducted a qualitative study to explore the changing dimensions of women's empowerment in three Bangladeshi villages. In particular, the study examined the face validity of composite empowerment scores that were previously derived from a quantitative survey. Their study concluded that the original empowerment indicators need to be modified either by omitting some which are found no longer relevant or by redefining some by changing the sub-indicators, as well as adding some new aspects that women perceive as essential to their empowerment. The new indicator list includes 15 indicators which fall under two categories -- resources and women's agency. The resource indicators include: access to media and phone, economic security, education, legal awareness, political awareness, self-efficacy, and social support. On the other hand, women's agency indicators include: having a paid job outside the home, participation in making major decisions in the family, involvement in

management of the family resources, freedom of mobility, participation in micro-credit projects, and participation in political issues.

Zimmerman and Zahniser (1991), in a quantitative study, developed the

Sociopolitical Control Scale to assess psychological empowerment. Zimmerman (1990)

differentiate between different dimensions of empowerment at the personal level, where
he introduced a broader scope for empowerment at individual levels, which is
psychological empowerment. According to Zimmerman (1990) psychological
empowerment is not a single paradigm focused on personality traits but rather includes
contextual considerations, such ecological and cultural influences. Zimmerman (1995)
distinguished three components within psychological empowerment: intrapersonal,
interactional, and behavioral. Zimmerman, Anczewska et al., (2013) defines

Psychological empowerment as an integration between personal abilities such as personal
control, personal approach to life, level of engagement in a community, and level of
socio-political awareness. The authors were able to identify empowerment components
by showing how psychological empowerment incorporates the three intrapersonal,
interactional and behavioral levels.

Menon (1999) defined the psychologically empowered state as "a cognitive state characterized by a sense of perceived control, competence, and goal internalization" (Menon, 1999, p. 161-162). He used a sample of 311 employed individuals and another sample of 66 employees to develop and validate a nine-item, three-factor scale of psychological empowerment with the following three dimentions: perceived control (.83), perceived competence (.80), and goal internalization (.88). Perceived control

reflects employees' beliefs about authority, autonomy in decision-making, resources, and level of independency in the performance and the like. The perceived competence captures aspects of role-mastery that requires competence in accomplishing routine tasks as well as successful coping strategies with non-conventional work situations. The goal of internalization dimension includes the shared vision of the organization. (Menon, 1999).

Using factor analysis, Kishor (2000) studies women empowerment in Egypt and was able to identify 10 indicators of women empowerment. These indicators include: financial autonomy, participation in the modern sector, lifetime exposure to employment, sharing of roles and decision-making, family structure amenable to empowerment, equality in marriage, devaluation of women, women's emancipation, marital advantage, and traditional marriage.

In a study in a Middle Eastern Arab setting, Yount et al. (2015), used data on women's agency from a national sample of 6,214 to assess women's agency in Egypt. Their results confirm that women's agency in Egypt is a multidimensional construct. The result yielded a 15-item model that captured three factors reflecting women's agency: financial decisions in the family, freedom of mobility in public, and vocalization of views, specifically in rejecting violence against wives.

A related study by Spreitzer (1995) studied the psychological empowerment in a work context. To construct a second-order confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) was conducted with two complementary samples. The researcher used a randomly selected sample of 393 managers from diverse work units representing all functions, divisions,

and geographic locations of an industrial company. A second random sample of 128 was selected from the employees. Using CFA, this research developed and validated a multidimensional measurement model the four-dimensional measure of women empowerment. These measures include meaning or work purpose, competence or self-efficacy, self-determination, and impact or the ability to influence others.

Using a sample of 349 service users in the setting of Public Centres for Social Welfare (PCSWs) in Belgian, Dop, Depauw, and Driessens (2016) conducted a factor analysis study among service users. The study aimed to build and validate a scale that can be used to measure the intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral dimensions of psychological empowerment. The study proposed scale of 28 items. The study found that the Service User Psychological Empowerment Scale (SUPES) valid and reliable. The main categories of the SUPES are intrapersonal empowerment, interactional empowerment, and behavioral empowerment.

The intrapersonal dimension includes aspects inside a person. According to this study it includes self-esteem, locus of control of a person's own competence (or self-efficacy), and motivation of individuals to influence their own situations. The last dimension is behavioral empowerment, which involves the actions undertaken to control outcomes in various contexts and levels. Resilience and assertiveness are some of the traits that enhance conscious behavioral choices (Dop, Depauw, & Driessens, 2016). From the above reviewed literature, qualitative, mixed and quantitative studies concluded that empowerment is a multi-dimension, multi-level phenomenon that changes overtime and according to each context and individual characteristics, which makes it essential to

document each experience and highlight its strengths and weaknesses. In relation to this specific research topic and the reviewed identifications of empowerment dimensions and levels, it becomes important to explore the discourse around sex work and empowerment. In the following section, various schools of thought and insights around the topic will be reviewed.

#### The Neoclassical Model: the IGAs as a Tool for Women's Empowerment

As its name implies, the microfinance revolution has emerged as an influential tool to improve the outreach of financial services (Morduch, 1998; Robinson, 2001; Schreiner, 2002; Pagán, & Paxton, 2005). Specifically, micro credits have been used to help poor people gain access to adequate start-up capital for small projects in an effort to reduce the burden of poverty among women; (Lafort et al., 2010; Banerjee & Jackson, 2017). Microfinance, an anti-poverty program, is a broader form of microcredit. However; both microfinance and microcredit are financial tool created to reduce poverty through providing financial services to the poor. Micro finance includes a broader range of services than merely providing small loans or microcredit for poor people. These services include savings, insurance, and transactional services (Barr, 2005; Kabir, 2015). Micro-credit is the extending of small loans to poor individuals or groups for selfemployment projects that generate income (The Micro-Credit Summit, 1997). Income Generating Activities (IGAs) are a specific type of microcredit provided by NGOs to poor individuals and groups to start a business that helps them generate sustainable income. However, since the study pertains with the impact of financial

empowerment without going into details of specific sources of financial funding, this literature review uses the two terms "*microcredit*" and "*microfinance*" interchangeably. Several development institutions and organizations are now focusing on assisting women to generate their own incomes through owning microenterprises (Albee, 1994; Kabir, Thomas, & Sinha, 2009; Awaworyi, 2014).

Focusing on women came in response to the growing evidence that economic and social development efforts had benefitted men more than women (Muro, 1994; Mbilinyi, 1992; Makombe, Temba, & Kihombo, 1999). These self-help projects for women are known as Income Generating Activities (IGAs), and they usually involve fewer restrictions and a less-aggressive fund recovery procedure. IGAs are the alternatives to the profit-driven microfinance model (Bateman, 2011; Banerjee & Jackson, 2017). Most of the time NGOs use a revolving-fund concept to move the funds among new beneficiaries in the community to avoid compulsory cost recovery.

Income Generating Activities (IGAs) are usually family-owned and have a small number of employees (Churchill & Frankiewicz, 2006). These projects cover diverse activities such as job creation schemes, dairy farms, sewing workshops, and market stalls (Whole Planet Foundation, 2009). IGA projects can be categorized under four major models: Solidarity groups, village banking model, Grameen model, and individual model (Guntz, 2011). The success of the 2006 Nobel Prize winner, Professor Muhammad Yunus of the Grameen Bank model inspired development agencies to adopt the concept of microfinance to alleviate poverty among women (Morduch, 1998; Mayoux, 1998; Rahman, 1999; Guntz, 2011).

However, there is an assumption that economic empowerment addresses gender problems and empowerment (Khan, 1999; Calves, 2009 Batliwala, Bezboruah, & Pillai, 2013). Therefore, IGAs are widely used by development agencies as a tool for improving women's situations and for supporting women's empowerment in developing countries (Khan, 1999; Banerjee & Jackson, 2017). For some organizations and individuals, to use Kabeer (2005)'s expression, microfinance is seen as a "magic bullet" for women's empowerment (2005). The Grameen Foundation, the pioneer of the microcredit movement, claims that the microcredit model holds the promise and premise for changing poor people's lives, especially those of women, while a parallel vision sees microfinance and microcredit as a false promise. Jairam Ramesh, the Indian Rural Development Minister, as cited in Banerjee (2017) issued a dismissive statement saying, "Microfinance has promised more than it has actually delivered, created more problems than it actually solved, and continues to promise much more than what it actually puts on the ground (p.64).

Specifically, studies have questioned the viability or the market-based measures of the IGA projects and their sustainability as well as their impact on women's empowerment (Khan, 1999). These studies came to various findings and conclusions. The following section summarizes the findings regarding viability and sustainability, as well as issues of the impact on women's empowerment. Reviews, some Meta-analysis studies, and some regional studies that highlighted the main questions about women's empowerment are reviewed. However, most of the studies are from Asia where the microcredit movement started and is more popular and well-documented.

IGA projects were used first to alleviate poverty and then adopted by NGOs to enhance women's empowerment. Therefore, the focus of the studies was on the viability and sustainability of the IGA programs and sustainability which are considered necessary but were not a sufficient condition of automatic transformation of economic empowerment into the intended change of power relative to women's positions in their families, organizations, and communities (Mayoux, 2010)". This approach generated theoretical and empirical critiques. The following section is a review of concepts and studies that explored the IGA projects as a tool for empowerment.

# Conceptual Aspects of the Income Generating Activities (IGAs), a Feminism Empowerment Approach

The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)' micro-credits movement was received with a wave of critiques from the feminists (Kabir, 2015). They argued that the IGA approach was inadequate to claim empowerment for women. The critique, which were posited that this approach is fully were promoted' and celebrated by the neoclassical economic theorists and neoliberal policymakers (Batliwala, 1994; Oxaal & Baden, 1997; Kabeer, 1999; Kabeer, 2005; Zand, 2011; Bateman & Chang, 2012). According to Tasli (2007), the neo-classical economic model or the neoliberal approach focuses on economic growth and considers women as an untapped resource that needs to be utilized to boost the efficiency of the economic performance of an organization, region, or country. The approach hypothesizes that efficiency leads to more economic participation of women, which will automatically increase equity and enhance gender issues.

Conceptually, the IGA initiative is based on the neoclassic economic or the neoliberal approach (Batliwala, 1994; Oxaal & Baden, 1997; Kabeer, 1999). Therefore, it is seen as an inconsistent tool with an ultimate goal of women's empowerment. Some scholars have criticized the approach and argued that these humanitarian efforts are done only to add a human face to neoclassical economic policies and market failure which are responsible for the inadequate distribution of wealth and power and the spread of severe poverty (Tasli, 2007; Cornwall, Gideon and Wilson 2008; Ali, 2012; Faki et al., 2012). Empowerment is defined by the feminists as a multifaceted phenomenon. Multifaceted aspects that address issues of disempowerment require dealing with the multidimensional origin of the problem rather than focusing on one dimension as do IGAs, which focus mainly on the economic dimension of disempowerment. The aspect of the process suggests that a solution should consider long-term sustainable solutions and not shortterm, mostly unsustainable projects. The mechanism of economic empowerment does not challenge the status quo; rather it actually maintains the existing power relations systems, which are mostly patriarchal (Kabir, 2015). Therefore, feminists have signaled that this phenomenon is actually conflicted with the ultimate aim of empowerment (Kabeer, 2001). It is cited that some research found that women are used as a front point to get the funds and male family members are the ones who actually use the credit. Other studies have found that women take the credit, but males control the loans (Goetz & Gupta, 1994; Montgomery, Bhattacharya & Hulme, 1996; Kabeer, 2001). Other studies have found that credits were used to pay dowries for daughters in some regions such as India. Some authors and researchers have argued that targeting economic empowerment as a

focal point through microcredit will not affect the power dynamics in households, but rather will result in shifting the financial burden onto women and who will end up with even greater disempowerment. For instance, Mayoux (2011) speculated that, "Women may not only fail to benefit, but may be seriously disempowered as they struggle to meet savings, loan repayment, and insurance premiums with increased workloads and little control over income." (p.6). Zand (2011) arrived at a conclusion supporting this claim which he noted that while women are economically empowered, the revenues they earn are directed to the well-being of the entire family which means the only result is a shift of the economic burden Therefore, feminists argue that women's disempowerment can only be addressed by confronting the structural factors of subordination, such as patriarch and capitalist economic systems (Molyneux, 1985; Goetz & Gupta, 1994; Bernasek, 2003; Kabeer, 2005).

A grassroots movement emerged as an alternative to the microcredit iterative and is promoted by feminists. Kabeer (2005) provided general features of the intended radical approach that entails a comprehensive understanding of the nature of inequality that targets structural changes. She indicated that, "A more viable alternative is represented by organisations which combine financial services with other forms of support and which use group based strategies to build organisational capacity of the poor." (p. 4717). However, the need for external intervention has always been a challenge for the grassroots movement advocates. In her proposal, Kabeer dismissed the effectiveness of the traditional alternatives of charity, patronage, welfarism, and subsidies. She

determined that these alternatives are of no help for the poor and only maintain the status quo (2005).

# Income Generating Activities (IGAs) and Women's Empowerment in Empirical Studies

Scholars also challenged the claim that these projects will succeed in increasing incomes of the poor and provide a sustainable source of income. These studies challenged the claim that the transformational effect of economic empowerment transforms into gender empowerment. Issues such as the commercial viability measures, sustainability, and the transformation mechanism received several critiques. Findings about the effectiveness and sustainability of IGAs in generating maintainable income and the impact on women's empowerment have been mixed (Banerjee & Jackson, 2017; Huis et al., 2017). Some studies claimed that the IGAs model was a success (Khandker, 2005), while other studies, including four meta-analyses (Duvendack et al., 2011; Stewart et al., 2012; Yang & Stanley, 2012; DuvendackPalmer-Jones & Vaessen, 2014; Awaworyi, 2014) found no evidence of poverty reduction or impact on women's empowerment associated with IGA programs. Furthermore, some studies claim that IGAs boost women's empowerment while others highlighted negative impacts of IGAs on the situations of women (Mayoux, 2010; Bateman, 2010; Dichter & Harper, 2007; Karim, 2011; Roodman, 2011).

Some studies found a positive relationship between microcredit programs and women's empowerment. For instance, Hashemi, Schuler, & Riley (1996) conducted an assessment of two credit programs in Bangladesh and were able to identify women's

empowerment indicators. These indicators include: economic security, small and large purchases, major decisions, not being dominated by family, political and legal awareness, participation in campaigns and protest, and contribution to family support. Analogously, IFAD conducted an evaluation of the seven years of experience of the IGAs projects that were launched in 1996. The evaluation involved issues of both efficiency and the impacts of the projects. The evaluation suggested that these projects had a positive impact on beneficiaries. For example, the IGA projects were found to have had a significant impact on the socio-economic status of females (FAD, 2005).

Khan (1999) studied the impacts of Jamalpur Ayesha Abed Foundation (AAF) projects in 41 sub-microcredit centers in the Jamalpur district in central Bangladesh. The researcher used quantitative and qualitative research methods. Surveys, interviews, and focus-group discussions were employed in data the collections. The aim of the study was, among other things to explore the manner in which these women valued the credit services and to examine the change in gender relationships in their households. The study found that women value stable wage employment opportunities over credit. The women in the study believe that stable jobs help them promote economic and social empowerment because they have more control over their wages than they do on returns from business, over which men usually have more control. The study revealed that 50 per cent of women's loans are used by male family members. It also found that there are some positive impacts regarding the expansion of women's mobility, because in the subcenters women are exposed to diverse life experiences through meeting and sharing ideas with other beneficiaries in the project. This phenomenon helped those women gain

bargaining power and broke their isolation and powerlessness. Women became economically independent, and the quality of their lives improved. Yet, the study noted that gender roles and relations do not change easily; the process is gradual.

Hashemi, Schular, and Riley (1996) investigated the relationship between the Grameen Bank and the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) program and women's empowerment. The study used ethnographic, a sample survey and a case study to collect data from beneficiaries in six villages in Bangladesh. The researchers developed operational measures of empowerment that consisted of eight indicators. The study found that the program had a significant positive impact on all the dimensions of women's empowerment identified by the eight indicators as well as with a composite indicator of empowerment. These indicators involved "mobility, economic security, ability to make small purchases, ability to make larger purchases, involvement in major household decisions, relative freedom from domination within the family, political and legal awareness, and involvement in political campaigning and protests" (p.638). The study also found a positive association between these programs and a reduction of violence against women.

Conversely, some studies investigated the association between microcredit and women's empowerment and found mixed results or no meaningful positive impacts.

These studies indicated that that micro-finance is not a panacea (Kabir, 2015), though it facilitates poverty reduction and enhances women's empowerment. Investing in women's solidarity as social capital can make a significant contribution to women's empowerment, but it requires several necessary conditions such as supporting norms system and social

networks (Mayoux, 2001; Kabir, 2015). For instance, Awaworyi (2014) conducted a meta-analysis of the impact of microfinance on five dimensions of women empowerment. These dimensions include; mobility, decision-making, control over finance, awareness, and women's assets. Three meta-analysis tools were used to identify the relationship among the articles analyzed. Awaworyi used fixed effects-weighted averages, precision effect, and funnel asymmetry tests (PET/FAT), in addition to the multivariate meta-regression analysis (MRA). The study found no evidence of a positive impact of microfinance on women's empowerment.

A similar conclusion was reached by Albee (1994). Referring to UNICEF's programs in North Africa, including those in The Republic of the Sudan, Albee indicated that the impact was not clearly evident. She suggested that the impact of the UNICEF's microcredit and IGA programs on women were mixed. She concluded that the impact on women is uneven and inadequate. Cole (2014) conducted research to examine the perception of seven women regarding their economic opportunities and sense of empowerment in Cape Town. The study found that women's empowerment experiences vary based on each woman's unique context, such as cultural upbringing and family structure. Another result showed that a lack of confidence regarding their economic abilities often negatively affects women's empowerment. The research also found that local communities are becoming more accepting of efforts toward women's empowerment.

Using a Photovoice methodology, Sutton-Brown (2011) conducted a qualitative study to understand how six women in Mali perceived and experienced empowerment in

relation to their participation in a microfinance program. The study documented their reflections on their experiences with empowerment and found that microfinance has a mixed effect on various dimensions of the perceptions of the women regarding empowerment. The study concluded that empowerment is a complex construct that is beyond the financial paradigm.

Drolet (2005) designed her qualitative research to explore women's understanding of their situation and experiences in a "Group Guaranteed Lending and Savings" micro credit loan project sponsored by Save the Children (USA) in Cairo, Egypt. The study used in-depth interviews, focus groups, direct observation, documentation, and memos to gain understanding of women's experiences. It concluded that empowerment is a complex and a multidimensional phenomenon and that, "While micro credit programs may assist women in meeting their practical gender needs, it is not sufficient for women's empowerment. Long-term strategic and integrative strategies across sectors (health, education, employment) are required" (p. 254).

In a qualitative case study, Zand (2011) explored the understanding of changes in gender roles and relationships regarding the way that women experience microcredit projects in Afghanistan. The study investigated whether and to what extent microcredit projects enhance women's empowerment and change intra-household power dynamics. Qualitative data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions with women from the Qarabagh, District of Kabul Province in Afghanistan. A group of non-microcredit projects clients was obtained for the sake of comparison. The study found no clear evidence that these projects enhance women's empowerment. For instance, the

study found that microfinance projects had little effect on decision-making power and gender roles in households. Women's roles are still restricted to activities inside their homes while men usually work outside. Some women reported that microfinance projects enhanced their feelings of self-worth and courage because they were able to contribute to the household well-being and hence gained some control over household financial decisions. However, while economically empowering, women's resources have been used for the well-being of the entire family. The author concluded that empowerment is a multifaceted concept that cannot be achieved only through providing microcredit for women. Such change in gender roles and power dynamics is a process that requires collaborative efforts and activities from various spheres of Afghan society. Nonetheless, microfinance has the potential to be one of the contributors to this process.

Some studies claim that microcredit has affected women's empowerment negatively and has, in fact, worsened women's lives (Bernasek, 2003). For example, Zaidi et al., (2007) conducted a study in Pakistan to investigate the effect of microcredit projects of six organizations on women's empowerment, namely the effect on decision-making. The study findings suggested there was a significant decrease in women's empowerment in the family across all indicators of decision-making.

Banerjee and Jackson (2017) conducted an ethnographic study in three villages in Bangladesh where they analyzed the role of NGOs' microcredit projects in poverty alleviation from the perspective of the receivers of microfinance. Their study found that these microcredit projects in fact aggravated poverty and increased vulnerabilities instead of creating empowerment among the beneficiaries. The researchers concluded that

microcredit increased levels of indebtedness as well as the economic, social and environmental vulnerability and disempowerment among women. The results of several other studies agreed with the findings of Banerjee and Jackson (2017), that several forms of economic, social and environmental vulnerability have been detected and documented. As women's empowerment is a process, it can be said that the ongoing discourse around vision, strategies, and approaches is part of the process. In the next section of this paper the discourse will involve the effectiveness of IGAs as a tool for empowering FSWs in relation to HIV AIDS issues.

## Income Generating Activities (IGAs) Projects in The Republic of the Sudan

Due to the humanitarian crises in The Republic of the Sudan, several international organizations have started working in the country. Though microcredit and incomegenerating activities, specifically with women, started in the eighties, few of the studies and reports are available online. Furthermore, the political orientation of the government has affected humanitarian work. For instance, the government has constantly suspected the international organizations' agenda, and has repeatedly suspended their work. In 2009 the Sudanese government expelled most of the working international NGOs following the ICC decision issued against President Omar AlBashir (Okeke, 2011; Potapkin, 2009). As a result, reports of statistics and studies to evaluate the NGOs' IGA projects are extremely rare (Abukasawi, 2006). In this section the researcher intends to review all of the available data regarding income-generating activities. Most of these activities targeted both men and women. In the projects carried out before the popularity of the

empowerment concept, with the purpose generally focused on supporting self-reliance and economic independence of participants.

# IGAs in The Republic of the Sudan: Empirical Studies' Findings

According to the International Labour Organization [ILO] (1987), the first income-generating activity in The Republic of the Sudan was initiated by the ILO in 1985 when, in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a Revolving Fund to finance IGA projects was established for refugees in five areas in the Eastern and Central Republic of the Sudan. The Fund was intended to support growth and promote self-reliance in small-scale businesses provided for group (83) and individual projects (6). The beneficiaries totaled 446, with 12 of them being run exclusively by females. The total amount of the fund was US \$363,046, which was distributed among small and medium-sized projects. The projects were implemented in phases based on evaluation of their operations. In addition to funding, the project provided skill training and technical support for the beneficiaries. Project activities included manufacturing, agricultural production, and processing. The evaluation mission report, as cited in the ILO (1987), showed that the IGAs' approach had demonstrated effectiveness and potential and achieved impressive results among the poorest of the refugees and the Sudanese. In addition to providing work opportunities to the beneficiaries and products to the local markets, 96% of the projects were able to fully recover their funding (ILO, 1987).

Another organization that focused on women's empowerment through IGAs is the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). This organization started its work in The Republic of the Sudan in 1979, concentrating on rehabilitation of the irrigated farming sector. The overall project goal was to improve the livelihoods in poor rural areas in The Republic of the Sudan. However, in the period 1995-2002 the organization introduced a revolving fund to finance income-generating activities for women. The aim was to empower poor women in rural areas through building the capacity of grass-roots organizations. Specific focus was placed on gender issues to mitigate women's inequality status regarding their weak participation in decision making and involvement in political issues that affected their lives. White Nile was one of the targeted states and the project was implemented in Ed Dueim, El Geteina, Jebelein and Kūstī in 1995-2002 (IFAD, 2007).

An evaluation of the impact of the project on women's empowerment and gender issues is not available in the IFAD (2007) report or any other online document. However, this researcher lived in a village that was targeted by the IFAD's IGA revolving fund during that period. From personal knowledge I know the recovery rate in my village was low. However, the spirit of independence among women was weighty. I can safely say the women in my village were not the same after the implementation of the project. Their feeling of being active agents in the village had changed the conventional stereotyping of the image of the women in the community. Several women had started new businesses by themselves, which is not the norm in rural areas in The Republic of the Sudan. At one time, all small shops in my villages were owned and run exclusively by women. Not only was the women's association active in the village, its members participated with their products in fairs at the national level and won prizes.

The World Food Program- Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping unit: The Republic of the Sudan [WFP-VAM], (2009) provided an assessment of the food security in White Nile to estimate the prevalence of such security among the targeted group. The report mentioned the WFP's partnership with the Fellowship for Africa Relief (FAR). The FAR organization provided funding for IGA projects in Kusti localities. The report appraised the experience and described it as successful and promising, but no details of the magnitude and type of impacts were reported (WFP The Republic of the Sudan unit, 2009).

Abukasawi, et al. (2006) conducted a study in four states in the Republic of the Sudan, including Khartoum state, to analyze the status of the microfinance sector in the country. A clients' survey and an NGO survey were utilized. The NGO/CBO survey included 12 working organizations in The Republic of the Sudan. The results reveal that few of the organizations had started in the eighties, while the majority (around 91.6 %) started after full implementation in 2000 by the current government of the economic liberalization policy and the structural adjustment programs (SAPs). For the clients' survey, the researchers randomly selected 75 clients of microfinance and found that almost half of the projects were funded by the formal financial sector under the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). This strategy was developed by the World Bank in a compliance with the MDGs that aimed to reduce poverty by half by the end of 2015. It should be mentioned that microfinance programs from the formal financial sector that focused on financial viability are not included in this study. The study is limited to microcredit projects provided by the NGOs to empower women. The survey of

Abukasawi et al. (2006)'s study found that almost half of the projects are funded by NGOs. Most participants of NGOs' microcredit clients mentioned that the lending procedures were simple, but 58% of them said that the loans were small. However, the study did not report the impact of the project as perceived by the participants.

Abdalla (2009) conducted PhD research to investigate the nature of women's empowerment promoted by the Sudanese Women General Union (SWGU). Among other strategies, the study assessed the impact of the SWGU savings and microcredit projects for women. It used a combined methodology, where quantitative data were generated from the national surveys, censuses, previous studies and reports, while qualitative data were collected from field research using group discussions and in-depth interviews. The study sample included 300 female beneficiaries of the IGA projects from the Khartoum and Notrth Kurdofan States. A sample of non-beneficiaries was interviewed for comparison. The study found that the SWGU had funded 1475 savings and microcredit projects for poor females between 2000 and 2005. From the data analysis the researcher found that the majority (62.3%) of women who took these loans were married. Most of the participants engaged in business due to external factors such as the death or absence of a husband. The main reason that the majority of the women initiated or joined businesses was to support their families. However, it was found that 81% of those females initiated their own idea for the business and only 12.3% got their ideas from a husband or family member. The researcher observed that the majority (67%) of the projects were in the service sector. The participants justified this choice saying the work in the services sector is easy to manage, does not require advanced skills, and can be done within the household. Furthermore, products from this sector generate a quick return because they are related to immediate daily needs.

The study found that the average recovery rate of these loans was 53.2% during the period 2001-2003. It showed no statistical difference in women's contribution to household expenses between the IGA beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. The study pointed out that the overall poor infrastructure and services and low development in the country, combined with the high rate of poverty, had unique impacts on female entrepreneurs. Yet, the study found, 64% of the beneficiaries managed to save some money after deducting their costs and household expenditures. The study concluded that SWGU's IGA projects have been instrumental in making economic and social impacts on females. These projects facilitated raising awareness among beneficiaries, increased their incomes, and raised their ability to be involved and to make decisions in their families. On the other hand, the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)' work among people who live with or are at-risk of HIV/AIDs has been challenging. The Sudanese government suspected the international organizations were trying to advance a certain agenda through promoting HIV/AIDs programs. As recently as 1998 the government denied the significance of HIV/AIDs prevalence among the Sudanese. However, starting in 2004, the government began to collaborate with the international community to address the problem (Berry 2015). Since then, there has been collaboration with the medication and awareness programs among peoples who live with HIV/AIDs.

Despite the reverse in positions, political support from the government is still verbal with no tangible financial support or resources mobilization to fund activities in

the HIV response. Religious leaders continue to oppose some types of interventions, such as the use and promotion of prevention methods beyond abstinence. Specifically, the opposition of religious leaders to HIV-related interventions is still active, taking such form as opposition to the promotion of condom use and support for FSWs. Due to the highly intolerant environment, targeting and supporting of people at risk or living with HIV/AIDs cannot be initiated without great support from the government. Therefore, NGOs in The Republic of the Sudan have restricted their work in relation to HIV/AIDs to awareness programs. Only recently, the government launched a collaborative pilot program that targets the MARP groups. It incorporates microcredit and awareness-training packages to empower the most at-risk women, including tea sellers and FSWs in The Republic of the Sudan.

According to my online search, this is the only research conducted to understand the impact of IGA projects on women's empowerment in The Republic of the Sudan. The following section elaborates more on the program details.

# Income Generating Activities (IGAs), HIV, and Women's Empowerment: Research Findings

As discussed above, Income Generating Activities (IGAs) have been adopted largely as a tool to empower women. The use of IGAs was recently expanded to empower some of the most vulnerable groups or the most-at-risk population, MARPs, who are at the risk of being infected by HIV (Dworkin & Blankenship, 2009; Arrivillaga & Salcedo, 2014). These interventions usually incorporate education and awareness with microcredit. Arrivillaga, Salcedo, and Pérez (2014) noted that the implication and

replications of these models have increased since 2006. It has been argued that microcredit, such as IGA projects, is seen as a promising tool to alleviate the economic impact of HIV/AIDS for infected and MARPs groups as it addresses the structural vulnerability associated with HIV (Dworkin and Blankenship, 2009; George, Blankenship, Biradavolu, Dhungana, and Tankasala, 2015; Hargreaves et al., 2009; Fonner, Kennedy, O'Reilly, and Sweat, 2014). Dworkin and Blankenship (2009) summarized the rationale behind selecting IGAs as an effective tool to empower MARPs groups. They highlighted their rationale in the following:

- First, IGAs boost women's financial independence, increases feelings of selfconfidence, and positively affects the power balance within relationships.
   Empowered women will be less dependent on exchanging sex for money or
  material goods and will be able to negotiate safe sex.
- Second, IGA programs can serve as a platform for building social capital, enhancing participants' access to resources that otherwise are not attainable.
- Third, education and skills training can be provided and integrated with these IGA projects (Dworkin & Blankenship, 2009).

In 2003, the World Health Organization (WHO) started working with Individuals, Families and Communities Framework (IFC), integrating the health services with other components to improve outcomes. Accordingly, in the field of HIV, WHO and partners developed a model that incorporates HIV/AIDS awareness programs with IGA projects, mostly targeting MARPs, to empower women. FSWs are considered one of the most atrisk population segments. It is noted that the prevalence of HIV is significantly higher

among sex workers than in the general population. It has been found that "female sex workers are 13.5 times more likely to be living with HIV than all other women, including in hyperendemic countries" (UNAIDS 2014, p.2). Kerrigan et al. (2013) reported that prevalence of HIV among sex workers in sub-Saharan Africa is 36.9% higher than the global rates. The UNAIDS (2012) recommendations included community empowerment as a necessary element of sex worker interventions.

Community empowerment is defined as "a process whereby sex workers take individual and collective ownership of programmes in order to achieve the most effective HIV responses and take concrete action to address social and structural barriers to their broader health and human rights" (World Health Organization, United Nations Population Fund, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Global Network of Sex Work Projects, The World Bank, 2013, p.4). The WHO recommended, among other projects, that community empowerment for sex workers should emphasize meaningful participation by sex workers in all aspects of the intervention, starting with program design, implementation, management, and evaluation (2013).

According to UNAIDS's recommendations; several intervention projects took place around the world, specifically in the hyperendemic countries. These interventions, delivered through a community-empowerment model, included awareness about sex workers' rights, in addition to providing a range of services that included providing IGA projects. The experience of HIV-response intervention is relatively new and, as Fonner et al. (2014) indicated. The effectiveness of these interventions on HIV-related outcomes

has not yet been synthesized. The following section includes some of the studies that were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the HIV response interventions.

#### HIV Response Interventions: Research Findings

Fonner, et al. (2014) conducted a review of the electronic databases from 1990-2012 on outcomes related to HIV prevention, including behavioral, psychological, and social outcomes. Accordingly, 12 studies that met the study's criteria were selected for the review. Even though the studies were from around the globe, half were conducted in sub-Saharan Africa. The target populations were women including some sex workers. Seventy-five percent of the interventions included some form of microfinance. However, few of the studies found significant intervention effects on condom use, number of sexual partners or other HIV-related behavioral outcomes, while most studies showed no significant change. Fonner, et al. (2014) concluded that evidence of influence of the IGA interventions on HIV related behaviors and outcomes are inconclusive.

Arrivillaga and Salcedo (2014) conducted a review of published articles on micro credit and HIV during the period from 1986 to 2012 and articles published electronically from 1996 to 2011. These searches yielded 14 studies including an evaluation of the Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS and Gender Equity (IMAGE) projects and female sex workers. The majority of these studies were in projects in Africa. The findings showed that microfinance-based interventions have positive impacts, with participants experiencing a boosting in economic welfare, equity status, and empowerment and a decrease in intimate-partner violence. However, the effect depended on the type of context of each project.

Arrivillaga, Salcedo, and Pérez (2014) conducted a pre-post quantitative research to evaluate the impact of microfinance, entrepreneurships and adherence to treatment (IMEA) interventions for 48 women living with HIV/AIDS and other related diseases in Colombia. The study found that intervention is partially effective. There were beneficial effects on the health outcomes, but only one-third of the participants were able to develop and maintain a legal operating business. The study concluded that the IMEA project needs to be framed in a different context in order to be considered for implementation as a public health program.

Hargreaves et al. (2010) used ground theory to conduct qualitative research to evaluate the impact of an IMAGE project in rural South Africa, where a gender-focused training component was integrated with microfinance programs in order to initiate a broader empowerment. Data were collected from multiple sources including documents analysis, observations, structured questionnaires (378), focus group discussions, and interviews (128) with participants. The analysis of data showed that the intervention helped reduce intimate- partner violence among participants; however, no clear evidence was found of a positive impact on sexual behavior among participants, households, or communities. The study concluded that viable intervention models based on integration of microfinance and health awareness necessitate further examination.

Kim et al. (2007) conducted a related study that aimed to evaluate the IMAGE intervention effect on women's empowerment in rural South Africa. The IMAGE intervention used microfinance program coupled with awareness training package to empower women. This training package includes HIV infection, gender equity, and

domestic violence awareness training sessions. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from 430 women in the study group and control group. The study traced the empowerment practices that caused improvement regarding domestic violence status. These practices are manifested in form of rejecting violence by women, women's attitude regarding assuming good treatment from their intimate partners, women quitting unhealthy and abusive relationships, and raising awareness among the public regarding partner violence. The study found that domestic sexual violence was decreased by above 50%. The study concluded that increased economic and social empowerment can decrease intimate-partner violence against women.

Reductions in violence resulted from a range of responses enabling women to challenge the acceptability of violence, expect and receive better treatment from partners, leave abusive relationships, and raise public awareness about intimate partner violence. Pronyk et al. (2008) conducted a two-year IMAGE intervention to evaluate the impact of combined microfinance and training intervention on HIV-risk behavior among young females in South Africa. The intervention was designed to cover eight villages and assessment results were compared to the results of the control group. Analysis of the quantitative data showed less probability of accepting unprotected sex among participants and higher levels of HIV-related communication and access to counseling. Qualitative data suggested a greater acceptance by families and communities of the discourse about HIV and sexuality. The study concluded that providing integrated microfinance with awareness programs positively impacted women's wellbeing and empowerment, which in turn contributed to reductions in HIV-risk behavior.

Wagner et al. (2012) conducted a study to assess the effectiveness of the Description of the Social and Economic Empowerment Program (SEEP) in Uganda. SEEP is a program that combines HIV medical care with microcredit. The researcher used a convenience sample of 30 adults. 43% of the sample were females. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and data were analyzed using content analysis to explore the effect of the microcredit on the economic, social, and psychological status of the clients. Majority of respondents indicated that the microcredit had a positive effect in their lives by boosting respondents' self-esteem and helped them involve more in their communities' activities. However, over 50 % defaulted payment. The study concluded that microcredit has the potential to empower people who live with HIV.

From the above-reviewed studies it is safe to say there is no conclusive evidence on the impact of microcredit and IGAs on the empowerment of females and FSWs. The following section previews The Republic of the Sudan profile and the context of the study. From the above- cited empirical studies it is obvious that there is no agreement on the ultimate impact of IGAs on women's empowerment, though there is great variation among the studies about the indicators used to access the IGA impact on women's empowerment. The researcher reviewed a considerable volume of literature about measuring and examining women's personal empowerment. Table 1 below compares the most popular models that deal with individual or personal women's empowerment. The heading indicators are classified according to Rowlands', (1997) model that defines empowerment in terms of challenging the prevailing power structure and giving more

control (power over), choice (power to), and influence (power within) to women. The vertical columns illustrate empowerment-indicators and the rows show the models.

**Table 1**Empowerment indicators by models

Model	Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Indicator 3	Indicator 4
	Power over/control"	"Power to/choice"		"Power from"
Г	ower over/control	rower to/choice	influence	change
Ibrahim and	Control over	Household	Domain-	Changing
Alkire	personal	decision-	specific	Aspects in one'
(2007)	decisions	making	autonomy	life
Malhotra,	Access to or	Household	Economic	Confidence in
Schuler and	control over	decision-	contribution to	community
Boender	resources	making	household	actions
(2002)	Access to, control	Finances,	nousenoru	actions
(===)	of cash,	resource		
	household	allocation,		
	income, assets,	spending,		
	unearned income,	expenditures		
	welfare receipts,	social and		
	household	domestic		
	budget,	matters		
	participation in	Child-related		
	paid employment	issues (e.g.,		
		well-being,		
	Mobility/freedom	schooling,		
	of movement	health)		
	Time use	Couple		
	Negotiation and	communication		
	discussion of sex			
Mayoux	Control over	Increased	Increased	Increase in
(1998)	personal	ability to	access to	networks for
	decisions	determine	income	support in
	Control over loan	parameters of	Increased	times of crisis
	use	household	access to	or for chosen
	Control over	consumption	productive	strategies to
	income from	and other	assets and	challenge
	loans and other	valued areas of	household	gender
	household	household	property	inequality

Model	Indicator 1 "Power over/control"	Indicator 2 "Power to/choice"	Indicator 3 "Power within" influence	Indicator 4 "Power from" change
	productive activities Control over productive assets and household property Increase in women's confidence and assertiveness Changes in women's aspirations and consciousness to challenge gender subordination	decision- making in favor of self Ability to defend self against violence in the household and community Enhanced perception of women's capacities and rights at household and community levels	Increase in skills, including literacy Increased mobility and access to markets Reduction in burden of domestic work including childcare Improved health and nutrition Increased autonomy and willingness to take decisions about self and	Participation in actions to defend other women against abuse in the household and community Higher valuation of girl children and other female family members Prioritization of provision of wage employment for other women at good wages
Yount et al., (2015) Women's agency model	Freedom of movement in public spaces and vocalization of views	Awareness of the rights of women vis-à- vis men, especially related to violence against wives.	others Women's influence in financial decisions	Participation in political action
Kabeer (1997)	Control over personal decisions	Household decision- making Ability to bargain and negotiate	Control over resources: incomes, savings, loans, properties, etc.	Participation in public actions Participation in modern society: education, employment, civil society organizations, et cetera

Model	Indicator 1 "Power over/control"	Indicator 2 "Power to/choice"	Indicator 3 "Power within" influence	Indicator 4 "Power from" change
Pitt, Khandker, and Cartwright (2003)	mobility	Decision- making authority within the household Incidents of male violence	Women's decision- making authority regarding common household purchases Control over income	change
Zimmerma (1995)	nn Perceived control Self-efficacy Motivation control Perceived competence	Critical awareness Understanding causal agents	and savings Skill transfer across life domains	Community involvement Organizational participations Coping behavior
Hashemi, Schuler, and Riley (1996)	Women's freedom of movement in access to public places Women's control over their money and properties.	Making decisions individually or jointly with husband	Economic security  Ability to make small purchases Ability to make large purchases	Community participation
Rowlands, Jo (1997)	Ability to formulate and express ideas and opinions Ability to interact outside the home Ability to organize own time Sense that things are possible	Ability to learn, analyze, and act Ability to interact outside the home	Ability to obtain and control resources	Ability to participate in and influence new spaces

Source: Collected by the researcher from different studies

## **The Study Conceptual Framework**

Building on the literature review, the conceptual framework of the study is rooted in the feminist theory combined with the program logic framework to provide a real-life approach for the analysis. The program logic framework is an effective tool for evaluating the effectiveness of the neoclassical approach to women's empowerment. The framework also incorporates the Core Self-evaluations (CSE) as a base for selecting the study empowerment indicators (Chang et al., 2012). The following section includes the process of building the conceptual framework using the logic program of program theory.

# The Logic Model of the Program Theory

The logic model is a graphical representation of the mechanism of regarding the manner in which a program works. It links the input, the process with program outcomes (Hayes & Howard, 2011). As explained above, the study examines the effect of the project on three areas: the output, the process, and the outcomes. Examining the perceived impact requires a model that links Theoretical bases of the study to the practical outcomes. The program is a plan that sets specific activities to achieve a specific purpose (Jean-Francois, 2014). The logic model emerged in the field of program evaluation and it helps bridge the gap between theory and practice (Jean-Francois, 2014; Trochim, 1989). Jean-Francois (2014) defined the logic model as

A series of interconnected assumptions that can lead to a set of desired outcomes.

Assumptions are beliefs about conditions expected to be met or satisfied by the program and the participants in order for the program to be successful.

Assumptions are based on a problem or a gap. Assumptions are also based on goals or objectives used to fill the identified gap. (2014, p.280).

The logic model, as Savaya and Waysman (2005) indicated, is a simple tool that helps identify and examine the manner in which the resources are used to create the program activities and the output in order to achieve the intended outcomes of the program. The logic model of the program theory has been gaining increased interest in recent years in developing, implementing, and evaluating projects (Jean-Francois, 2014; Savaya and Waysman, 2005).

The logic model allows for an examination of the program's process and not just a focus of the final outcomes and impacts (Ziviani et al., 2011). This feature is compatible with the feminism empowerment approach that emphasizes grassroots' participation on the empowerment process. Goodman as cited in Ziviani et al. (2011), indicates that examining the project process provides insight into challenges and concerns during the implementation of the program. These features suggest that the logic model of program theory is useful in examining each step of the project in relation to women's empowerment. It is argued that the logic model provides a useful instrument that defines Theoretical illustration of regarding the manner that a project works (Ziviani et al., 2011). The following figure is a simple illustration of how the model works.

Figure 6

Logic Model

If ... Then ... If ... Then ...



Source: Derived from Jean-Francois (2014

JASMAR Project Components. This program under inquiry is one of the NGO IGA projects. The goal of the program is to empower Female Sex Workers (FSWs) and cause a behavior change to reduce the risk of HIV infection among MARPs in The Republic of the Sudan. The IGA approach is a microcredit tool promoted by the World Bank to empower women. The promise and basic assumption of the IGA model is that economic empowerment leads automatically to an increase in female participation and enhances their empowerment (Talsi, 2007). The program in this study provided the FSWs with microcredit combined with training programs. The following section contains a brief identification of the input, project activities, output, and intended outcomes and impacts of the project.

*Project Inputs*. Project inputs as defined by Jean-Francois (2014) are the "resources that nonprofit organizations use to implement programs, projects, or activities" (p. 282). The beneficiaries in this project received some resources in terms of microcredit or small loans to start a business along with a short training session on

project management. According to the WHO model, the microcredit comes combined with an HIV/AIDs awareness program. For the project to yield the desired impact, these IGAs should be commercially viable, successful, and sustainable.

**Project Output.** As Jean-Francois (2014) says, the program outputs are the program strategies used to execute the program mission, the activities of the project, and the participants. Inclusion of participants in the program activities is essential for detecting their contribution to the empowerment process in the project. In this study the outputs are the project activities, where the beneficiaries participate in the entire project process. For instance, their participation started before they received the loans, that is. effective participation begins with thoughtful planning for a new project. The beneficiaries are assumed to be the operators of the projects who are involved with the implementation of the organizational and its ongoing evaluation. The feminist approach emphasizes that empowerment is a process and that grassroots women need to be an important part of any project and have a voice, and not be passive receivers of funding (Batliwala, 2014, Kabeer 2001). The WB approach asserts that development should be for people, with people, and by people (Sen, 1990) Therefore, it is assumed that the beneficiaries will gain empowerment through participating in the IGA projects. Hence the second condition to achieve women's empowerment is to ensure that the beneficiaries have participated effectively in each step of the project. For this reason, an exploration of their perceptions of participation, implementation, and evaluation of the project is important.

The Project Outcomes. The ultimate outcome or influence of the IGA project on the beneficiaries is the final step in understanding how the beneficiaries in the project perceive the effect of the project on their personal empowerment and familial and community power relationships. The intended outcomes of any program depend on the program vision, which can be short-term, medium-term, or long-term (Jean-Francois, 2014). Various models agreed that empowerment is a long-term intended outcome; however, these models and schools of thinking vary in their approaches to achieving women's empowerment. For instance, Sen (1990) indicated that human development is the highest sense of freedom. Personal empowerment also involves a sense of freedom, whereby women can, without barriers, fully interact, affect, and be affected by family, community, and society in a fashion largely equal to their male counterparts (Taha, 1979). In addition to a sense of agency, Rowlands defined women's personal empowerment as "developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity and undoing the effects of internalized oppression" (1995, p.103). Empowerment involves the transformation from victimhood and feeling fragile to feeling independent, and secure, with a strong sense of self-worth (Kabeer, 2005; Mayoux, 2000). The following section shows the selection of the study's indicator. According to various models, empirical studies resulted in a variety of empowerment indicators. In the following section selection of indicators for this study is discussed.

### Core Self-Evaluations (CSE)

It is noted that there is no agreement about indicators of empowerment at the personal level, and empirical studies have yielded a variety of indicators. However, the

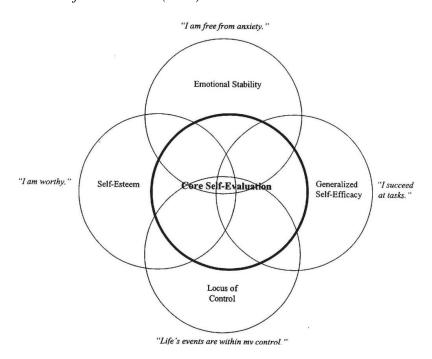
researcher observed that most of these indicators reflect personality merits linked to achievement, competence, leadership, and goal setting. On the other hand, the researcher also noted there are efforts in the psychology studies to develop one scale for what is called a Core-Self Evaluation construct. The core value or Core Self-Evaluations (CSE) is a cumulative or a higher order construct that "represents fundamental appraisals individuals make about their self-worth and capabilities." (Chang et al., 2012, p. 2). The construct originated in the field of psychology and has since been largely applied in different fields, such as administration, education, and empowerment studies (Chang et al., 2012). Erez and Judge (2001) validated the CSE construct and found that the core self-evaluation trait is a broad, latent construct comprising the four well-established personality traits of self-esteem, neuroticism, locus of control, and generalized selfefficacy. As defined by Chang et al. (2012), self-esteem is the "overall appraisal of one's self-worth", generalized self-efficacy is the "estimate of one's ability to perform and cope successfully within an extensive range of situations", neuroticism or emotional stability is "the propensity to feel calm and secure", and locus of control is "the belief that desired effects result from one's own behavior rather than by fate or powerful others" (p. 83). With the revision of the cited empowerment indicators, the researcher is convinced that using CSE is a better fit for examining women's personal empowerment.

The empirical studies on CSE suggested a positive association between this construct and goal setting, motivation and performance (Judge and Erez, 2001); CSE and strategic decision-making (Hiller and Hambrick 2005); job and life satisfaction, inrole and extra-role job performance, and perceptions of the work environment (Chang et

al., 2012). However, search via Google Scholar yielded no study that used the CSE in women's empowerment studies; Zimmerman (1990) suggested the core value construct indicators for personal empowerment. The following figure depicts how the CSE model works:

Figure 7

Core Self-evaluations (CES)



Source: Hiller and Hambrick (2005)

Connecting observations from Table 1 with the CSE model, the researcher was able to draw connections between the indicators from empirical studies and the traits in the CSE construct, i.e., generalized self-efficacy, self-esteem, locus of control, and emotional stability. Generalized self-efficacy is linked to personal mastery expectations

and is considered the primary indicator of behavioral change (Sherer et al., 1982).

Behavior change is one of the major goals of the JASMAR project for FSWs; in addition, the ability to change has been cited in several studies (see Table 1 above). Self-esteem is the self-worth of self-respect (Chang et al., 2012). Indicators related to self-respect are enormous in the empirical studies on women's empowerment (see Table 1). The same thing applies to locus of control and women's autonomy and independence.

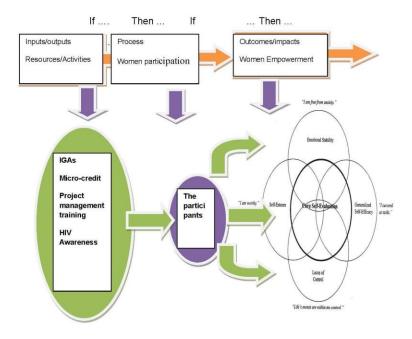
Therefore, the researcher suggests using CSE as an indicator of women's empowerment. The interview questions for this research are guided by the 12-item scale that developed and validated by Judge, Erez, Bono, and Thoresen (2003); (see Appendix A).

The next step after identifying the study indicators for women's empowerment is to decide how to trace the project impacts using these indicators. One of the models that the researcher found compatible with the empowerment assessment is the logic model. The following section provides insight into how the model can be used to achieve the aim of this study.

## Building Up the study's Conceptual Framework

As mentioned above, this study utilizes the logic model to examine the impact of the IGAs of the JASMAR project on FSWs. The empowerment indicators are identified using the CSE model of Hiller and Hambrick (2005). A conceptual framework that combines those two models directs the examination process of this study. Figure 7 below which shows a visual illustration of the study's conceptual framework.

Figure 8
Study's Conceptual Framework



Source: The researcher' own work

Using the above-explained framework, the study utilizes a qualitative research approach to listen to women's voices and their perspectives on the impact of empowerment in relation to their experiences with the JASMAR Human Security Organization IGA project.

# **Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a literature review regarding the research topic, with an introduction that shows the chapter organization. Then, the literature on empowerment was discussed. Two models, the neoclassical economic model and the feminism approach of empowerment were also discussed. Insights from the Islamic world about women's

empowerment were included in this section. The discussion was guided by feminist insights and the challenges they pose to the neoliberal model of empowerment. Empirical studies and their findings regarding the effectiveness of IGAs as a tool for empowerment were discussed. The chapter includes the conceptual framework of the study. The study utilizes the logic model and Core Self-evaluation models to build its framework.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The purpose of this proposed qualitative inquiry is to understand how women perceive their empowerment in relation to their experiences with Income Generating Activities (IGAs) provided by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). As part of the investigation, the study explores the effectiveness of the IGAs as a tool for empowerment. This research project intends to shed light on the Sudanese experience. The study examines whether the IGAs' projects have contributed to empowering FSWs in the JASMAR Human Security Organization project in White Nile State in The Republic of the Sudan Specifically, the study strives to explores the ways that ten women perceive and experience empowerment in relation to their participation in an IGA program in The Republic of the Sudan. The participants are part of a pilot project that targeted Most-at-Risk Populations (MARPs) for HIV/AIDS in the White Nile State in The Republic of the Sudan between 2011 and 2017. The study examines factors that enhance or hinder the success of IGAs for women in the project, focusing particularly on examining the sustainability of the IGA projects under study. Examining IGAs' market viability and success beside the projects' sustainability is an important step toward studying impacts on women's empowerment. The study describes and analyzes empowerment status and behavior change among the beneficiaries of the program using the Core Self-Evaluation (CSE) approach. The CSE is a high-order construct that involves four essential elements of personal empowerment indicators. These indicators are self-efficacy, self-esteem, locus of control, and emotional stability (Erez & Judge, 2001; Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002; Judge et al., 2003). In particular, the study

focuses on hearing the voices of these women, and how women perceive and experience empowerment in relation to their participation in IGA programs.

The study utilizes a wide ranging interdisciplinary theoretical framework and multidimensional theories to capture the impact on the personal/household and community/organization aspects of the program and to understand women's perceptions of the influence of the IGAs projects on their empowerment. This theoretical framework includes the neoliberal empowerment model, the feminism theory of empowerment, and the capability framework for understanding how empowerment works. The logic model of the program theory is used to assess the effectiveness of the NGO empowerment model. The CSE self-evaluation model is used to assess the influences on the personal aspects of women's empowerment. This case study utilizes a qualitative methodology to address the research questions. The researcher selected the interpretive case study to hear women voices regarding their perspectives on the impact of the empowerment program they experienced. As a qualitative study, the aim of the research is to understand and interpret the women's experience and to make some assertions regarding the phenomenon (Erickson, 1986; Stake, 2010). The researcher utilizes a triangulation technique for theorizing and for methods, as well as a triangulation of the data source and collection method. The theoretical framework is based on an interdisciplinary approach that includes models from a variety of specifications, while data collection methods include multi-source and several techniques that include in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Seidman (2013) indicated that in-depth interviewing allows for a deep understanding of the experiences of others. "Others" for this study are ten female

sex workers who are the beneficiaries of JASMAR IGA projects in the Kūstī locality in White Nile State in The Republic of the Sudan. The data is interpreted to identify themes and patterns in the participants' empowerment experiences. The process and analysis are designed to enrich the existing literature on the grassroots' empowerment process and experience.

The definition, design, data collection and analysis, and validation are based on Merriam's case study approach (Merriam, 1991). Scholars use different labeling for case studies, some consider it a methodology; others believe it is a research method, while still others deal with it as a research design (Wynsberghe & Khan, 2007). Various definitions were provided (Merriam, 1991; Stake, 2010; Yin, 2011). Merriam (1988) stated that "The case study offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon" (p. 41). However, the definition by Wynsberghe and Khan (2007) represents a better fit for this research study, given the complexity of the context of The Republic of the Sudan and the target population for the study. Wynsberghe and Khan (2007) defined the case study as "a transparadigmatic and transdisciplinary heuristic that involves the careful delineation of the phenomena for which evidence is being collected (event, concept, program, process, etc.)." (Wynsberghe & Khan, 2007, p. 80). Wynsberghe and Khan (2007)'s definition fits the multi-paradigmatic and multidisciplinary features of this study, noting that the definitions cited by Merriam and Wynsberghe and Khan (2007) are not contradictory, and the case study properties described by each remain almost the same.

Apart from the definition, the researcher reviewed four case study models, by Robert Yin, Robert Stake, Wynsberghe and Khan and Sharan Merriam. Each of those scholars has a different epistemological stance, defining case and case study, designing case study, gathering data, analyzing data, and validating data. The phenomenon under investigation within the context of the JASMAR project for FSWs is compatible with Merriam's (1991) approach. This study follows Merriam (1991) advice regarding methodology and the research method. This chapter will preview the proposed research methodology and its execution. The research methodology will be explained under three major sections: (1) methodology; (2) research methods; and (3) research credibility and research ethics

# Methodology

It is agreed among scholars that research questions and the nature of the problem should determine the research design. Understanding individuals' experiences and exploring perceptions can best be uncovered through conducting a qualitative case study. Qualitative inquiry properties, specifically case study design; to enhance understanding of the multi-reality and to help the researcher to shed light on one of the pioneer projects for women's empowerment in The Republic of the Sudan. In addition, the selection of a qualitative methodology for this research is based on the research questions that guide the study. Selecting a methodology that enhances answering the research questions should help to maintain the credibility of the study. For that matter several scholars indicated that a qualitative approach is the most suitable for studying individuals' experiences (Merriam, 1991; Stake, 2010). (Bassey 2003; Merriam, 1991; Stake 2010).

Merriam (1991) suggested that a case study design is appropriate when the research effort focuses on humanistic outcomes. As Stake (2010) stated; "The interpretations of qualitative research give emphasis to human values and experiences" (Stake, 2010, p. 37). This interpretive was meant "not to find the 'correct' or 'true' interpretation of the facts, but rather to eliminate erroneous conclusions so that one is left with the best possible, the most compelling, interpretation" (Bromley, 1986, p. 38). Using this unique case study of women's empowerment, the researcher aimed to gather detailed data about those FSWs, using a triangulation technique, to voice out grassroots which is an essential process of qualitative inquiry and empowerment theory. Interpretation of these data provides a thick description of the participants' experiences, thus enriching the existing literature and the accumulated knowledge to illuminate women's empowerment to readers around the world (Batliwala, 2014; Kabeer, 2005; Merriam, 1991). This description of this research process satisfies the characteristics of case studies suggested by Merriam (1991). The suggested characteristics are: particularistic, descriptive, heuristics, and inductive. These essential properties enhance studying the FSWs empowerment experience with the IGAs program, providing a thick description. The researcher delved into the Sudanese community sex-related taboos, relying on inductive reasoning to gain understanding of those FSWs empowerment experiences. The researcher hopes to expand the readers' understanding and guide them to discover new meanings of women's empowerment from this specific context.

#### **Research Methods**

This section includes a description and explanation of the researcher's choice of

site and participants, data collection, and organization and analysis of the collected data. As Merriam (1991) recommended, this research employed triangulation techniques, multiple sources of data are utilized as well as several modes of data collection, namely qualitative interviews, observation, and document analysis. The section discusses the means used for data collection, data analysis, and reporting.

## Selection of the Case and the Site

Women's empowerment is one of the researcher's areas of interest. As empowerment theory suggests that context matters. For that reason, the researcher decided to investigate the phenomenon in The Republic of the Sudan, where interaction of culture and religion has resulted in unique situations for the Sudanese women. In addition, the researcher comes from an interdisciplinary background in which personal economic backgrounds and focus on the field of development, particularly with issues of gender equality, made studying economic empowerment of women through micro-credits projects an appealing focus of interest.

Concentrating on studying the phenomenon of women's empowerment among the most fragile segments of the Sudanese community allows the researcher to highlight the distinguishing features of this experience in The Republic of the Sudan. The selected project is a case study of the experiences of empowerment among female sex workers in The Republic of the Sudan. In addition, while most NGO women's empowerment projects implied their goals, the JASMAR project is one of the few projects in The Republic of the Sudan that highlighted women's empowerment as an explicit objective. Though the project is executed in six states in The Republic of the Sudan (JASMAR, 20

17), this case study focuses on the White Nile State project. All ten beneficiaries of this project were selected to participate in this study. In addition, multiple sources for data were utilized. Specifically, individuals representing the stakeholders were interviewed. The partners of the JASMAR Project in White Nile are The United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA-The Republic of the Sudan), The Republic of the Sudan National AIDS Control Program (SNAP), the Sudanese Environment Conservation Society (SECS) and the Sudanese General Women Union (SGWN) (JASMAR, 2016). The General Manager of the Kūstī Office, the president of the SECS, the president of SGWN, the JASMAR project Kūstī office coordinators and the economic consultant of the project were interviewed, as was a representative of UNFPA- Sudan and SNAP.

## Selection of the Participants

The research uses purposeful sampling for participant selection. Purposeful sampling means the sample is not randomly selected, but participants are deliberately selected (Maxwell, 2012; Patton, 2002; Suri, 2011). Weiss (1994) as cited in Maxwell (2012) argued that it is not unusual for qualitative inquiry to purposefully select participants who are unique sources of information because they are privileged witnesses to an experience or a phenomenon or the case under investigation (2013). Patton, 2002 wrote:

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry,

thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations (p. 230).

Maxwell (2012) suggested, as well, that one justification for selecting a purposeful sampling strategy or consciously selection of participants or cases is when this specific selection is critical for testing theories or models that the researcher is interested in studying from the beginning. The participants in this study are the 10 beneficiaries in a JASMAR project for sex workers, a unique source of information about the experience. I used the entire 2012-2013 cohort of the JASMAR project with no exclusion for participation in the study. The beneficiaries in the cohort were ten women who have a formal experience with sex work. In addition, interviews involved key informants who are experts from the project administration. All the participants were adults over 18 years old. The participants' contribution is expected to enrich the study.

## **Data Collection Methods**

In qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument of the study (Glesne 2011; Stake 2010). The researcher designs the study, collects and analyses the data, and generates the findings and conclusions (Glesne, 2011). This poses a critical challenge to the researcher because, as Yin (2011) indicated, "The topics of inquiry do not fall within neat or well-established boundaries, and there always are surprises" (p. 25). To overcome the challenge, Merriam (1991) recommended excessive use of a qualitative data sources using rigorous triangulated methods for collecting data. This method requires a well-trained and skilled researcher who uses his or her personal experience and qualities, one who knows how to dig data from documents and follow certain procedures to ensure

careful observation and effective interviews.

This interpretive case study generates data from several sources representing the stakeholders in the JASMAR project, using a combination of data collection methods that include qualitative interviewing, observation, and documents analysis.

**Document Analysis.** Studying documents is a technique that can be used along with triangulation of data sources, in order to obtain high-quality information. Documents are of great significance in qualitative research because they can enhance credibility. Documents can help researchers understand the manner that things work. However, documents should be studied with caution because there is always a possibility that some data might be missed and that the analysis conclusions cannot be tested. Prior (2004), as cited in Stake (2010), noted:

If I were nowadays asked to give just one piece of advice to the novice researcher, it would be as follows: look at the documentation, not merely for its content but more at how it is produced, how it functions in episodes of daily interaction, and how, exactly, it circulates. (p. 89)

Even though qualitative interviewing is the main technique used in this case study to collect data from participants, this review will start with the first step of data collection; document analysis. Glesne (2011) pointed out that "Documents can raise questions about your hunches and thereby shape new directions for observations and interviews. They also provide you with historical, demographic, and sometimes personal information that is unavailable from other sources" (p. 85).

According to Patton (2002), documents include "Written materials and other documents from organizational, clinical, or program records; memoranda and correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries, letters, artistic work, photographs, and memorabilia; and written responses to open-ended survey" (p. 293). The researcher collected and used documents from various stakeholders in the project. These documents included bookkeeping from the participants, in addition to follow-up reports, monthly and annual case reports, evaluation and monitoring reports, and other documents from the JASMAR organization and partners. Patton (2002) also indicates that "Documents prove valuable not only because of what can be learned directly from them but also as stimulus for paths of inquiry that can be pursued only through direct observation and interviewing" (p.294). The researcher was able to make use of the collected data from documents to inform and enrich the path of inquiry.

**Observation.** Observation is another qualitative data collection tool. It is used to describe settings, activities, and participants and reflects the observer's perspective (Patton, 2002). As Patton (2002) indicates, the primary purpose of observational data is to describe the setting, people, and activities occurring in that setting. The description must be "Factual, accurate, and thorough without being cluttered by irrelevant minutiae and trivia" (Patton, 2002, p. 262). In observation, the researcher is just using the eyes to gain direct information, to understand ongoing behavior, to examine physical evidence, or to provide an alternative when other data collection tools are inappropriate (Morra-Imas & Rist, 2009).

Observation allows the researcher the opportunity to see and feel the expected and the unexpected as Patton (2002) expressed. Glesne wrote: "Through being part of the setting, you learn firsthand how the actions of research participants correspond to their words; see patterns of behavior, experience the unexpected, as well as the expected; and develop a quality of trust, relationships, and obligation with others in the setting" (2011, p. 63). Observation helps the researcher to understand the meanings. Glesne, (2011) wote: "When you observe and describe the interaction taking place, you invariably look for patterns in what at the first you might perceive as chaos and disorder" (p. 73). However, Patton (2002) noted that, "Scientific inquiry using observational methods requires disciplined training and rigorous preparation" (p. 260). The skilled observer should promote trustworthy and credible research through rigorous training (Patton, 2002)

Morra-Imas and Rist (2009) noted that "Observation is a useful data collection tool when the purpose of the evaluation is to collect benchmark and descriptive data or to document program activities, processes, and outputs" (p. 310). Therefore, for this case study, where it concerns collecting benchmarks of the participants' situation during the project lifetime, observation was an essential way to gain information. As mentioned earlier, the researcher was not able to travel to conduct the fieldwork but has, instead, used key informants. The researcher has interviewed some key informants, such as the program director, the economic consultant of the project and the program coordinator. The researcher used their observations to enhance triangulation. The interview questions were structured to include the remarks and observations of the project participants,

including references to their projects. The key informant protocol is included (see appendix C).

Qualitative Interviewing. Interviews are a useful interaction between a researcher and a participant. A face-to-face meeting gives the researcher an opportunity to observe the participants, their feelings, and their body language which gives depth to the analysis. As Patton indicates, the goal of interviewing is to gain understanding of other people's perspectives (2002, p.341). Seidman (2013) indicated that interviewing enables researchers to gain a deep understanding of the experiences of others. In this case, "others" will include ten female sex workers who are the beneficiaries of JASMAR IGAs projects in Kūstī localities in White Nile State in The Republic of the Sudan. Several terms are used to identify types of interviews. However, Yin (2011) argued that "The term qualitative interviewing was preferred over alternatives such as unstructured interviewing, intensive interviewing, and in-depth interviewing, because qualitative interviewing has become sufficiently diverse that, under different circumstances, it may include any of the variants in some combination" (p. 133). Glesne added that qualitative interviewing provides an opportunity for the researcher to learn about things that cannot be seen in observation (Glense, 2011). Furthermore, interviews are used to get unique information or explanations held by the interviewees, as well as to gather numerical collective information from interviewees (Stake, 2010).

**Design, Scheduling, and Conducting Interviews.** Glesne (2011) wrote; "An interview is between at least two persons, but other possibilities include one or more interviewers and one or more interviewees" (p. 102). Glesne (2011) named three methods

for collecting data using open-ended interviews: The informal conversational interview, the general interview guide approach and the standardized open-ended interview. In the first approach the researcher develops his or her questions upon the natural flow of conversation; the second one uses a guide to cover topics; and with the last one, the least open-ended, the researcher uses the same set of questions for each participant (Patton, 2002).

This case study used the general interview guide approach. Questions were formulated to gain understanding of FSWs experience in relation to their experience with IGAs. A set of open-ended questions has been developed to guide the qualitative interviews. Using a question guide allowed the researcher to ask additional questions during the conversation. Therefore, the researcher developed true open-ended questions that "allow the person being interviewed to select from among that person's full repertories of possible responses those that are most salient" (Patton, 2002, p. 354). The questions were structured in a way that avoids dichotomy-like and yes/no responses.

Alternatively, questions were formulated as an inquiry-based conversation to enhance the conversation flow as opposed to the inquiry approach (Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

However, the researcher ensured that for the clarity of the questions; each single question would be asked at a time to allow the participant to express her feeling or thinking about the topic asked without distraction.

The study used Seidman's (2013) three-interview series, which he argued allows the participants to revisit their experiences and the interviewer to examine and capture the participants' experiences. Following this method, the researcher conducted three rounds

of interviews, each 45-60 minute in length, in order to capture the depth and breadth of the experience of the participants.

The first round of interviews investigated each participant's specific context and background. The researcher focused on the participants' perceptions about their disempowerment. The focus was on self-identification of disempowerment and gender inequality among the participants. The reason for focusing on disempowerment as an alternative to focusing on women's empowerment is based on the researcher's knowledge about The Republic of the Sudanese community, where the term and definition of women's empowerment are not popular among random women, though well-known among elites and educated individuals. Uneducated women, such as the participants in this study, can easily relate to and identify with what they know very well in real life, which is the fact of their disempowerment as opposed to abstract notions.

The second round of interviews was focused on detailed information about the participants' experiences with disempowerment through their experiences with sex work and empowerment in relation to their participation in the JASMAR IGAs project. For the third round, the interviewees were made aware that the researcher was willing to hear about any matter that they perceived to be relevant, which the researcher had failed to cover, such as something important or an essential positive or negative effect of their experience during previous conversations. This last step allowed for the make-up of missing or the inclusion of omitted salient topics (Patton, 2002).

Interviews were conducted via WhatsApp. They were recorded via Audacity

Automatic Call Recorder (ACR), then saved to the researcher's personal laptop. These

folders were secured with a password, transcribed, then deleted permanently when no further action appeared needed. The list of interviewees included the ten project participants, in addition to key informants, such as the JASMAR Organization Kūstī Office Director, the project coordinator, the social worker, and the economic consultant of the project. The researcher first proposed to include the Women Union president (WU), and the National AIDs program representative in the interview list. However, according to political changes through the revolution in Sudan, it became impossible for the researcher to include them in the interviews. The researcher conducted the interviews in a convenient time that was selected by the participants in order to secure their privacy. The interviews were conducted during a two- to three-week period, which allowed the participants an opportunity to think more deeply about their experiences between the interviews. This timing helped the researcher to maintain rapport with the participants, as Seidman (2013) had suggested.

The questions of the interviews were designed to answer the research questions. In addition, these responses helped the researcher to develop a definition of empowerment from the point of view of female sex workers from grassroots women in White Nile State. This definition will shed light specifically on the understanding of the sex workers in the spectrum of empowerment/disempowerment. The responses also helped the researcher to gain insights from the participants regarding sex work, particularly as it fits into the spectrum of empowerment/disempowerment. Among others, these definitions will promote understanding of what the participants consider as empowerment in relation to their experiences with IGAs. In structuring these questions,

the researcher was aware that her role as a researcher requires, as Glesne (2011) indicated; to be an artist who carefully builds strategies for asking questions, crafting questions, choosing suitable procedures, and being creative in producing follow up questions. The researcher tried to be, as Glesne (2011) suggested; to be an interpreter and present understanding of the world of others, besides being a transformer and catalytic educator who identifies with the situation. The intention is to apply rigorous methods for conducting interviews that produce high-quality data to be systematically analyzed with the focus on aspects of credibility (Patton, 2002). Following is the questions guide for qualitative interviewing for this study.

Open-ended Questions' Guide. This section explains how open-ended questions were structured to answer the researcher's questions. Questions were designed to gain understanding about the beneficiaries' perceptions about the process of empowerment and disempowerment, their insights into the project activities and output, and their perceptions about the impact of the JASMAR project on their empowerment. The guide basically included four types of questions. The type one included background questions and questions seeking to understand the participants' experiences of the empowerment and disempowerment process through participating in the JASMAR project. A second level of questions that pertained to the manner in which the participants had been introduced to the program, their roles, and perceptions about the effectiveness of their participation. The third type of question was focused upon the participants' perceptions of their business. Are they satisfied? Do they think it is profitable and successful? Do they think it is sustainable? The final type of question dealt with the beneficiaries'

perceptions of the impact of the project on their empowerment status. Specific questions were asked covering the CSE and the latent traits associated with an empowered personality, which are self-efficacy, self-esteem, locus of control, and emotional stability. Questions around these four traits were guided by the 12-item scale for CSE developed by Judge, Erez, Bono, and Thoresen (2003). Questions in the interview protocol were drafted in English, but were translated into Arabic, the participants' language, and the interviewees' responses were translated into English.

## 1- Background and self-identification questions:

These questions were directed at the beneficiaries' personal information, education and skills, work experience, families, and socioeconomic statuses. These questions helped the researcher understand the manner that the interviewees define their identities, and the way that they acknowledge or recognize their qualities and skills.

2- Understanding the participants' experiences with the process of empowerment with the JASMAR project:

In this section questions were structured to help the researcher gain an understanding of the participants' role in the project. The responses helped the researcher understood the participants' perceptions about their feelings of ownership of the project, and the way that they perceive their successes failures, growths over time, as well as future plans for their business. A special focus was given to the beneficiaries' evaluation of the commercial viability of their business and chances for the sustainability of their projects. In addition, the researcher was able to

understand their perceptions and feelings about the challenges they face, their concerns, the opportunities seen or taken and the skills that they had gained.

This round also included questions pertaining to the situations of the interviewees before and after their interventions. Questions were structured to cover two basic areas; the beneficiaries' identification of the aspects of their empowerment/disempowerment before and after engaging the JASMAR intervention. The questions also focused on the obtainment of an understanding regarding the way the women perceive the impact of the project on their empowerment situation and on their core values. Specifically, questions were designed to gain understanding about how the beneficiaries perceive the impacts on their Core Self-evaluation in relation to their experiences with the JASMAR Organization intervention.

In relation to self-efficacy, an assumption was made that the competence expectations of the participants reflected they are the primary indicators of behavioral change (Sherer et al., 1968). Therefore, questions were asked about the participants' self-perceptions of their knowledge, skills, and success in life. Questions regarding the lives and work experiences of the beneficiaries before and after the JASMAR intervention focused on their self-perceptions about their ability to plan, to solve problems, to take work-related decisions, and to persist. In relation to self-esteem, questions were concentrated on the interviewee's feelings of self-respect, their reactions to stigmatization, their abilities to make decisions about movement and travel, and their choices about their bodies, time, and appearances.

Questions were asked to understand the women's perceptions about their sex work in relation to empowerment/disempowerment. Questions concerning the decision to get involved in sex work and in the JASMAR project were also included. In relation to locus of control, beneficiaries were asked about their perceptions of the reasons for their success or failure in life. Also, questions pertaining to their status of control and their perception of control were asked. These questions pertained the way the participants control and deal with their bodies, time, resources, and household and family decisions. Independence and autonomy are closely related to the concept of control. Inquiries revolved around women's ability to control their lives and solve problems, and their ability to contribute to the community. The inquiries also included questions regarding respondents' ability to negotiate, especially in relation to their clients, and the women's ability to negotiate rates, place and time for sex work, and to choose protection modes such as condoms. The participants were asked about their relationships to spouses and family, their assigned gender roles, their ability to solve problems in their families, and their ability to negotiate and to make decisions. Questions were also asked, with the intent of obtaining a greater understanding of the differences in the self-perceptions of self-worth of the women, before and after the interventions

In relation to emotional stability, questions were asked about the participants' feeling of security, centered on their connections to spouses/partners, families, and community. Questions were also asked about feeling threatened, fragile, or vulnerable in the community. Some indirect questions around the interviewees' participation in family events, sharing life, responsibilities, and participation in community life, were asked. The

inquiry was focused on the family and community attitudes and behaviors and the interviewees' reaction and defense process; in order to understand the interviewees' economic and emotional feeling of security (Schneier, 2010), before and after the JASMAR interventions.

# Data Analysis

Data analysis, formulation of findings and drawing of conclusions is a critical process to establish credibility in qualitative inquiry (Merriam, 1991). Data analysis is the process whereby the researcher uses his or her skills, utilizing the most suitable analyzing techniques to compress, consolidate, link, and to make sense of the data Merriam (1991) offered several dimensions of data analysis, which include analysis during the data collection process, devising categories, and theory building.

Conducting data analysis based on rigorous guidelines allows the researcher to draw findings and come to credible and trustworthy conclusions. The researcher followed a combination of the protocol of data analysis recommended by Merriam and thematic interpretative content analysis. Stake, as cited in Kohlbacher; argued that a case study is a research strategy, and "is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied. By whatever methods, we choose to study the case" (2006, p. 5). Merriam, too, referred to case study as a research design "Case study is a basic design that can accommodate a variety of disciplinary perspectives, as well as a philosophical perspective on the nature of research itself." (1991, p.2). Furthermore, thematic interpretative analysis is compatible with Merriam's case study analysis process.

Therefore, combining the two ways of analysis will add value to the study. Thematic

interpretative analysis is defined as "a set of analytical techniques (syntactic, lexical and thematic), in which systematic and objective procedures are employed to describe the content of messages, using qualitative or quantitative indicators that allow knowledge to be inferred" (Oliveira et al., 2014, p. 35). Merriam's approach, as well as a thematic interpretative analysis, emphasizes early or pre-analysis exploration or primary analysis, and treatment, or intensive interpretation (Oliveira et al., 2014). The strength of the qualitative interpretive content analysis is that "it is strictly controlled methodologically and that the material is analyzed step-by-step. Central to it is a category system which is developed right on the material employing a theory-guided procedure." (Kohlbacher. 2006, p. 10).

Oliveira et al. (2014) recommended using an interpretive content analysis approach in case studies. Cassell and Symon (1994) as cited in (Oliveira et al., 2014) argued that qualitative research is "less driven by very specific hypotheses and categorical frameworks and more concerned with emergent themes and idiographic descriptions" (2014, p.9). Therefore, combining the Merriam qualitative analysis with the interpretive content analysis will add an essential feature that will improve the analysis. The reason for incorporating a thematic interpretative analysis is that the intent of the researcher is to explore women's understanding of the concept of empowerment, meaning that, while generally the coding technique will be guided by the feminism and empowerment theory, an interpretation is seeking to catch new meaning to add to the accumulated knowledge based on a grassroots understanding. Despite the researcher's orientation pre-assumptions and biases, the researcher was ultimately open to

illumination gained from grassroots women in White Nile State in The Republic of the Sudan. Therefore, the researcher was able to make an informed decision regarding the data categories, based on feminism and the empowerment theory, yet at the interpretation stage, the researcher was open to new meanings and understandings from the women. However, the researcher is committed to avoid imposing her own ideas on the participants.

**Analysis During Data Collection.** Qualitative research is not a linear process; rather steps of data collection and data analysis run simultaneously (Merriam 1991; Huberman & Miles 2002). As Merriam indicated, "The process of data collection and data analysis is recursive and dynamic" (p. 123). Cotetz and LeCompte (1984), as cited in Merriam (1991), recommended that data analysis starts with a review of the research proposal. The purpose of concurrent processing is to prepare for the second step of data analysis. The purpose is to enhance an easy access to data, as well as to engage the researcher in an involvement with the data, and establishing familiarity and interaction between the researcher and his or her data. This is an essential step to approaching the analysis with the aim and research questions in mind, which will help focus the analysis around the research goals. Therefore, before collecting the data, the researcher revisited the proposal, which helped her to focus on collecting data regarding the research goal. During the data collection, the researcher started writing notes and comments. For that matter, analyzing during the data collection included simple data sorting. Early analysis provided the researcher with new insights that improved the researcher work. Huberman and Miles (2002) suggested that during the data collection a researcher can add to the

data source or add questions to interviewees as deemed to be needed. All data collected from observations, documents, and interviews were brought together to form the "case study data base" (Yin, 1984). As Merriam (1991) indicated, the organization of the data can be according to the source and/or dates. In this study, data were organized by source in a comprehensive primary resource package (Patton, 1980). Furthermore, and for easy access of data, each individual source data package was organized chronologically.

Devising of Categories. Once the collection of the data was completed, the researcher dived into an intensive analysis. Preparation for the analysis included accurate and precise transcribing of interview contents. This step was followed by reading through the collected data several times, applying careful observations, and then recording the notes (Huberman & Miles 2002; Maxwell, 2012; Merriam, 1991). This process, as Merriam indicated., helped the researcher to become connected to the data and effectively involved with it. This approach also helped the researcher to become familiar with the data and to easily identify general features, similarities, and differences.

Recording the notes and comments was critical at this juncture, which represents an entrance ramp for compressing and linking the data. Then the researcher utilized the data for the purpose of developing subsequent categories (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1991). Merriam (1991) indicated that "Units come from interview transcripts, observation notes, or documents. A unit can be a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph." (p. 123). The unit for this research meets the required criteria suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), whereby units are heuristic and interpretable or self-explanatory. This process helped the researcher with the coding process. Coding was conducted manually,

after establishing the interactive relationship with data in the previous steps. For that matter, the researcher proposed that coding should be conducted using the MAXQDA software package for data management. However, the researcher used a free trial version of the program to code the data and realized that using a manual coding approach would be more effective with this small data size. This approach is supported by Basit (2003), in which he conducted two studies to compare manual and electronical coding and concluded that the choice depends on the size of the sample and the time and the funding available for the researcher. As the study sample size is small and the budget is tight, the researcher decided to use manual coding. The researchers listened multiple times and wrote notes and memos with observations and remarks while listening. Then each interview was subscribed.

Coding in particular helped the researcher to identify categories. Qualitative analysis in the general and developing categories is largely intuitive (Merriam, 1991; Stake, 2010). For this reason, the researcher was committed to carry on a systematic and well-informed analysis to devise categories that are oriented around the purpose of thee research. Stake (2010) commented "We do much of this work intuitively. We use common sense. We follow certain routines. We triangulate. We follow the patterns of other researchers, as well as the patterns we ourselves used earlier. Sometimes we invent new ways to analyze and synthesize." (p. 134).

The researcher used personal disciplinary orientation, knowledge, insights, skills and creativity to pursue efforts, to make an objective examination of the data. The researcher exercised critical reflection on observations regarding relationships,

connections, and recurring regularities among data (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Examining and checking the researcher's own subjectivity and judgment allowed for noticing alternative themes. This step involved the influence of subjective knowledge. To minimize the subjectivity of the researcher, categories selection was guided by the theoretical framework of the study, specifically, the feminism and empowerment theory. In fact, interpretive content analysis features of informed selection of categories and making the categories the center of the analysis is recommended by Oliveira et al. (2014), to improve the analysis. This type of categorization was applied within both the case analysis and across the-case analysis (Merriam). This case study of the JASMAR Human Security Organization IGAs project for FSWs includes ten participants. Each woman has her own experience and story. Therefore, the analysis was performed on two levels, the individual as a standalone case, and the collective level. The researcher will select, within the case analysis and the cross-case analysis, the categories and dimensions to identify similarities and differences within and between the cases (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

The analysis started within case analysis, where the researcher wrote each individual case story. Huberman and Miles (2002) indicated that this early stage of write-up is usually descriptive, but essential for generating insights. Then, a cross-case analysis was conducted. Huberman and Miles (2002) wrote, "Cross case searching tactic is to force the investigator to go beyond initial impression, especially through the use of structured and diverse lenses on the data." (p, 19). A matrix of similarities and differences was created to enhance the cross-case analysis. The researcher created a

unified matrix of all the participant responses in order to organize the data according to the interview questions. Further, the interview questions were color coded according to the research questions. Reading over and over the matrix, the researcher was able to identify codes from the vocabulary used by the participants and their expressions in each response or interview question. Then, the researcher started coding line by line with more details. A mini matrix that associates interview questions with the identified codes was produced. To maintain the link between the interview questions and the research questions, the researcher kept the interview question color-coded according to the study questions.

This step helped the researcher detect alternative themes. "The juxtaposition of seemingly similar cases by a researcher looking for differences can break simplistic frames." (Huberman & Miles 2002, p. 18). The approach also helped with an examination of the strength and consistency of the relationships within and across the cases. The researcher maintained an informed selection of categories that follows Guba and Lincoln's (1981) specific criteria. The use of the criteria resulted in each selected category, which was mentioned by the majority of the participants, being retained. The use of the criteria also revealed areas of inquires that are not recognized or suggested by any of the participants as being critical to their stories. Selecting categories by participants (Merriam, 1991; Patton, 1980), is specifically important in empowerment studies, as the participants had the chance to be involved explicitly in the research process by selecting the research categories and themes. Following systematic guidelines helped in devising exhaustive, independent, yet mutually exclusive categories and themes

that reflect the purpose of the study (Merriam, 1991). Following the emergence of themes, the researcher chose to refine and reduce the categories and link the themes with the intent of identifying patterns. This process was achieved by following the recommendations of Oliveira et al. (2014) about selection based on theory. Reducing and refining categories requires a clear vision based on rigorous understanding of theory in the field of empowerment. As Oliveira et al., (2014) indicated, the strategy of depending merely on the emergent themes is useful and can give insights for a new area of research. While in areas of sound theories and rigorous research, it is more effective to use these previous efforts to inform the researcher's decisions regarding the selection of categories. Data analysis was followed by formulating the research findings. Based on the use of the findings, the researcher was able to draw conclusions that will inform the readers about women's empowerment in the context of The Republic of the Sudan.

Theorizing and Inference. The third and final level of the analysis is to move from description to abstract, to theorize about the phenomenon. At this level, the researcher will be able to provide a definition of women's empowerment from the perspective of the participants in the study. In addition, a description of the empowerment process will be provided based on the experiences of the FSWs in the study. For that matter, the perceptions of the participants regarding the outcomes of this experience will be interpreted. The researcher intends to capture and describe the accumulated knowledge and theories around women's empowerment by expressing those FSWs and reflecting their experiences and stories regarding empowerment intervention programs. The

researcher will produce a written final product of this micro-interpretation including research findings and conclusions.

# **Credibility and Research Ethics**

Qualitative research is concerned with producing credible knowledge in an ethical manner (Merriam, 1991). While Merriam used the term *internal validity*, this case study will replace it with the term *research credibility*. The term *credibility* is seen as corresponding to internal validity in qualitative research (Morrow, 2005). This section will discuss issues of research credibility and reflexivity. In addition, potential threats to the validity of the study and related limitations will be explained. Guidelines for research ethics will be laid out, namely steps to ensure that the participants in the study are treated with respect and that their identities are protected will be elucidated.

# Research Credibility

Conducting a qualitative research project is a challenging task. However, establishing credibility is becoming easier (Patton, 2002). In qualitative research, the researcher is typically the main research instrument (Glense, 2011; Stake, 2010; Yin, 2011). Therefore, instrument validation depends on the quality and training of the researcher, the quality and richness of the collected data, and the use of. rigorous analytical strategies, methods and tools (Patton, 2002). This section discusses measures that the researcher will take to maintain the research credibility. The research is designed in a way that maintains the research credibility. In other ways, credibility is a built-in feature throughout the research methodology, research design, literature review, triangulation of research method, and research conclusions. The first

steps toward maintaining research credibility started with the appropriate selection of the research methodology and design as Merriam (1991) advised. Qualitative inquiry is cited as the most appropriate methodology to understand the experiences of others? In addition, case studies designs are the most suitable to study a phenomenon or to tell a story of a group of individuals in a project. The experience of empowering a group of Female Sex Workers (FSWs) in The Republic of the Sudan represents a unique case that can be best understood by an inductive analysis. The selection of the design is intended to allow for answering the research questions. The research design is focused on building well-defined research aims and questions and developing a review of the literature pertaining to the research questions. The final step will be to preserve the evidence-based discussion. Applying such measures will help the researcher to make sense of the collected data and tell the stories of the participants and then draw research conclusions based on the research findings.

As indicated earlier, this research follows Merriam's (1991) approach for qualitative case study. Merriam suggested certain procedures to ensure research validity or credibility. These procedures include validity and credibility of the research instruments such as the researcher, the data collecting approaches, and the data analysis methods. In addition to selection of appropriate methodology and research design, Merriam recommended disclosure of researcher bias, triangulation, member checks, long-term observation, peer examination, and participatory research to improve research credibility. The following section represents a detailed explanation of the validation methods that were used in this study.

# Research Ethics

Conducting research in an ethical way has been an issue of concern for all disciplines (Merriam, 1991). For example, the Nuremberg Code (1949), represents a document to ensure that research is conducted with no harm to human and animal subjects (Hesse-Biber& Heavy, 2016; Merriam, 1991). Such codes and guidelines deal with "the protection of subjects from harm, the right to privacy, the notion of informed consent, and the issue of deception. (Merriam, 1991, p. 178). However, "differences in research design lead to difference in relative weight of various ethical issues" (Merriam, 1991, p. 179). It is noted that all codes are guided by the Common Rule of the Office for the Protection of Research Risks (OPRR), which mandated that research participation must be voluntary (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010).

This research will follow the guide-lines generated by the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the measures taken by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Ohio University to ensure the protection of the participants' rights and the confidentiality of the data. The procedure of establishing a sound ethical standard for collecting and analyzing data will be laid out in this section. Consideration of ethics needs to be a critical part of the substructure of the research process from the inception of the research problem to the interpretation and publishing of the research findings.

The researcher obtained informed consent from the human subjects prior to their participation in the study (see appendix A). The consent covers a range of procedures that were implemented during the study. All participants were sent an informed-consent letter to sign and return. In that letter, the respondents were informed about the study and their

intended role in it. The letter was written in detail to inform the participants about the specific nature and aim of the study and to explain the manner that they can help with the attainment of the study goals. The letter outlined in detail the nature and aim of the interviews' questions, which will include explanation of any potential risks.

The researcher made it clear to the participants that their involvement was completely voluntary and that they were free to withdraw without penalty from the study at any time before, during, or after it began. One of the participants preferred not to speak, instead she just gave a brief report about her project. In addition, the researcher strived to make certain that the participants weighed any potential risks with the benefits resulting from their contributions to the study Merriam (1991) specified two areas of anticipated ethical dilemma in qualitative case study, which are data collection and dissemination of research findings. The participants on this study are FSWs. Of major importance to this dimension of the study, sex work is a sensitive issue in a Muslim community. Therefore, approaching the participants to share their experiences was conducted in a way that caused them to recognize that their privacy was ensured. In addition, the interviewees were informed that the data will remain secure throughout the duration of the study. They were also assured that all collected data will be destroyed when no longer needed. In addition, the participants were informed that the data will not be shared, and their identities will not be revealed in the study report. Additionally, the participants were informed that they could follow up with any questions or concerns. For that matter, the researcher made her contact information available for the participants for any follow-up or inquiries. A sample of the consent letter is in appendix (B).

### Reflexivity and Researcher's Bias

In a qualitative study, validating the researcher is an essential step in building research credibility (Glesne, 2011; Patton, 2002; Stake, 2010). Patton (1999) asserted that:

Because the researcher is the instrument in qualitative inquiry, a qualitative report must include information about the researcher. What experience, training, and perspective does the researcher bring to the field? What personal connections does the researcher have to the people, program, or topic studied? (p.1198)

This researcher is a female Muslim from The Republic of the Sudan, who came from a middle -income class family that resided in a rural area in White Nile State. She studied economics as an undergraduate student and earned a bachelor's degree in law, as well. For her master's degree, she specialized in economics and development. Issues of development, human rights, and gender equality were her specific areas of interest. She believes that women's empowerment needs systematic efforts from the global community, governments, civic organizations, local communities, and first and foremost, from women themselves. She believes in progressive Islamic values, as opposed to the conventional understanding of Islam that imposes barriers to complete participation by women in their communities. This worldview for women's issues has formulated her assumptions and preconceptions about understanding the women's empowerment concept and gender role by the implementing bodies and personnel of the JASMAR project.

The major implementing body of the project is the Sudanese General Women Union SGWN, which is one of the supporting bodies of the conventional Islamic

movements in The Republic of the Sudan. From her understanding of the Sudanese context, the researcher believes that conventional Islam is suspicious of Western values, such as democracy, human rights and women's empowerment. The Sudanese context believes, according to her understanding, in a conspiracy theory and that the concepts mentioned above are exported by Westerners to target Islam and Islamic communities, and to provide an alternative understanding for the prevailing understanding of Islam. For example, conventional understanding indicates that sex work is a great sin. Women who practice sex out of wedlock should be punished not empowered. The researcher has suspicions and presumptions that the government officially accepted collaboration with international organization to support MARPs groups under pressure from the global community, and not because of a genuine belief in human rights, women's empowerment, and gender equality.

The interest of the researcher in justice and human rights has affected some of her research decisions. For instance, she intentionally chose a FSW project because it is a unique case that will allow her to discuss in depth the interplay and effect of religion and culture on women's and community's perceptions. One issue that will affect the research process and conclusions is the researcher's relationship to the key informants. The researcher worked for the JASMAR Project as an economic consultant during 2011-2012 However, the researcher worked with the first cohort of female sex workers (2011). Therefore, the researcher did not meet or supervise any of this research participants. The final reflection will be on the researcher's position with regards to the study. The researcher recognized that her multi-disciplinary background shaped her insights and

beliefs about women's empowerment. However, the researcher's worldview and stands generally stem from her commitment to progressive Islam. She deeply believes in the vision of Mahmoud Mohamed Taha (1909-1985) of progressive Islam. Taha developed a vision for Islam to embrace human rights, democracy, social justice and economic justice. In particular, he highlighted issues of marginalized groups with consideration of the prevailing understanding of Islam, such as it pertains to non-Muslims and women's rights. Regarding women, Taha provided a vision that the women's positions in Shari'a should be developed to be compatible with human rights (An-Na'im, 1988). It is worth mentioning that this vision is not acceptable to the mainstream, conventional understanding of Islam. Taha was tried and sentenced for apostasy and was executed in 1985. His books were burned, and his followers are regarded as apostates (An-Na'im 1987; The Republican Thoughts, nd).

From an economic stance, this researcher believes that Sen's (1990) capability approach of shifting the focus of development to human beings provides an endeavor that is compatible with human rights, specifically the incorporation of the gender gap in developmental measures. The interplay of these factors provides support for my perspective of women's empowerment. However, as a researcher who strives to uncover new meanings and explore different lenses of perspective, I am entering this study acknowledging and embracing my biases, knowledge, and experience, yet remaining open-minded toward learning from this research process.

Other measures for ensuing research credibility include triangulation, member checks, long-term observation, peer examination, and participatory research. This

research applied triangulation measures in all of the study processes. A multi-disciplinary theoretical framework, multiple sources of data, and triangulation of data collection techniques were employed. In the data collection process, the researcher will use key informants whose input should enrich the quality of the collected data.

Furthermore, the empowerment approach emphasizes the involvement of the participants in the empowerment process/ For that matter, this research is part of the empowerment process. Scholars highlighted the importance of treating the participants as equal partners and not research subjects. (Batliwala, 2014; Kabeer, 2009; Kabir 2005). Merriam (1991) as well, suggested that participatory research enhances research credibility. The researcher is committed to treat participants as partners in this project. This researcher feels humbled to work with grassroots participants, who are women who have an enormous amount of relevant information to contribute to this research project. These women understand their situations in creative ways that can produce solutions to their problems. The researcher recognizes that her job in this research is to listen carefully to the participants. Even after analyzing the data and generating results, the researcher should be willing to consult with the participants to ask if they think the results are plausible. This member-check technique is recommended by Guba and Lincoln (1981) to support credibility. For that matter, the technique is compatible with the empowerment approach. In addition, the researcher has applied peer examination during the entire writing process. For example, some researchers and non-researcher friends have read and discussed the study contents. The researcher intends to continue checking and sharing the research data with peers to the end of the study.

Additionally, committee members will be the best support for checking and discussing the research content. By applying the recommended measures and guidelines for credibility, the researcher hopes the outcomes provide findings and conclusions that ring true to with well-informed readers. By committing to clarifying reflexivity, applying triangulation, long-term observation, and participatory research, with member checks and peer examinations, the researcher is pursuing findings that fulfill the recommended measures for inurement of credibility. The next section will explain the manner that the researcher will maintain study credibility and research ethics.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has described the methodology used for this research project. The chapter reflects that the study utilized qualitative inquiry to understand women's experiences with empowerment in relation to their experience with the IGA project. The chapter also exhibits that purposive sampling was used for the selection of the participants for the case study. It indicates that the data was collected using qualitative interviewing. Three rounds of interviews were conducted with ten FSWs and key informants. A questions guide is included in this section. In addition, the project documents were collected and analyzed. The chapter includes the measures that were taken by the researcher to ensure research credibility and adherence to research ethics. These measures include researcher reflexivity, whereby the researcher's stance is described, and her biases are disclosed. Detailed information about the researcher's worldview, theoretical orientation, assumptions, and preconceptions are provided.

#### **Chapter 4: Research Findings**

Claims have been made that income generating activities empower women in developing countries (Parvin, 2004). This research was designed and conducted to investigate the influence of the income generating activities on women's empowerment in the Republic of the Sudan. Following the proposed research method, the researcher collected data from the Female Sex Workers (FSWs) at the JASMAR empowerment program in the Kūstī area in Sudan. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the study participants and three of the key informants from the JASMAR program. Additionally, data were collected from documents related to the project. This chapter presents the findings that emerged from the data collection and analysis. The first portion of the chapter provides an overview of the profiles of the participants. The second part addresses the research questions.

# Participants' Profiles: An Overview of Female Sex Workers Stories

The interviews include nine of the ten JASMAR empowerment project beneficiaries. From the interviews, the researcher discovered that seven of the participants were active sex workers. Two of the participants claimed that they never worked in sex industry and that they joined the JASMAR project under misleading information about the project targeted group. Unlike others, those two participants are highly educated; one of them has a bachelor's degree in Sharia and Law, and the other one has a bachelor's degree in economics. Further, both of these participants are from middle income families. However, the JASMAR team, including the key informants expressed a belief that these two participants had been active sex workers before the

intervention. The team and informants expressed a belief that these highly educated participants had quit sex work after the intervention and that they no longer wanted to be associated with the sex work stigma to avoid its negative affect on their future careers. JASMAR has reported that all the Female Sex Workers (FSWs) are between the ages of 18 and 28 years old, as determined by the selection criteria. However, one of the participants told the researcher that she was only 16 years old at the beginning of the intervention. Six of the participants are poor and come from socioeconomically disadvantageous families. To make things worse for this group is that the mothers are uneducated, with no skills, and forced to do hard manual labor jobs in the absence of a father (four deceased fathers and two absentees). However, the degree of the severity of poverty varies among the participants in the group. Three of the participants came from middle income groups, where most of their family members are college graduates and have good jobs (engineers, physicians, entrepreneurs ...etc.). Two of the participants had part-time jobs, which made them better off, having a larger source of income. All the participants, except for one, were from ethnical minority groups. All the participants were Sudanese Muslims. According to the Sudanese culture, females should be living with their families and can only move out if got marries. Since all of the participants were single at the beginning of the project, they lived with their families, they all live with their families. In this section stories of each participant will be voiced. All participants are given pseudonyms to protect their identities. The researcher chose to refer to the participants by fruits. In the following part the stories of lemon, watermelon, cantaloupe, apple, peaches, mango, guava, pineapple will be told respectively.

#### Lemon

Lemon is a 23-year-old girl. She lives with her mother and brother in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Kūstī town. This neighborhood lacks even the basic public necessities such as electricity, water, and health services. Lemon's family is originally from western Sudan, a region that is considered as the origin of the most marginalized ethnic groups in Sudan (Ylönen, 2008). Lemon's father died when she was a child and she dropped out of school in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. She said that her mother could not afford school expenses, so she and her only brother dropped out of elementary school. The brother has no job, while the mother works as a domestic who washes clothes in other people's homes. The manual washing of clothes represents hard and time-consuming work. Therefore, the mother is away from the home most of the day, while Lemon stays home alone with a considerate amount of leisure time. Lemon said that she joined the sex network through the influence of her girlfriends when she was sixteen. The researcher asked Lemon about her motives or reasons to prefer sex work to other traditional work. She said that the only job that she was able to get was to wash clothes at peoples' houses. Washing clothes is a popular job that is usually performed by poor women who have no education or skills. In addition, the wages are very low with this type of work. Lemon told me during the interview that I conducted as the researcher, that she found that working in sex does not require much effort and that she makes more money. Lemon also told me that sex work was not rewarding, but at least she enjoys her time. Lemon explained that the income from sex work does not covers all her expenses. She further offered "but at least I do not have to ask anyone to buy my personal items, such as food,

sanitary pads, and make up". When asked if she had a regular income from sex work, she answered that it depends, some days the money is good, but sometimes she stayed without work for days. However, Lemon said that she was satisfied with her sex work and even when there were no clients, she indicated enjoying having leisure time and smoking "Shisha" with her girlfriends. However, she said in a sad voice "you have no life, you might be tired and planning on having a nap, and all of a sudden a client calls you, so you have to get up and get dressed and use the transportation in this hot weather to meet him".

Lemon told the researcher that she heard stories from other Female Sex Workers (FSWs) about violence and police arrest, but she had never encountered any difficulties or problems. She said she had never had bad clients, and she had never been treated with disrespect or cheated. "I am not naive to be taken advantage of, only weak girls can be cheated" she said proudly. She added, "I know the market very well. I do not work through an agent, I do not allow others to profit from my behind". When asked if she feels that her sex work had negatively affected her relationship with the family or relatives or neighbors, she indicated that she does not care for them. When asked who provided support for her sex work before the intervention, she responded that she relied on herself and no one else helped her.

Lemon was introduced to the JASMAR through a girlfriend in her sex network.

Lemon indicated that she was hesitant at the beginning because she is not used to doing serious work, and because she did not know s trade. Lemon attended the AIDs HIV awareness program and she explained that the training was useful for her and that she

learned information that she had not known before. "Lemon elaborated, having been taught about types of HIV and methods of transfer. "I never knew that" she continued. She also told the researcher that she had never heard about condoms before the JASMAR intervention. She said she has been using them since then, even though JASMAR is no longer provide condoms for free. Lemon nodded her head and said "I was so ignorant before the intervention, now I know something". Lemon also attended the small projects management training, which was delivered by the economic consultant of the project. Even though Lemon said the training was good and that she benefited from it, she indicated having difficulties remembering even the trainer's name who worked with her closely during the project. Additionally, when the researcher asked Lemon about some concepts and practices of the doing business that she had learned from the training, she seemed confused, and she could not remember them. the researcher asked Lemon about the manner that she had selected her project. She simply answered: "I saw other people selecting boutique and it seemed better for me than the other projects". Also, when asked if she was keeping an account of her business transactions, she said no. From the discussion, the researcher realized that Lemon had difficulties in pricing and in marketing. Lemon also told me that she was unable to understand the manner that business works. She told me "sex work is easier and more fun". When asked for how long her project was profitable, she responded "for a very long time, about seven months". This answer indicates that she was not that passionate about the project. Lemon indicated that, she returned to sex work soon after her project started declining. When asked if she had benefited from the project, she said the awareness program was the most useful part. I am still attending awareness workshops, and I am still insisting on using condoms every time I do sex work" she said. About the business Lemon indicate "The most thing that I benefited from the project is that I had the experience to have that much money in hand for the first time in life". Lemon said that during the first six months, she was so busy in her shop that she had no time for sex work. She expressed having quit sex work for the first few months of the project, and her clients had begun feeling that she had turned away from them because she had become rich.

However, Lemon admitted that she did not understand, and she did not enjoy the work at the boutique, that pricing was a problem for her. She said her major problems were the debts, where her clients used to take the goods in promise to pay in the future, but never did. She told the researcher that sellers should be assertive and be able to collect money from customers, but "I am not that person; I was not good with the business". She indicated she was feeling more comfortable doing sex work compared to the business work. "Lemon indicated that she had leisure time, and fun time having "shisha" and coffee groups." We chat and enjoy ourselves she told the researcher. Lemon ended up losing her initial capital and was not able to replace her stock. She admitted that she is not interested in doing business again "I did not get it at all, I do not know how to be an entrepreneur". She added "sex work became an addiction to me, it is just like coffee, I have to do it every day, even if the money is little". She continued, I work in sex because I need the money, and I am good at this work, I work in secure places, and I do not use an agent. I work directly with clients and get all the money, I am not foolish" she said proudly. Even though some sex clients try to get what they want without paying, but

I handle the situation very well, payment is in advance. When I asked lemon if her sex work cause her problem with the family, she said that they do not know "I go behind their backs". When I asked in her work case her any problems with neighbors. She also told me that she is "I am careful Lemon indicated "I do my work without any notice. The neighbors do not know anything". When asked about the manner that she had benefited from the boutique project, she indicated that she had the experience of having money in hand "I now know the value of the money". She added "Oh my God, I was so naive. Now I know how to protect myself in sex work". When asked if she wants to change, she laughed and said If I could, I would reach to the moon and be back again, but "everything is written by god before we were born."

#### Watermelon

Watermelon is an ambitious young girl. She was a college graduate at the beginning of the intervention project. Watermelon's family is a middle-income family. She lives with her parents in a relatively rich neighborhood. Watermelon is the youngest in the family and is the only person to pursue higher education. However, her brothers are entrepreneurs and have successful business in the town. She indicated that she was desperately looking for a job when she was told about the project. Watermelon indicated "to be honest my brothers have a very good business, but I hate to ask anyone to give me money, I want to be able to support myself". "Yes, I joined the project, but I have nothing to do with sex work" She said in an angry voice, "we were cheated". She said that she was told about the project by a friend's cousin. She was told that there is an organization that provides funding for recent graduates. She said that the community key advisor

suggested that she take advantage of the opportunity. Watermelon claimed that she was not particularly clear about the project. However, she indicated she had been told that if she wanted to get the funding to start a business, she had to answer with yes to whatever questions were asked by the JASMAR organization representative, which she did". She said that even though the questions seemed irrelevant to her, she accepted to join the project and signed the papers and got the funding. She justified her "look; with an explanation that if I did not get that funding, I likely would have been without funding for a business project." Watermelon offered that "after she had engaged in; the awareness program, I even had to lie to my neighbors. I felt that I wanted to share this priceless information about HIV AIDs, so I lied to them and said I worked with JASMAR at the HIV program, and they listened to me".

Watermelon indicated that she had never thought about doing business before

JASMAR. She further offered that her utmost wish was to find a job in her hometown.

"Even though my brothers are all in businesses, it never crossed my mind to engage in one." Watermelon noted that she had attended the awareness program and she believe that the program was very beneficial to her and her community. Watermelon also attended the small projects management training course. She was very enthusiastic about both trainings. She offered that the business management program gave her a sprit to start her business. Watermelon mentioned that the economic consultant helped her to do a feasibility study for the project. She chose to sell vegetables, fruits, and meats in the neighborhood. She used an extra room in her parents' home to store her products.

Watermelon indicated that the project was a failure. "It was a big loss, I was not able to

sell my products, and every day I had to throw away the unsold vegetables and fruits". Watermelon decided to change her project to sell cosmetics, that is products that do not expire easily. Watermelon expressed pleasure with the new project as she was able to open a saving account. Watermelon keeps her accounts recorded in a ledger as she was trained. Watermelon project was running fine for more than a year. The project reportedly had a positive effect on her life, as she was able to be self-supporting and being responsible for her mother's medication "that is my responsibility, I do not allow anyone to do it for me". She said that she no longer depends on any person, but further; she started that she was participating in the house expenses. Watermelon indicated that she helped her sisters and she bought new furniture and a big television. Watermelon responded to a question with "honestly, I do not find myself in business. It is just something to cover my personal expenses because I hate asking anyone to give me money". She asserted that she had no intention to expand her project, and she was just keeping it until she got a job. Watermelon project did not last for a long time. She said that her father died, all of a sudden, of a heart attack, and she was in a trauma for a long time thereafter. Traditionally in Sudan, when someone passes away relatives and neighbors stay with his or her family for a long time for support. Usually, close relatives and neighbors stay for forty days after the passing day. Watermelon offered "I forgot about everything including my business, and after finally everyone was gone, I realized that the guests have used all the body and hair care products".

Watermelon had lost her capital and had no will or ability to restart the business. She told me, a few months after the incident, she got a full-time job and was happy with her new life. Watermelon shared her bad moments and the challenges that she faced during the project. She said that her biggest fear pertained to the ramifications of a JASMAR team visit. She explained that she was always scared that the neighbor might figure out the project's targeted group and that would destroy her reputation and her family. She also mentioned that the JASMAR team provided each participant with condoms for free. Watermelon said that even though she is not in sex work, she used to take the condoms and later throw them away just to avoid JASMAR officer's critiques. Watermelon described that she was frightened that her family members might witness the condoms "I imagine that would be my last day in life; thanks god all of that is over now. I will never get into such an experience", she murmured. Watermelon is now planning for her wedding and has no plans to return to a business. However, Watermelon thinks that the business experience changed her personality. She also indicated that she feels more confident in making her own decisions.

# Cantaloupe

Cantaloupe is Watermelon's friend. They are both college graduates. Cantaloupe has a bachelor's in Sharia Law. She joined the project when she was 26 years old.

Cantaloupe is the youngest in her family. She was single, and living with her family when she joined the project. Unlike Watermelon, Cantaloupe came from a highly educated family. All her sisters and brothers are college graduates. Three of her siblings are engineers including her only sister. Cantaloupe also comes from a middle-income family. Cantaloupe's family is from a minority ethnicity originally from western Sudan. After graduation, Cantaloupe worked as associate at a court for a short period of time in

the capital of Sudan. She had to leave the job because she needed to take care of her mother who had an accident that resulted in a broken leg, and her mother eventually became disabled. Cantaloupe commented "I am an ambitious person, I had to quit my job at the capital, and I hated staying here in this small town, it was like an end to my dreams".

Cantaloupe said that she joined the JASMAR project under a misunderstanding. She told the same story about the fresh graduates' projects that was told by Watermelon. She asserted that she knows nothing about sex work, and that the community key leader got them into the project. She claimed that she was told that all the interviews with the JASMAR officers are just formalities. The community key leader asked her to ignore any "weird looking" information conveyed to her by JASMAR personnel. She added "The JASMAR officer was clear about the targeted group, which shocked me; I suddenly realized the truth, and I wanted to withdraw". She explained that her family is a wellknown family and that she is a respected person in the neighborhood. She also offered that the key leader convinced her to sign and obtain the funding. Cantaloupe attended the AIDs HIV awareness program. She explained that the training was beneficial. She said she enjoyed learning about HIV AIDs and that she started sharing the information with her community. She said she took some of her friends to the trainings that JASMAR used to provide from time to time. She said that she has seen other participants using condoms, but that she never took them, as she did not need them. She commented in a protesting voice about the other participants, indicating about "the way they dressed is different, the

way they behave is different; they openly smoke cigarettes you know", I have no relation with any of them; she ended her sentence.

Cantaloupe also indicated having attended the small project management training, which was delivered by the economic consultant of the project. Cantaloupe offered that the training was good, and that she continued to attend other training sessions in small business that were offered by another women, who empowered organizations in the town. She selected to start a boutique because there was not a single shop that provided women supplies in the neighborhood. Cantaloupe used a room in her family's home to sell her products in the neighborhood.

Cantaloupe shared that she was excited to apply what she learned from the training for her project. She indicated having opened a saving account and having committed to deposit little, but constant amounts of money in the account every month. She reported being committed to keeping records and the book account. "I still use my ledger she said, if I have access to scanner, I will send you a copy to see the manner that I organized my work"; she said proudly. Cantaloupe indicated that she had made good profits, and she was able to participate in her household expenses. She said that her siblings have good jobs, but they are married and have their own families". Cantaloupe explained that sometimes when the family has needs in the house, she had to ask the other members of the family to address the needs, a situation that she hates. She told me that her father, who works as a driver, told her not to ask anyone other than him. From the discussion with Cantaloupe, variation in the living standards of the members of the household and her siblings became evident. She thinks the situation is unfair and that the

siblings should provide better support for the family. Cantaloupe said that she expects to support her parents and has never asked for assistance from "whoever" [the reference here is to her siblings].

Cantaloupe indicated that she is responsible for her disabled mother's medications. She also bought furniture and was able to do some renovation in her house. She reported that she is happy specifically because she allows her mother to work with her in the project. Cantaloupe offered that she faced some issues with debt, where customers would take products with a promise to pay later, which they never fulfilled. Deferred payment is a popular marketing model in Sudan, especially in canteens in neighborhood where residents are known to each other. Typically, regular customers pay part of the price and then pay the balance in future with a customized agreement. Cantaloupe indicated that at some point she lost her initial capital, but with support from her brother she was able to start again and make profits. She said "I learned from my mistakes and corrected my errors. However, after three years of success, Cantaloupe had to give up her project after she got married. She moved to a different neighborhood at which time she became pregnant, and later had a child. She indicated that it was impractical for her to come from a far neighborhood to sell products in her parents' house. She said it was hard for her to leave her project, "but now I have a husband and a child to take care of". She continued; "I am happy the project is not over, and my mother now has continued the successful project". Cantaloupe indicated that she still looks over her mother from far, and she helps her with marketing and the pricing. "I am happy I left

my mother with the project, which means that she has something and that she does not have to ask for help."

Even though the original project was over, Cantaloupe did not stop attending small business trainings. She indicated that she wants to invest in her experience. "I know how to buy and sell, I know how to negotiate, and I know how to keep my accounts, I was just lacking finances" she indicated. Cantaloupe reached out to one of the big cosmetics stores in the town's main market and convinced the owner to consider her as a distributer in her neighborhood. She takes the products for a discount price and then pays the owner after selling the products. She explained that now she works from home, a situation that fit her new status, where she can sell and take care of her family all day. The new project is profitable. Cantaloupe compared it to her office job before the projects, and she offered that her profits from the new project is fourfold her salary from her old job. Cantaloupe seems so happy and proud with her new experience "I did it on my own" she offered. Now I am even more cautious about my accounts, I keep all accounts clean because this is not my money; it's a loan". "My money is my money, and I support whoever I want. She indicated that now she is even able to support her father financially. "Now I am supporting both of my parents; I send money regularly to my father". When asked if her husband has any control of the money, she replied "no way". However, she added that her husband's income is rather modest, and she helps with some of the house expenses. She said her husband is supportive of her work, and that he was able to get her approval form to open a store. Cantaloupe mentioned that she is optimistic about expanding her project into a store. She elaborated that she is still active with the

Women Union Association, which helped her connect to the Family Bank. Cantaloupe's plan is to take a loan a loan from the Family Bank to build her new business.

Cantaloupe remembers some of the challenges and concerns during her business, where she was harassed by one of the merchants in the market. She said that he was willing to trade the merchandizes for some entertainment. She explained "We have a masculine society as you know, and harassment is so much expected when you enter a male dominant arena, and I was no exception". She continued "But you do not know me, I am a strong woman, I did not back up, I needed to take the merchandize from this merchant, but I made him understand that I am not that kind of women".

Cantaloupe believes that the project changed her scope of life completely. She indicated that she was just looking for a job, and now she makes money better than any graduate can make from a regular office job. She also indicated that she gained knowledge and a set of skills that she did not realize that she could handle. "Now I am confident, and I make my own decisions, this is big". She compared herself to other participants and she believes that she is one of the most successful because other participants did not develop themselves or their projects, as she did.

# Apple

Apple was an active sex worker. She was 25 years old when she joined the JASMAR empowerment program. Her parents are originally from the northern part of Sudan. Her father was a working laborer who was hardly able to provide for the family's basic needs. She said she dropped out of school from 5th grade. "My father couldn't pay for my schooling" she said in a sad voice. She has five brothers and two sisters. Later, her

father died, and her sisters got married. Her mother is old and has no opportunity for work. She said all her brothers work in junk jobs. Apple found herself alone at home, with no work, and no money and with plenty of leisure time. Apple started going out with her girlfriend who introduced her to sex work. Apple said that she chose sex work because she is not educated, and it seemed to her that sex work was the only possible job she could do; "I really needed the money" she explained. Apple said that the income was limited, but "was something" and "I had nothing". Apple explained that the income was not regular "it depends on your luck" she said. Apple used the money to buy basic needs and medication for her mother. To get an excuse to go out from her home, Apple useded to lie to her mother claiming that she found a part-time job. Apple never used protection before she joined the intervention. She offered that she did not learn about the use condoms until she was introduced to JASMAR. Apple said "hamdulilah I had never got pregnant", but she said she knows that other girls had and had to get rid of their babies by abortion. Apple mentioned that she was never been exposed, as a sex worker, to violence and "everything was consensual".

To avoid getting caught by community members or getting arrested by police,

Apple said that she and her network of friends worked in shifts. She explained that the

clients provided "the box", which is a highly secured place, which is usually in an

unoccupied home, in a quiet neighborhood, with someone watching the street. Apple was

asked if she was satisfied with her life before the intervention or if she was looking for

change.

She immediately stated "you could not imagine our situation before the intervention, I knew nothing, I was nothing". When asked to elaborate, she said that she did not realize that she was harming herself and that she did not realize that she deserved to be protected.

Apple was introduced to the JASMAR through the community key leader. Apple said that the community leader told her about the targeted group and the purpose of the project from the beginning "She knows the truth, and she knows what kind of women we are, so she told me directly, and I agreed immediately. I wanted to change". Apple indicated that she was so excited about the HIV AIDs awareness, and she always shared information with her network. She said in a firm voice, "Currently, I have returned to sex work, but I insist on using condoms with all clients". Apple also attended the small business management training Apple indicated that she was so excited to find an opportunity and to have a project to change her life. She said that she had her family's support where her sister advised her to start a boutique and her brother supported her with the business establishment. Apple offered that she followed the economic consultant's guidance and started keeping her accounts. Also, she started making deposits in her savings account. Apple thinks that she now knows all the tricks and shortcuts in order to make money. Instead of buying from retailers in the local market, she decided to make more money by travelling to the capital and buying her products from wholesale traders. Apple became use to traveling three times a month to the capital to purchase needed merchandizes. She said with joy that the demand for her merchandize was high and her project was profitable. Apple indicated that she started taking responsibility for her home

expenses. Also, Apple joined a women's Rotating Credit and Savings Association (ROSCA) and she was able to buy new furniture for her family's home. She said with passion "I have a new life style.". Then, she elaborated that she has no leisure time or time for sex work. She indicated that she felt that she has a better relationship with neighbors and relatives. Apple also offered that her family has no control of her money; but that she feels responsible for her family and pays for home expenses. Despite having a new experience, Apple was able to address the related challenges and to defy all the problems. She offered "I was a laser focused on my work, no relations or anything". However, Apple lost her project after three years of success. She told the researcher that she was engaged and she needed the money for her wedding. She explained, that the family used the money to cover her wedding expenses, and herself used the cloth and cosmetics for herself and as gifts for the bride mates. Speaking about the impacts of the project, Apple said that the project affected her family and became a regular income for the family. Apple also believe that she gained skills and experience in trading and bargaining.

Apple offered she now felt confidence to travel by herself outside the town and to deal with money and related transactions. Apple mentioned that the big change in her life pertained to sex work. She is no longer doing that job or associating with old friends who are still doing sex work. Apple shared the sad experience regarding the loss of her husband in a motorcycle accident after two years of marriage. Apple returned to live with her family. However, she said she never returned to sex work. Apple indicated that she feels that she has suitable experiences to start a new project and she is looking for

funding. Apple indicated that she had reached out to JASMAR and was looking at other options.

#### **Peaches**

Peaches is a happy girl in her twenties. She offered that her father had died when she was a child. She has two sisters elder than her and a sister younger than her. All the sisters are married now. In addition, she has two younger brothers. Peaches went to school but dropped out at high school. She said she was not that interested in school. Her mother is an uneducated housewife. Peaches father was a driver with a very low income. They lived in a slum in the Kūstī area. My mother had to work" she explained. Her mother, with no skills and no education, started working as a street tea seller. Peaches joined sex work through a friend; "I was lured into the sex business by my girlfriends, they told me that they make good money She explained that she grew in a home with no father, and a mother who is out of the home for work the entire day. Peaches indicated that she used to bluff her male siblings in order to be out of the home without problems. She explained that sex work is adventurous, but risky. She elaborated that "sex work is very risky, but what can I do?"; "You have to be cautious, the family, neighbors, the street, and the police are watching you". She said she used to sneak behind her family's back in order to engage in sex work. Peaches indicated that she worked with a secure sex network, with others who worked in groups. She elaborated that she has a friend whose husband was married to another wife in a different city, and they used her place for sex work. She said they would take turns to cover and watch for each other. Additionally, Peaches worked with a solicitor who arranged with clients and collected the money. Peaches believes that the money was not that good, but she was "hocked into that lifestyle". She said you need money to treat yourself with little things, which other girls can more easily afford She indicated having used the sex work money to purchase relatively small needs, such as phone credit, make up, or having a nice sandwich with a bottle of coke and Shisha [Popular flavored tabaco pipe/Hookah]. Peaches said that the sex work money was not that good, but she got used to having sex and she could not stop. Peaches reported that she never was exposed to violence from clients or forced into sex or raped. However, she said sometime the clients do not pay you. "I cannot sue them. What can I do; she said". Peaches said that she had never gotten into trouble or been arrested by the police. Though she had experienced different problems. Peaches got pregnant, and she had to go through an illegal abortion. Peaches said that a friend helped her find a traditional midwife to do the operation. "It was a very tough time for me" she indicted. Peaches had to keep her pregnancy secret and she never told her family. Also, she did not tell her father about the pregnancy "you know he will deny it and I will gain nothing".

Peaches said that she feels that the neighbors looked down at her, but she never cared for them "when I am determined, I do whatever I want to do". Peaches offered, in a sad voice, that she was satisfied with her life and thought that she leads a fun, easy life. She added "I was not like this completely before the project, I did not know that I was at risk". She added "you know I had never heard about protection or condoms before the intervention".

In 2013 Peaches was contacted by one of her girlfriends, a fellow sex worker, about the JASAMR organization program. She agreed to join the program and went through the orientation and the training and did the paperwork. Peaches explained that she did not have previous experience or intentions to have her own business before the intervention. Peaches selected to open a small shop to sell phone credit. She rented a shop in a transportation station. She said that she was so busy with her work that she regularly worked two shifts; namely the morning and the evening shifts.

The phone credit money was good, and she said she almost stopped sex work. Peaches explained that she was "fixated" a term used when a sex worker is paid by one client to stay exclusively loyal to him and never engage in sex with other clients. This type of deals is popular and preferred among FSWs, where they believe it involves less risk, and better stability in income.

Peaches said that her project was going very well for three years. She was able to pay the rent and electricity bills for the house. She also contributed to other house expenses. However, this project did not sustain for various reasons. She explained that the transportation station that she had her business in, was removed and hence she lost her customers. Peaches did not give up and collected her savings and joined a ROSCA. She took the money and rented a shelter to sell tea in the main intercity transportation's terminal. She indicated that the new place if full of people and that she was able to grow new customers in a short period of time. Peaches new business has also been successful. Therefore, she saved the profits to expand her business. Besides selling tea and coffee she started selling light breakfasts and cereals. She also sells fruit salad and phone credit. She

said in a happy tune "The work is good, and my initial capital has multiplied, and I am making good profits. Peaches is in charge of the household expenses and bills, including her mother's medications. Peaches indicated, in reaction to the changes in her life that "now I have no time for sex work, but still I do it for fun with a limited a number of people". Peaches was asked if she has any problems running her project. She answered that she learned from her previous experiences and now she knows how to manage her business. She offered that "in the past I was not able to collect my debt from customers, but now I know how to deal with defaulted customers". Peaches said that she saved money because she wanted to expand her business and open a beauty Salon, but instead she used the money to help her brother undergo a surgery. She said "thank God I had the money to help him". Peaches now is saving a little money and is planning on buying Raksha [A motorcycle with a roof, used for transportation across neighborhoods]. She thinks that Raksha will be a second source of income and provide a job for her brother. Peaches thinks that her project helped her to have a better relationship with her family and her neighbors. Peaches said that since she knew about the condoms, she has never engaged in unprotected sex. She even declined invitations when her clients insisted on not using condoms. Overall, she thinks that the project helped her be a better person that cares for herself, family, and community.

#### Mango

Mango is an active sex worker. She comes from a poor family which lives in a slum area in the Kūstī region. Her parents are uneducated. Her father was a solider, and her mother was a housewife. She has two elder sisters and three younger brothers. Mango

dropped out of school beginning with the eighth grade. She explained in a sad voice "I had to drop because my father disappeared all of a sudden and we no longer had any provider. This period of time represented an extremely tough time for my family". The father was sent to South Sudan during the civil war years in Sudan. Because of the weak government during the civil war in Sudan, it was common that solider were reported as being missing with no confirmation of death. Mango, her sisters, and brother all had to drop out of school. Fortunately, Mango's father returned after many years, but the family had endured difficult times during his forced disappearance.

Mango said that she needed money and sex work was the only way to get money. She became involved in sex work immediately after dropping out of school. Mango remembered that she resorted to tricks to hide her activities from her family. Mango said she was never forced into sex work, that it was consensual. "I was enjoying the work too, but the money was so little", she said that with a regret and continued "now I know that was wrong, but the work is like an addiction, if you are hocked into it; it is hard to quit. Mango indicated that she was able to save or invest some money from sex work.

However, the money was used primarily for daily expenses. Mango said that even though the money was not good, she felt there was nothing else that she could do to improve her status and life. Mango indicated that she almost quit sex work during the first months of the project. Mango is still an active sex worker, but the money she is making now is less than what she was making during the project days/. Mango indicated that she was super careful in her movements and never got into trouble with the community or the police. She engaged in sex work in a friend's house, and they covered

for each other. Mango said that she has never been raped or encountered violence; she added that she knows her clients and everything has been consensual. However, Mango reported that she never knew or used condoms before the intervention. Mango said that she was feeling bad having been involved in sex work, but she did not think seriously about quitting.

Mango was recruited by one of her fellow FSWs into the JASMAR empowerment project. She is still an active sex worker. She said she was hesitant and suspected that joining the JASMR project might be a trick from the police to catch her. However, she agreed to meet the JASMAR staff and ended up agreeing to participate in the empowerment program. She first joined the HIV AIDs awareness program. Mango reported that she never had any idea that HIV AIDs can be transmitted through sexual relations. She offered that she found the information useful and that she felt she was completely ignorant regarding protection modes. Mango said she usually talks to other FSWs about protection and shares with them the information about HIV AIDs transmission. She feels proud that she can benefit her community regarding awareness about HIV AIDs.

Later Mango attended the small business management training workshop. Mango seems to be confused about the training, and she does not have a clear understanding of simple business concepts, such as the difference between capital and profits. For instance, she confessed that she used her everyday gross returns to cover her daily expenses.

Mango project was a boutique in her neighborhood. She said the problem with marketing started from the beginning, when I would attempt to sell my goods and try to buy new

goods I usually found that the new products prices had increased, so I was not able to buy a comparable amount of new goods. Mango's project was struggling from the beginning and in nine months she had consumed all her starting capital. In response to an inquiry, Mango indicated than an economic consultant visited with her regularly, but "it was a problem, I could not do it" she explained. Mango indicated that she ended up selling the project assets and used the returns to start a different business. She changed her model to sell children clothes at home just for neighbors. This type of trade is known in Sudan as "Dallalia". Mango reported that her new project was not a success, being able to make little profit. She said she improved her buying and selling skills, and that she gradually found herself liking the new job. Mango explained that she has full control over her capital and no one of her family members intervenes in her decisions or businesses. Mango said she was completely independent during the project days; "I even had the chance to contribute to some home expenses.

However, Mango admitted the project was not very good and at the end that she lost her starter capital. She offered that "the project was not doing well and with COVID 19, my trade was over". After the business was over, Mango got back to sex work.

Mango said that "after my project failed, I felt destroyed, I know that sex work is wrong, but I had lost my source of income". No response was received to a question about starting her business again, Mango indicated that she does not know how to find funding". Mango thinks that if she finds funding she will shift to a different trade. Mango exhibited confusion about the business and could not identify reasons for her projects' failure. However, she feels sad about the situation, she indicated "I did not need to ask

anyone during my project times". Mango offered that she was happy with her business experience and that she learned several skills. She added proudly "I learned to protect myself and use condoms, "I am still using condoms even though JASMAR is no longer provides condoms for free".

#### Guava

Guava is one of the FSWs who joined JASMAR after she had a child out of wedlock. Having a child out of wedlock is a serious experience in an Islamic society like Sudan. It is not just illegal, it is a social stigma and shame to the family and the entire tribe. Guava initially was only to share her experience with the empowerment program. Guava's father was absent from her family because he lives with his second wife. Guava is the eldest child in the family, and she has three sisters younger than her and one brother. She and her siblings dropped from elementary school. Guava indicated that she had to find income as she is the person who is in charge of her home expenses. Guava was not willing to go into detailed information about this responsibility. Guava was recruited for the empower program via the community key leader. She attended the HIV AIDs awareness program and the small business training. Guava said that the training was very useful and helped her change. Guava selected to start a boutique. Guava said she worked hard in her boutique and was gaining reasonable profits. The project worked well for about a year. Gradually the sales volume went down, and she was not able to replace her products. Guava spend part of her capital to cover home expenses. Later in 2015 Guava got married and moved out of her family's house. Guava indicated that she used the money she had for her wedding "I also used the

products, why should I keep anything, I got married and that's it". Guava, upon inquiry, expressed that she feels she does not have to work after all "I have my family to look after."

Guava said that she is grateful to the JASMAR people because they helped her to understand that what she was doing was "wrong of no real benefit" as she described it.

She said she feels happy that they helped her. "I feel that I was so ignorant, they help me got out of that nonsense". Even though Guava believe that sex work is "nonsense" as she described it, she is still an active sex worker.

## **Pineapple**

Pineapple is one of the eldest FSWs in the project. She was 27 when she joined the empowerment program. Pineapple comes from a middle-income family. She had a marriage experience prior the intervention. Pineapple was open to conversation and gladly shared her experiences regarding the intervention. Pineapple explained that she usually works in sex with two clients a day. She said the money was good and she was able to cover her personal expenses. She said that she even was able to buy some luxurious stuff such as make up and good cloth. She said the work was adventurous, and she enjoyed the career. However, she said this job was very risky and she lived in a continuous fear.

Pineapple explained that the client usually prepares "the box", or the secure place. "it is scary; sometimes I tell myself he [the client] might kill me, and no one will know". She added "the money was good, but not easy". Pineapple shared with the researcher that she sometimes encountered difficult clients and was forced to do things during the

relation she did not want to do. "I have to do whatever the client asks me to do so that I finish quickly and get out of the place" she explained. Pineapple said that she had never been pregnant, but she suffered several times from sexually transmitted infections.

Pineapple shared a story in which she needed to take her sick mother to a doctor. The doctor had to conduct a surgery for the mother. However, the cost was unaffordable. She said she begged the physician to do the surgery for a lower price. The doctor asked her to stay until he finished with the other patients. He then asked her to have sex with him in his clinic with a promise to operate on her mother for free. She indicated "I had no choice, I had to accept that he was so cruel to me. She said in a mocking voice, "we started at midnight and when he was done, it was dawn. We were hearing the call for dawn prayers, he expressed feeling ashamed and got up off me". Pineapple shared that she was feeling excited with her career at the beginning, but later she got high blood pressure and other serious diseases due to the stress and fear.

Pineapple was introduced to the empowerment program by one of the participants. She attended the awareness program. Pineapple said that she felt lucky to get into the program. She said that after the screening, they gave her medications for infections. Also, she said that she started using condoms for the first time. She shared that she felt more comfortable doing protected sex work "it made a big difference, I do not have to worry about transmitted diseases" she said. Pineapple also attended the small business management training. She said the training was good and inspired her to organize her project. Pineapple selected to start cookware rentals. She said her project was a big success and she was busy all of the time. She said that she was making

"unbelievable profits". She added with a victorious voice "I was able to buy anything that I wanted or craved for, to the extent that I was able to buy steaks and fruits; that was true, can you believe it?". Pineapple said that her contacts with her sex work customers was limited. She said she was able to buy furniture and support her family. Her project was successful for four years, and she said the project changed her life.

Pineapple got married and moved to a different town. She had to shut down her business. She shared a small house with her parents-in-law. Pineapple indicated she is not happy at all in her new life. She said that she feels it is a waste of time and resources to leave her cookware rental shop closed. Pineapple also feels that her husband is not a good match for her sexual desires. Pineapple added that her husband has no regular income, and that they only eat cheap food. She cried saying "I want to do the right things, I want to quit prostituting and please God, but my intentions are not working for me". She added with anger "this town is small, and everyone knows each other, so you cannot do any business [sex work], and I feel like I am in prison". Pineapple, offered that she is planning to divorce her husband and to go back to restart her project.

### Papaya

Papaya was an active sex worker when she joined the empowerment program. She is a reticent person, and did not want to share all the information about various aspects. She agreed to share information regarded her business with JASMAR. As documented in the project reports, she had a child out of wedlock before she joined the program. Papaya started an informal trade as Dallalia. She used to sell cloth from door to door. Papaya was very successful at the beginning. However, she has a reliant tendency

and JASMAR lost contact with her. Her project was flourishing for a round one year then she lost her starting capital. Papaya is an active sex worker now.

## Findings for Research Question 1: The Level of Involvement of Female Sex Workers

The first set of questions was designed to investigate the objective and subjective aspects of the participants' empowerment. Accordingly, questions were focused toward each participant's specific context and background and on each participants' perceptions about her status of empowerment/disempowerment before the intervention. From the JASMAR Human Security Organization project documents, the researcher found that the "snowball" approach was used to recruit beneficiaries to the project. The project's management was able to identify one of the female sex workers and selected her as a community key to bring in other female sex workers. This was an effective approach in which they were able to recruit the entire batch in a few days. However, one of the weaknesses of this approach was that all the selected participants were from one town and almost all were from the same neighborhood. When interviewed, the researcher found that almost all of the project beneficiaries were active in the same circle and from the same friendship group. They all used to meet for chatting in coffee and "Shisha" group, where FSWs meet and smoke in turns.

# Self-report of Status of Disempowerment/Empowerment Status before the Intervention

From the background questions, as stated above, all the participants were single, and unemployed with no regular income. When asked about the resources to which they had access, "body and time were the answers recorded by the researcher. In their stories, the beneficiaries reported that they have no access or obtain any regular income, cash, or

financial resources. Their responses indicated that the only resources that they controlled were their time and bodies and the only cash they had access to was from their sex activities. The researcher asked why they chose to be involved in sex work rather than alternatives jobs. The reasons frequently used by the participants to this question pertained to a combination of poverty and the fact that sex work is easy and fun. The coded expressions used by the researcher for this question were: "illiteracy", "inexperienced", "severe poverty", "destitution", "needs", "cash", "sacrifice", "lack", "choices", "easy", "fun", "leisure time", "friends", "addiction". One participant's response summarized their status where she said "when you are not educated and have no skills, you have no options".

When the participants were asked about the volume and the returns from sex work, the coded data that was used by the researcher were "it depends", "not regular", "cannot tell", "clients". Most participants indicated that they go for sex work one or twice a week and usually with one client. All of them expressed that they do not negotiate price or protection, and the clients pay what they feel is reasonable. Most participants indicted that the money was not good. At least two of the participants reported that some of the clients do not pay, and the girls said that they were not able to complain "you just keep it to yourself".

Then, the researcher asked about their spending and participation in their household budget to double check on their returns. Frequent expressions to describe the income were: "it does not work", "covers expenses", "effaced money", "not much of

money". "better than nothing", "covers nothing", "hardly covers anything", and "at least something".

The researcher found that the money was little and at least seven of the participants never had contributed to their house expenses or bought valuable stuff. Not one of the participants was able to save or invest their income from sex work. Moreover, most of participants do not have cellphones, which is a work tool and the mean of communication for them to acquire clients. Other participants said that it was an easy life they were enjoying, but they would prefer to have sustainable income from their small projects.

Almost all of the participants said that they enjoyed having a good time and earning some money. All of the participants indicted that they usually spend the money for their personal needs such as food, make up, and transportation to work.

When asked if they learned about or used protection before the intervention, their responses were: "no idea", "I was ignorant", "did not know", "never heard about it". All the Female Sex Workers (FSWs) expressed having never heard about or used condoms before the intervention. They engaged in a risky activity because they did not know that they have the right to protect themselves. Most of them explained that you got some diseases because of unprotected sex. One of them told me, "I just use the contraceptive pills to avoid pregnancy".

When asked if they got pregnant due to sex work, their responses were: "Never happened" "hamdulila [thanks God], no", "accident". "things happen", "unavoidable", "luck", and "God wills". Even though only two participants admitted that they got

pregnant, the key informant who, was in charge of this group, reported that at least five of them got pregnant as a result of unprotected sex.

In response to violent incidences during work, most common answers were "never, it is consensual", "good clients", "consent", "difficult clients", "nice clients" "cheaters". However, few incidents of violence were reported. They explained that sex work is a very secret limited market, therefore, clients usually become customers and they do not lean towards violence. One participant said, "I heard that happens, but not me". When asked if they ever had been arrested by the police, except for one; they said they use safe houses and have no concern about the police. However, one client was abused by a corrupted policeman because he knows about her job. He used to bully her to accept having sex with him before the intervention. Coded responses to the question regarding the manner that sex work affected their relationships with their families were: "sneak", "behind backs", "cautious", "bluff", and "lie".

Seven of the participants expressed their pleasure at having the chance to sneak and go out without their families' knowledge. Their voices when telling their stories reflected the joy they had with their adventurous trips. When asked about their relations to their local community, common responses were: "my freedom", "do not care", "no relations", "respect", "not anyone's business", and "determination". Most of the participants responded with a hostile tone. One of the participants said, "they have no business in mine, and I have no business with them". The hostile tone can be attributed to the fact that sex work is seen as a stigma and scandal not only for the girl, but for the

entire family and the entire tribe. Most of the participants involved their sex work circle social life more with their neighborhood and communities.

Finally, the researcher asked the participants about their overall satisfaction about their life before the intervention. Most common expressions used to describe their level of satisfaction were: "It is something", "better than nothing", "it was adventurous", "does not work", "wrong", "stressful life", "was nothing", "late realization", "ignorant".

The participants shared that they were not aware about the risk they were in before the intervention and concluded that they were satisfied because of their ignorance of the matter. Part of the participants mentioned that they were forced to do sex work because of the lack of options and that they were not that happy with the sex work.

When asked if they had ever thought about finding another job or thought about creating their own businesses, most responses were negative. The reasons were coded as: "no finance" "no chances" "no options", "lack of capabilities", "lack of access", "hooked", and "addicted".

### Status of Empowerment During the Intervention

As previously indicated, ten active FSWs from low socioeconomic families were selected to participate in the projects. The JASMAR office documents shows that, the intervention consisted of three inputs: (1) HIV AIDs awareness training, (2) small business management training, and (3) projects funding. The JASMAR team supervised the execution of the projects and provided technical support to the beneficiaries after the preparation step. This team included the Kūstī office director, the economic consultant of the program, and a case manager. The director oversaw the overall project, the economic

consultant addressed overseas project activities and provided support when needed, and the social worker followed up with the beneficiaries helping them coordinate and communicate with the project manager.

The projected outcomes were that the beneficiaries would be economically empowered. The program philosophy assumed that economic empowerment would automatically empower women in all aspects. Therefore, it was expected when causes of risk behavior are lifted, the FSWs would abandon sex work, participate in their communities as productive members, and ultimately reach the desired empowerment. The program reports indicated that participants were trained to manage small projects. The training workshop was ten days in duration and delivered by the economic consultant of the project. Topics ranged from markets need assessment, selecting projects, bookkeeping, marketing, and communications. The awareness program focused on HIV AIDs transmission and methods of protection. Free condoms were provided for all participants during their project time. Additional support that was provided as part of the package included issuing identities for each participant and helping them open accounts at the bank.

Also, health insurance was provided for free under the organization umbrella. All participants completed the HIV AIDs awareness program and the small business management training. All participants selected their own projects and received an equal amount of (4250000 SD) in 2013. This amount is equivalent to approximately \$750 USD at the time of the funding.

The second step of the projects was to start the business activities. Participants selected their own projects. The dominant choice was small shops for selling clothing and cosmetics, that is "Boutiques". Other projects included mobile trade, selling vegetables, and cookware rentals. As expected in a conservative culture, women are not encouraged to work in markets. Therefore, most of the selling spaces are either inside or close to the houses of the families of the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries of the projects were asked, and they all opened bank accounts to get ready to deposit their savings. The participants took their first real step in doing business by making their first purchase of merchandize. The participants were asked if they had been informed about the purpose of the projects and the selection criteria. All participants except for two said that they were aware about this information. Their responses were coded as: "crystal clear", "fully aware", "informed", "wanted to change", and "wanted to try", and "misunderstanding". A participant commented "they had received full information about everyone's activities".

The JASMAR office manager informed the researcher the organization is a government owned organization, and the state and federal police, and intelligence agency are supporting partners who provide accurate information about the participants.

The researcher wanted to investigate if the participants were part of the preparation for the project to boost their ownership sprit. The researcher asked if the participants had participated in the planning or execution of the training or had been consulted about preference of topics or skills covered by the training. Their coded responses are: "not really", "attendee", "arranged" and "no participation".

All participants reported that they were given the chance to select their own projects by themselves. When asked about the reason for selecting these specific projects, their responses were: "search around", "advised", and "family suggestions". The researcher noticed that most of participants seemed confused, having received no guidance regarding business concepts. The researcher asked a follow up question to the participants regarding if they felt passionate about their selection. Their responses were coded as: "excited", "happy", "change", "better than the nonsense", and "confused".

A concern about empowerment projects, is the inclusion of beneficiaries in the project evaluation process. Questions were asked in this study to investigate the level of beneficiaries' inclusion through discussing how often they were visited by a JASMAR team. Coded responses were generally positive as: "a lot" and "very often". A follow up question was asked regarding the frequency that their inputs were taken into consideration. Coded responses were: "positive" "they listen", and "they are considerate".

When asked about their expectations of their projects, all beneficiaries except for one said that they were excited and expected great success and a change of life. They expressed gratefulness for the awareness program. The coded expressions were: "big difference", "impassive change", "already changed", "a change of life", "great expectations", and "great chance to change". One of the participants told the researcher that the awareness program was "an eye opener" for her. The participants reported that they already felt the change because they realized the risks of their jobs before the intervention.

Interview questions then became deeper regarding the participants' experience with business management. All the beneficiaries expressed being able to prepare their small shops and make their first purchase of commodities. When asked about their family feelings regarding their starting a business, they all expressed that the families were very supportive. Coded expressions were "happy", "supportive", "objections", and "conditions".

However, a few participants told the researcher that their families objected when they went out of their homes for work. Therefore, they adjusted their palms to use part of their house as a shop. In addition, women's mobility in Sudanese culture is under the male family members guardianship (Hale, S. (2018). This may explain that all participants, except for one; had the business either inside their family homes or in part of the family's homes.

To understand the level of freedom that the participants enjoyed in making decisions regarding their business, they were asked if they were given the cash in hand and if they executed their projects on their own. The participants indicated that purchases were a joint task that they did it with the involvement of the JASMAR economic consultant. The beneficiaries did have the freedom to decide on what they wanted to buy, and the consultants paid for the bill. Participants expressed that that they did not mind the process, which resulted in the recording of code terms such as: "thankful", "appreciative", "satisfied", "cannot complain".

Markets are dominated by males in Sudan (Welsh et.al, 2013). Working women are always under suspicion when and seen as they do not mind being approached by men.

The researcher asked if participants were faced with harassment from men when they started dealing with the market. Except one woman, the others offered that they were treated with respect: "no serious issues", "focusing on business", "respect", and "could be managed".

The banking system is mostly concentrated in the centers of big towns and cities in Sudan. Dealing with the banking system is only popular among government and big institutions employees and bug business owners. It is not common for ordinary people and to a lesser degree woman, to deal with the banking system in Sudan. To engage the projects, the beneficiaries needed to be involved in the business culture, JASMAR required and helped the participants to open bank accounts. When asked if they have been using their accounts, the coded expressions were: "not really", "they wanted us", "I never used it", "few times", "already closed", "no money to deposit". However, he most dominant coded expression was "ROSCA".

A set of questions were designed to gain to an understanding of the perspectives of the participants about the sustainability of their projects. To compare their income and time use before and after the intervention, the participants were asked about their income from sex work in relation to the project activities. Most participants shared that the incomes from the projects were better than incomes from sex work. Coded expressions included: "way better", "the income is regular", "no comparison", "huge difference", "sex work money was nothing". However, an odd comment was "sex was better".

Additionally, most participants said that they were so busy with their projects that they had no time for sex work. When asked if they had rejected a client's invitation because

they were not ready for serving, most participants reported positive beginning with their project. One participant said, "my sex clients are teasing me saying that I abandoned hem because I became a rich business person, but really the business occupied all my time". Most of the participants reported that they started returning to sex work after six months of the beginning of the projects. However, they all reported that they were using condoms for protection. When asked if they ever rejected unprotected sex after the intervention, most client said they insisted and usually convinced their clients to use condoms. However, the key informant reported that five of the participants got pregnant after the intervention. One of them indicated the "it was a horrible experience, and I had to get rid of the baby by abortion".

To better understand the manner that the participants sustained their projects and to understand their perceptions during their projects' lives, the researcher asked about the perceived changes in the participants' lives after the intervention. After the intervention is also classified into four periods of time, namely the immediate change during the first six months, then during the first year and a half, then in three years, then from three years to the time of the interviews.

The researcher asked about the returns, profits, and savings during the first six months. Dominant responses were "good selling", "overwhelming demand", "incredible returns", "it was improving", and "best project ever". Some other expressions were "rising difficulties", and "challenges". The participants shared their excitement about being able to participate in household expenses. Some coded expenses were "food", "family needs", "parents' medicine", and less commonly used words were "rent" and

"bills". Except for one, participant coded reasons reflect that they were not comfortable making deposits at banks: such as: "no time", "reinvestment", "no surplus", "nothing to deposit", and "no need".

Regarding risky behavior, all participants reported that they were so busy with their work that they had no time for sex work. Peremptory tone expressions were used by participants to indicate their positions such as: "No way", "not at all", "absolutely not", "are you kidding", "no time", and "why I do it". However, when checking questions and responses from the JASMAR office reports, it seems that at least one of the participants was sextually active during the period. Additionally, the researcher understood that she was not using condoms. Overall, it was obvious to the researcher that the first six month was a success, and no losses were reported.

Generally, the participants shared with the researcher that beginning with the first six months they felt that the project had changed their lives. Most of the participants were happy with the changes. The most commonly coded expressions were "new person", "a life changer", "no more nonsense", "no time for the nonsense", "no more clients", and "busy". One of participants said that "I realized that I was wasting my time and energy". However, despite the excitement about the new projects, two of the participants shared their concerned that they were not able to handle that much work. Their expressions reflected their concerns of being "confused", and experiencing a "stressful life style". Then the researcher, asked the participants about the success and sustainability of their projects after one year and a half. The coded responses regarding their profits and

savings, were: "doing good", "Hamdulilah [Cannot complain]", "fighting", "surviving", and "struggling".

The researcher observed that three projects were successful and were growing. The participants were able to make profits and have savings. The participants said they joined a ROSCA, which allowed them to put their savings a side and not use them to cover daily household expenses. Then they reinvested the money and expanded their portfolios of merchandize. For instance, the lady who owns the cookware rentals, was able to add women's clothing. Since cookware rental customers are women in Sudan, it is considered a smart move to add other merchandize using the same clients. The participant said, "my profits were exceptional, and I cannot describe to you the change this project has brought to my life". She added "I no longer have to do sex work, which is an energy draining activity, but when you are in need you have to do hard work".

A second participant reported that "I work in my canteen. I even started selling cellphones credit cards, I was the best of all the projects". Four other projects were sustained, still profiting, but not growing. These projects owners were having technical difficulties in pricing and debts. They explained that the market prices are unstable, and sometimes they just sell for no profit. The inflation rate was reaching high points and increasing every day at that time in Sudan. The inflation worsened the situations for those participants who were new to business work.

The economic deterioration affected the purchasing power of the public and created a depression which is manifested in a lack of demand and lack of cash at hand.

People started to borrow goods more and pay in instalments. In a poor neighborhood such

as the location of the participants' residences, the likelihood of completing the installments was very low. Later, two of those participants got married and moved out of the neighborhood leaving their projects behind. One of the participants had her mother managing the boutique. However, her mother is old and had some mobility issues.

Another participant who got married had some difficulties managing the project with the adjustment to her new role as a wife and a mother. The ultimate effect was that these projects were not making profits, and for this reason, the business entered a new phase of struggle. Two projects were poorly performing, and the owners lost some of the capital.

However, the shops were still opened at the time of the interviews.

Regarding the sex work in the second term, at least six of the participants returned to sex work besides their work in their business. When asked if they recalled that they have committed to business work, they indicated that the business was not good and that they needed extra money. Coded expressions regarding engaging in risky behavior were "not easy to quit", "money is an issue", "no time", and "I am using condoms", and "addiction".

A participant told the researcher that "Sex is addiction, it is just like feeling a need to have coffee". A second participant said "Yes, I returned to sex work, since the business is not much good". However, except for one, they all use the condoms that were provided for free from JASMAR. One of them said she insisted on using condoms even though the rates are different.

The researcher then asked the participants about their projects' status after three years from the date the projects started. Their most common expression regarding their

profits varied reflecting: "gave up", "out of business", "making losses", "not for me", "it was all debt", "ate up my capital", "not good any more", "going down", "in trouble", "trying to hold in", "hanging in there", "doing well", and "feeling good".

At this period, overall more projects were going down than the ones that are growing.

Further, some of the successful project went out of business while some suffering projects were out performing other previously successful projects. The obvious reason, in addition to the overall disarray in the Sudan economy, is the change in marital status of the participants. More three participants got married. The changes in social circumstances and responsibilities had severely affected the status of their projects. For instance, one of the successful projects which was growing and flourishing in the first period, had completely stopped. The owner got married and moved out of the city. Her cookware rental, which she used to run from home is now stored in her family's house and she is no

A second successful project also went out of business. The owner had a canteen in a busy transportation station and her project was doing well. She was even able to expand her project and added a cellphone credit service and was making big progress. However, the city decided to change the location of the transportation station and the participant lost her clients. She eventually had to shut down her business. Another participant, whose project was not growing well in the first two periods, shared with the researcher that she had spent all of the project's money on her wedding. She simply said "I even used the cloth that was for sale for my "Shella"; and by the end of the wedding everything was gone". Shella is a popular tradition in Sudan weddings. The groom is required to buy a

longer in business.

cloth gift called "Shella". Shella values vary according to the groom's financial ability, but normally it includes entire sets of cloth. For example, it contains dozen of everything, such as skirts, blouses, shoes, scarfs, traditional dresses, perfumes, body and hair products, makeup, and the like. Shella has an important social meaning. Failing to provide Shella is a stigma. The bride's family usually displays the Shella along with the dowry, and then invites the relatives and neighbors to see the Shella. Therefore, this specific participant decided to use the boutique commodities as her own Shella since her groom is financially unable to buy these expensive dressings. Another participant, who started struggling since the second period, went out of business after having a baby. One participant said that she had spent all her starter capital and was not able to buy new commodities: "most customer take the commodities and pay one installment and never pay again, I always had a deficit and was never able to replace my stock.

On the other hand, one of the participants who previously got married and moved from her place, was able to start another business. She told the researcher that she had the experience but was just lacking the starting capital. She was able to have access to some financial resources and borrowed money and started a new business. She is selling cosmetics and make up from home. She is also managing her old business from a remote location and her mother is working in the store. "I do all the purchasing and pricing for her, and the project is doing well, and "I am so happy to have the chance to help my mother have a source of income and have a business to occupy her time". The participant added, because her mother is a person with a disability and is unable to go out, but now she is not alone because all the neighbors come to her place and help her with the

business.". Similarly, one of the projects that was suffering in the second period, was doing well at this period, where the owner sells clothes as a mobile trader, a traditional females' trading model known in Sudan by the name "Dallalia". In Dallalia, a woman takes her merchandize and visits her regular clients at their homes to show her products. It is a time and energy consuming task because it involves lots of transportation. However, Dallalia is a popular model because it does not involve rent, utility, tax, or any governmental fees. Dallalia usually increase their client volume through mouth word. It seems that this project owner was able to prove herself and to build a reasonable and growing client base. Even though her mobile trade was profitable and her returns are growing, she did not expand her project or improved it to become a regular cloth shop. Even though the business was doing fine, this specific participant was sexually active. In summary two projects were profitable, two were sustained and five were completely out of business. Further, six of the participants returned to sex work. Then, the researcher asked the participants about their projects' status in the current period. The most coded expressions ere: "flourishing", "improving", "more ideas to come", "have plans", "hamdulilah [thanks God], "no luck", "no success", "shut down", and "losses". The researcher noticed that there are three categories of expressions that were coded, the first expression reflects proudness from the successes of the participants.

Another expression was from participants who had lost, but still think about or at least are open to looking for new business opportunities. The last ones have completely disregarded the notion of engaging in a business. The researcher found that with the exception of two, all the projects are not operating, and the owners have lost their initial

capitals. However, one still has her assets, the "cookware for rentals business". The other successful project is a mobile cosmetics and beauty supply trade. The participant shut down her first project after successive lost in returns. However, the owner did not consume her capital. Instead, she joined a ROSCA, and used her safe to start a new project. She started a mini coffee shop, where she sells coffee, local Donatus, fresh fruit salat, cereal, and snacks. For four successive years, her project is profiting. Further, her investment increased substantially. When the researcher asked her about her running budget, she reported that her weekly investment is an amount equal to 750 dollars. This means that the participant's weekly investments a are equal to the entire starting capital that she received from JASMAR when she started her project in 2013. The participant shared with the researcher that she feels like a new person. She is so proud of herself and her ability to provide for herself and her family. According to her, she has saved good money and was planning on opening a beauty salon. However, her brother was severely injured in a car accident, and she needed to pay for his surgery and hospital costs. She said that she is so optimistic that she will soon be able to save enough money to fulfil her dream and start a beauty salon. The researcher noticed that she was the only participant who did not ask for financial support to improve her business. The other successful project is the mobile cosmetic trade business. The owner is now running two projects. The first is the one that was financed by JASMAR, which she gave it to her mother. The second project is a mobile trade. The participant said that the projects are profitable, and her client base is growing. In addition to securing sustainable income for her mother, she also supports her father and helps him with medication expenses. She is optimistic about

the future. She told the researcher that the JAMAR project has empowered her in all her life aspects. The researcher asked the participants if they have plans to pursue their business or start new business. The coded expressions were: "maybe", "need of finance", "need of support" "not again", and "beyond my abilities".

At this point, five of the participants are active as sex workers including one of the owners of a successful project. All the participants who stopped sex work are the ones who got married. However, one of them did not stop sex work by choice, rather due to her new social setting. She lives in a small town where "everyone knows me" as she said in an angry voice. She complained that her husband is unable to support her financially and that he is not a good fit for her sexually. She told the researcher that she will probably get a divorce because she is unable to continue in such as a miserable situation, as she described it. One of the most successful project participants did not stop sex work. However, she told the researcher that she currently has only one client. She explained that she is satisfied with her life, and that she does not consider sex work to be disempowering, but rather it is her choice."

# Findings for Research Question 2: Perceived Success and Sustainability of the Income Generation Activities (IGA)

One of the major challenges of IGAs in developing countries is the lack of project sustainability. A critical element of empowerments is the participants perceptions of the targeted group members. Therefore, the level of success before and after the intervention is perceived to be critical for this study. The participants of the study went through two different business experiences before and after the intervention. In both periods the

participants expressed their feelings and perceptions about their successes and the projects' sustainability.

### Business Success and Sustainability before the Intervention

The participants were asked about their perceptions of their successes before the intervention. The coded responses of the participants were "somewhat satisfied", "okay", and "risky". Some participants were happy with their sex work. These participants appear to believe that they are having fun and making money at the same time in sex work. However, all of them believe that the money was limited. Some participants think of it as a time and energy consuming job, with little income, while a third portion of the participants was convinced that the money is not worth the stress. This, the second research question, included asking about the money they made, their feeling and perception about their accomplishments. The coded answer can be captured by the word "dissatisfaction". All of them shared that the money was not good. In addition, most of them expressed their regret to be involved in risky behavior. However, they still believe working in sex was the only option they had. As the participants stories expressed, six of them resumed their sex work jobs after the failure of their businesses. As explained, the reason that the rest of the participants quit sex work pertained to the change in their marital statuses.

#### Business Success and Sustainability after the Intervention

This section will describe the themes that emerged from discussing motivations, perceived successes, and the sustainability of businesses among the participants after the

interventions. Themes will be identified regarding each element of the second research question.

Emerging codes regarding the perceptions about the successes varied during the projects. Themes that prevailed in the short term are "Excitement" and "confusion". Some participants were open to change and passionate about a new start, while others were not fully open to change and had doubts about their skills to manage a business. The coded themes were "hopefulness" and "worries", and "depression". With the start of each of the projects, the participants were faced with real life challenges. Building a business and a name in the market usually takes time. However, with their limited experience, many of the project participants were expecting immediate and regular profits. Some of them were able to learn quickly, stayed positive, and kept working hard on their projects. However, some exhibited anxieties and others were disappointed. At this stage some of them started returning to do sex work, partially because sex work was their comfort zone and partially because they needed immediate income to spend on their daily lives. The themes that were coded for their responses are "proudness", "optimism", and "disappointment". The feelings and perceptions about success and project sustainability are connected to the participants' feelings of empowerment. The next section connects the success and sustainability of the projects to the influence of the women's empowerment. The discussion below highlights themes related to women's self-efficacy, self-esteem, emotional stability, and women overall self-core-evaluation.

# Findings for Research Question 3: The Influence of the Income Generation Activities on Women Individual Empowerment

The prospected influence on women's effect is thought to affect the women's core self-evaluation. Specifically, change will enhance women' Generalized Self-Efficacy (GSE), self-esteem, emotional stability, and locus of control. Themes related to these concepts will be identified and discussed in the following section. To enhance the analysis, the discussion will be divided int two sections, which are, before and after the intervention.

#### Perceived Individual Empowerment before and after the Intervention

The researcher will first explore themes related to the first research sub-question that investigates the beneficiaries' perception of the impact of the intervention on their sense of generalized self-efficacy. This question in the study is about the participants' perception of their abilities to reach goals. These questions are from Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995; Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE). Participants were asked these questions for the period before and the period after the intervention.

Generalized Self-Efficacy before and after the Intervention. Theme answers for the question regarding the participants Generalized Self-Efficacy before the intervention reflect the perceptions and the coping strategies that the FSWs used to navigate life difficulties. These perceptions and strategies signal the status of the FSWs self-efficacy, and thus empowerment status before the intervention. The coded themes are: acceptive, indifferent, bluffing, avoidance or surrender, and sacrifice. The following section will discuss in detail the emerging themes.

One question pertains to the reason for choosing sex work despite the risks and stigma. Theme responses for this question are "needs", "fun", "leisure time". These themes reflect the participants' determination to obtain desired outcomes regardless of the risks. It is known that engaging in sex work in a Muslim country like Sudan, requires great courage. It is not only a sin from a religious perspective, but also a source of shame and stigma in a community. The traditions continually reinforce the feeling of guilt for a women's body, voice, and appearance. Women are raised to be aware that their bodies are "Awra", a word which means that women are prohibited by religion to expose their body. Women are expected to sit and walk in a way that do not expose their bodies. Also, women are not supposed to raise their voices in public. Women's mobility is subjected to several limitations, and they are allowed to mobile only for legitimate reasons, such as official work or family social occasions. Otherwise, women have to obtain permission from their families to go out or to travel. Parents are the natural guardians of single females, and in absence of a father, the male sibling will take his place. After marriage the guardianship is transferred to the husband. Therefore, working in the sex business is not only a violation of norms and traditions, but also, is a sin and a crime under the law. Sex workers may face sentences ranging from contempt and casting out by the community to flogging if caught by the police and charged. Another severe punishment can be killing by the family to avoid shame. Prostitution is a stigma, and the entire family will be disowned when a female member has been described as a prostitute. Therefore, female sex workers consciously live under the fear that if they are exposed, their families' reputation will be destroyed. Making the decision to engage in such a risky

activity can stem either from a feeling of a severe helplessness or high determination. The participants stories tell details about their motivation and right to use their bodies and time. The answers regarding enjoying leisure and spare time, were the most frequent reasons for those FSWs to choose to work in the sex industry. Money and basic needs were the second most frequent answers. The participants' behavior appears to reflect high self-efficacy

Another question relating to self-efficacy pertained to the inquiry about comparison to other people or other sex workers' income. Coded responses can be reflected in the themes of "acceptive and "indifferent". Most participants do not negotiate rates, accepting whatever the clients pay. Also, most participants do not compare themselves to each other. The researcher noted that most participants work in the same network and there was not much of variation in payment among the participants.

Regardless, these themes reflect low efficacy A question regarding solving problems with families is highly related to the self-efficacy trait. The coded responses show that most participants use a different strategy. A theme that reflects this coded response is "avoidance". Participants are highly determined to do what they want without challenging their families. A question was asked if they were ever cheated regarding payment and what they did about being cheated. A theme that reflects responses to this question was "submission", which is negatively related to self-efficacy.

**Participants' Self-Esteem before the Intervention.** The general theme for the responses of the participants is that they were "worthless". When asked about their feelings towards payments from sex work, the coded response is "acceptance". The

participants tend to accept whatever is offered, that is not negotiating. They feel that the opportunity and cost of their time is lower that any rate a client can provide. In addition, the stigma around their jobs makes them want to continue with a secure limited number of clients despite their low payment, as opposed to looking for additional and new clients. There is always a risk that a new client might be from the government inelegance agency who would end up arresting them. Another possibility is that a new client might have relations to your family or one of your family members and reveal your secret job

After the intervention the participants' responses tend to vary according to the time. At the beginning of the project during the first six months, the participants' stories exhibit they feel a positive change. The coded theme of their responses, which relate to self-worth and self-esteem, is "self-recognition". The awareness training, combined with the involvement in serious work gave the participants enhanced self-esteem. The tone that was exhibited by the participants to describe their attitude towards change reflected the immediate positive change on their lives. However, as empowerment is a process, positive changes need to be sustained. The concept of sustainability is critical for empowerment. It can be noticed that the immediate effect on the self-esteem was quickly shaken when the participants were faced with some challenges regarding their projects' performance.

For instance, the participants' attitudes towards sex and acceptance of low returns changed during the second term. Compared to one participant in the first period; at least six of the participants returned to sex work in the second period. Those participants, who were accepting the low rates that they were receiving before starting their business,

changed their reactions. However, some chose to continue focusing on improving their projects. Themes that capture their attitude and behavior were: "insecurity", "withdrawal", and "fighting". Moving toward the third and fourth periods, some themes prevailed. However, withdrawal had become the most dominant theme.

Participants Emotional Stability before and after the Intervention. Emotional stability is one of the indicators of empowerment according to SCE theory. Emotional stability can be measured by the level of apathy or empathy, the level of tolerance or aggressiveness, the level of autonomy, and the perceived expectations. The following section discusses these measures in details.

Apathy/Empathy before and after the Intervention. Apathy is associated with behavior that does not care about people around you, while empathy pertains to the capacity to understand and share the feelings of another. The researcher asked the participants about their relation to their surroundings. Specifically, the participants were asked about their attitude towards community opposition of their sex career choice. Coded theme answers regarding the community opposition can be summed up with: "apathy" and "avoidance". Some of participants declared that they do not care about what people say, while others resorted to hiding their activities. Despite the intolerant environment toward women's freedom, particularly sex work, the participants did not express concern, and they continued with their sex work".

Aggressive/Tolerance Behavior before and after the Intervention. Before the intervention, themes emerged. The codes related to the questions regarding engaging or dealing with violent behavior among participant were "escape", "avoid", and "prevent".

The participants do not appear to initiate or become involved in violence. Rather, their response to violent behavior is to avoid it as much as you can and try to escape if violence occurs.

The participants justified that the ramification for engaging in violence are serious and might lead to police interference, a situation that sex workers avoid. After the intervention, no changes appear to have happened to the participants' behavior. However, few of them expressed hostility towards the JASMAR team. The justification provided by the key informant is that the participants were always worried about people wondering about the regular visits of the JASMAR staff members. They were worried that their families or neighbors might discover the description of the targeted groups, which could cause them to get into trouble. Strategies used by the team to decrease the anxiety levels, were to use public transportations instead of the organization vehicles that includes the organization label.

Perceived Dependency/Autonomy Level before and after the Intervention. One of the elements that has been cited as an empowerment dimension is the status of dependency (Parvin, 2004). Independent persons have the abilities to provide for themselves and their families. The income and pattern of expenses shows the level of autonomy of the participants. Before the intervention, the theme of their income and expenditures pertained to the rates, subsistence, and personal needs. After the intervention the themes were profits, saving, basic needs, personal needs, family support, and ROSCA. After the intervention, some participants made profits and secured savings.

They showed capacity to save, to invest, to contribute, and to have the power to affect the lives of others.

Optimism/Pessimism Attitude before and after the Intervention. Emotional stability pertains to a participants' motivations to join a project and start a business. The responses varied to the questions. Two themes emerged from the coded data "hope for change" and "carelessness". Some participants saw the projects as an opportunity to change their lives, while some of them did not have a great passion for change. Another theme that relates to positive/negative feelings is the participants' attitude towards change. The general themes that describe the participants' feelings towards the new change are: "excitement", "discretion", and "defeaturing". Most participants had a positive attitude, some were worried, but still positive, and others were easily defeated. These themes reflect variation in emotional stability levels among the participants.

Locus of Control before and after the Intervention. Control and power over are seem as the most cited manifestations of empowerment (Kabeer, 1999; Batliwala, 2014). Therefore, locus of control is one of the closely tied traits to empowerment. Locus of control refers to an individual's perception about the underlying main causes of events in his/her life. According to attribution theory, persons who have the feeling of control of their lives and attribute their successes or failures only to their own work have an internal locus of control, while those who attribute their success or failure to outside factors are said to have an external locus of control (Martinko, 1995).

The perceived locus of control among beneficiaries was reported through their stories before and after the intervention. The following section discuss themes related to the participants' perceived control before the intervention. Specifically, the themes are related to perceived control such as access to or control over resources, perceived control of life's events, decisions regarding mobility and freedom of movement in public spaces, in addition to the ability to practice and to negotiate rights.

When asked about their access to material resources, the theme responses were "no access" "lack of access", and "no information available". Before starting their sex work, the participants depended totally on their poor families. The participants expressed a belief that the only resources they have access to are their time and bodies. After the intervention, themes emerged regarding control over resources such as funding, opportunities, profits, and ROSCA.

Regarding participants movement in public spaces the prevailing themes were "my rights", "peoples' opinions", and "family respect". Those women were trying to practice their rights while avoiding confronting families and communities. After the intervention, the themes were: Stocking, public work, and program activities. The shift reflects s reaction to other persons' opinions, to involving in more mobility that is approved and supported by families and the organization.

Ability to negotiate is practiced by the participants when negotiating about sex work and rates. Theme response before the intervention were "acceptance", ", and "predestined". The participants had never negotiated protection. Further, they were under the clients' control regarding payment. Client may pay low rates, or chose to pay in kind, such as providing food Also, some clients just refused to pay, and the participants were not able to confront them. However, after the intervention, negotiation was mostly over

prices of the merchandize. The prevailing themes were: "bargaining, discounts, and costbenefit comparisons". The participants learned to calculate and negotiate based on objective facts such as costs and benefits.

The themes described above provided a clear change in the directions of women empowerment before and after the intervention. The following chapter discusses patterns of empowerment among the FSWs in the study to answer the research questions.

#### **Chapter 5: Study Findings and Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to explore the level of involvement of female sex workers in Sudan in the JASMAR Human Security Organization project for women empowerment and the perceived influence of such project on their individual empowerment. This qualitive case study utilized in-depth interviews to obtain information from the study participants. Guided by the feminist theory, the study adopted a simple, yet comprehensive definition developed by Kabeer (1999), who asserted that women's empowerment is the ability to exercise choice. This definition includes the characteristics of women's empowerment, which are preconditions for empowerment's process and outcome.

Women's empowerment is a highly complex and subjective phenomenon in which beliefs, not facts, are the basis for perceptions (Wong, 2003; Calves, 2009; Batliwala 2014). I decided to use a transparadigmatic and transdisciplinary qualitative approach to explore and interpret the phenomenon (Erickson, 1986; Stake, 2010). This study used an interpretive case study research design that allows for deep understanding of the underlying reasons for a practice, a situation, or a phenomenon Stake, 2010; Yin, 2011). The research also developed a transdisciplinary conceptual framework to help analyzing the phenomenon. The conceptual model was used to detect patterns in the collected data and analyze them to generate answers to the research questions that guided the study. The program inputs were followed to explore women involvement in these activities, their success, and sustainability. Then, the core-self-evaluation, thorough its latent components was used to investigate the ultimate output of the program and

understand how IGAs influence women's empowerment. Both, the case study and conceptual framework emphasize the process rather than the ends or outcomes. This allowed me to explore multiple realities which is required for understanding empowerment (Patton, 2002). This chapter will provide a summary of the participant profiles, an overview of the findings and discussions and recommendations emerging from the findings of the study.

#### **Overview of Participant Profiles**

The collected data reflects that nine of the participants are young, with their ages ranging between 18-28 years old. These female participants, are at the beginning of the project. All the beneficiaries are poor, unemployed, and from low-income families. Their families' incomes are way below the international poverty line of 2 dollars per capita a day. In the Sudanese culture, women live in their parents houses unless they get married. Since these participants were single at the beginning of the projects, they were living with their families in slums or poor neighborhoods. Moreover, most of the participants are from minority ethnicities. This fact adds a new layer to the stigma of sex work. It is well documented that ethnicity in Sudan, as it is in most African countries, reflects a complex and serious issue (Paglia, 2007). Seven of the participants in the study have a low level of education, which varies from elementary to some level of high. However, two of the participants graduated from college. The level of education is coupled with lack of skills. During the study period, Sudan experienced a high level of unemployment (17-18%) combined with high inflation (50-60%) rate, which led to economic stagnation in the country (Almosharaf & Tian, 2014).

Seven of the beneficiaries reported that they were sextually active, and usually engaged in unprotected sex. Two of the participants claimed that they are not sex workers and that they joined the project under a misunderstanding. They said that the recruitment criteria regarding being sextually active was not fully explained to them. Each of the participants became involved in a business. Some of the business projects were successful while most of them failed. The following section will offer a deeper discussion to link the analysis of the researcher's interview outcomes to the study conceptual framework.

The JASMAR project philosophy was based on the assumption that economic empowerment used the input of the IGAs to influence the empowerment of the Female Sex Workers (FSWs). The researcher used the conceptual framework of the study to pursue an understanding regarding the function and/or disfunction to produce a desired output for each project. Reading over themes emerging from the projects, the researcher found that there are definite patterns signaling changes on the participants' level of empowerment before and after the intervention. In this section, the researcher will describe the emerging patterns from an analysis of the themes. The description will follow the before and after the analysis method to explain the influence of the IGA projects on the participants' perceived empowerment by answering the following research questions respectively:

RQ2: What are the perspectives of the participants regarding the perceived sustainability of their income generating activities (IGA) implemented by the JASMAR project for women empowerment?

RQ3.: What are the perspectives of the participants about the perceived influence of the JASMAR project on their individual empowerment?

# Involvement of Female Sex Workers in Sudan in the JASMAR Project for Women Empowerment

The first study question has as its purpose to investigate women's involvement in the process of empowerment. In this section, the researcher will discuss the patterns and the directions of the participants level of involvement in planning, execution, and evaluation of the JASMAR activities for women empowerment.

The themes that reflect the women's involvement in the JASMAR empowerment program reflected a great variation from compliance to support for the agency. These themes indicate that involvement ranged from high to low among participants and across time. There were times of high involvement, and others of both high and low involvement.

For instance, at the stage of planning, the prevailing pattern was low involvement. At this stage the beneficiaries of the project were selected and informed about the entire program plan. They were asked to either accept and sign the paper for their project or decline it. Each program is designed and planned before contact is made with a beneficiary. However, according to the empowerment theory, empowerment should be a thorough process and with similar outcomes (Rowlands, 1997; Kabeer, 1999). The program is supposed have a built-in mechanism that enhances a shift "of power to" the beneficiaries instead of practicing "power over" them. Including the participants as active agents in the empowerment process almost always increases the beneficiaries' sense of

ownership (Rowlands, 2016). Based on this principle, the empowerment programs are expected to be predesigned and to accept limited adjustments initiated by the feedback from beneficiaries. For instance, beneficiaries might have relevant inputs on the planned training, which might improve its outcomes (Finsterbusch & Wicklin, 1987). For example, surveys and feedbacks from the beneficiaries could have been incorporated in the original plans to improve the outcomes and to enhance the sense of ownership of the participants. On the other hand, the level of involvement of the beneficiaries was relatively high at the stage of execution. At this stage, the JASMAR program shifted some power to the participants. The beneficiaries were given choices. They were asked to select their own projects. The program input was addressed in a way that made the participants feel as active agents, who had meaningful participation in the program activities. UNAIDS guidance (2012) indicated, giving power and control to the beneficiaries can positively affect their sense of project ownership. Therefore, despite the participants limited skills, the participants were offered a positive feeling in relation to enjoying the freedom to select their projects. However, at this point the involvement and the passion towards involvement in the program activities varied among the participants. Some participants chose to be highly engaged, while others were suspicious and demonstrated low involvement.

The participants who have higher motivation to be involved in the program, and who had higher feelings of ownership are the beneficiaries who had prior experience with work or business. However, the majority of the beneficiaries reported that they had zero experience in business and the only motivation for them to start a project was the

availability of funding. From the projects' performance I, the researcher, would argue that there was a high association between involvement and prior experience level of participants' involvement in the programs' activities. The impact of the prior experience was evident from the beginning of the program activities. For instance, when the researcher asked the participants about the manner that they had selected their projects, it appeared that they had never ha clear guidelines or understanding of a business. Since most of the participants had had no previous experience in owning or running a business, the most common answer was that they selected their projects because they had seen similar work in other places. Seven out of the ten participants selected to start small boutiques for selling women and children clothes in their neighborhoods. The key informants indicated that two of the participants mentioned that the projects were selected without a proper feasibility study. Both of these participants suggested that the JASMAR program should develop standard feasibility studies for various business projects in the targeted area before allowing the beneficiaries to make project selections. As part of their training, the prospective beneficiaries suggested that they should be offered directions regarding project selection.

Additionally, the participants suggested that beneficiaries should be trained in ta specific project to guarantee that the beneficiary develops relevant skills that would help her to execute and develop her project. This suggestion matched well the results of a Pronyk et al. (2008) study that noted the value of providing integrated and comprehensive microfinance training, which in turn positively impacted women's projects performance. The researcher would argue that adequate training and knowledge about options, would

help fragile groups to make informed decisions. However, despite the problems and limitations, the participants were happy and feeling acknowledged to be given that much money and given the choice to select a project. This shows that the dimension of "power to" or choice, is critical for perceived empowerment.

# Perspectives of the Participants about the Perceived Sustainability of Their Income Generation Activities (IGA) for Women Empowerment

The researcher strived to follow the projects' themes to determine the level of success and sustainability during different periods. Themes were developed to understand the performance during the short, medium, and long runs. The success of the projects varied among periods from highly successful to improving, to complete failure. Some projects sustained the success for long periods while others fluctuated during the time periods.

The first pattern of success reflects those participants who defied the odds and were able to sustain and expand their projects and make them into success stories.

Unfortunately, only two projects in the JASMAR Human Security Organization program were able to sustain and expand their projects, even with consideration that keeping accounting records, pricing, and other marketing operations require education. It is not clear from this study sample if there is a relationship between educations and the successes of the participants' businesses. The targeted group was selected from poor FSWs, of which only two had a high level of education. One of the success project owners is a college graduate, who keeps her financial records. Another participant had little education and she did not keep any accounting records. Also, it is not clear if there

is a relationship between prior business experience and business project success. The sample includes only two with prior experiences in business, one of them succeeded, while the other failed. Both successful project owners believe that the projects have changed their lives completely. One of them admitted that starting a business was never one of her dreams. What she initially wanted was a traditional office job with a regular income. She speaks with confidence about her plans to expand her projects (she has two different projects now). The other successful participant speaks graciously about her success. She feels proud of her success in business and announced that she is currently doing sex work by choice, that is not only for money. The researcher found no clear association between the success of a business and risky behavior. All participants who lost their business returned to sex work, except for those who got married. However, not all the participants who succeeded stopped sex work.

# Perspectives of the Participants about the Perceived Influence of the JASMAR Project on Their Individual Empowerment

To understand the ultimate influence of the IGAs projects on women's empowerment, the researcher followed patterns among various induvial empowerment dimensions. Specifically, patterns of perceived impact of the intervention on the FSWs' generalized self-efficacy, self-esteem, emotional stability, and locus of control were examined.

#### Generalized Self-Efficacy

As Mierlo et al (2006) stated; Self-efficacy is regarded as an essential determinant of several aspects of human behavior. It is associated with several traits such as self-

determination, self-set goals, autonomy, problem solving, and controllability. Further, self-efficacy influences the level of achievement through its influence on goal setting (Mierlo et al., 2006; Bandura & Wood, 1989; Wood & Bandura, 1989). There are several themes that have been identified from FSWs in this study regarding perceived self-efficacy. The researcher noted that these themes took two directions or patterns before and after the intervention. High level of self-efficacy and uncertainty about self-efficacy in other times. In this section the researcher will focus on explaining the self-goal setting among participants as instrument to understand participants' self-efficacy.

Before the intervention the participants' shows high self-efficacy. Despite the risk associate with sex work in an extremely conservative community, they were determined to pursue sex work. Their reasons varied, appearing to be focused on basic needs, money, or just leisure time, including determination and perseverance on defying the challenges. The participants showed a natural tendency to be set free and achieve their autonomy. They showed an apparent level of ability to solve problems that faced them during sex work. They seemed to have a high level of controllability of their fate in life, which reflects a high level of self-efficacy.

After the intervention, this level of determination on achieving goals appears to have been shaken. A pattern of "uncertainty" about the ability of the participants to achieve the goals initially appeared to have dominated the situation. During the intervention, the prevailing mode among the practitioners was high self-efficacy. The participants were excited about the new experience regardless of their limited knowledge, skills, and experience in the field. However, the medium and the long-term periods

reflected a different pattern of uncertainty about self-efficacy. During the medium term, most participants were faced with real life challenges regarding managing their business. In the long term, most of the participants failed to achieve their goals for sustaining their projects. This outcome is associated with a general trend of low self-efficacy.

The researcher noted that the participants were excited about their work before the intervention. as they had selected, without interference their business (sex work) based on their understanding of their needs, skills, and experiences. The participants expressed high feelings of loyalty and ownership to their business. Their determination to achieve their goals was also high. To achieve their goals they faced their families, their community and its rules, and the police. They developed several coping strategies, as needed, to reach their goals. These strategies varied from confronting, sneaking, and avoiding. Participants reported that they were satisfied and happy despite the risks and the limited income.

After the intervention, which included only three weeks of training and preparation, the participants appeared to have a new mind set. Therefore, with real life problems, such as pricing, marketing, and accounting, the participants' capacity and perceived efficacy were greatly challenged. Some participants kept fighting, while others reported low self-efficacy. With the end of the projects and only three surviving projects, the general trend was low among the participants' self-efficacy in relation to business management. As previously noted, three of the participants had stopped working in sex work. All of the participants stopped or postponed their activities because of a change of marital status. The rest of the participants returned to sex work and determined to stay in

the business despite the risks associated with this activity. Further, one of the married participants told the researcher that she is seriously thinking about divorce and getting back to the sex business.

Moreover, the failure of the businesses has had a negative ramification on the participants' Generalized Self-Efficacy. During the projects, the activities of some of the participants in sex work decreased. This led to a loss of clients. The return to the sex market was unfortunately concurrent with the spread of the COVID 19. This has worsened the situation. Since age and time are critical measures in the sex business, those participants are having increasing fears and doubts that their success in gaining back their clients and thus maintaining their careers. There is a general feeling of disappointment among those who are willing to pursue their previous sex work careers.

### Self-Esteem

There are three popular types of self-esteem. They are frequently labeled as inflated self-esteem, high self-esteem, and low self-esteem. The latter is typically associated with disempowered women. Symptoms associated with high/low self-esteem are trusting/distrusting one's own opinions, overthinking, refraining from challenges, self-punishment, and anxiety ((Erez & Judge, 2001; Chang et al. (2012). The researchers, in an ancillary manner, noted that most of the FSWs in this study were from disadvantaged families. They were faced with poverty and inequality. Their capabilities to access resources were limited. The researcher observed that thee participants demonstrated high self-esteem before the intervention. For instance, when asked about the reasons that they chose to pursue sex work, the participants' responses were money,

leisure time, and fun. The researcher noticed a behavior pattern. Most of the participants started in the sex business for fun and enjoying leisure time. Then, paid sex started later in time. The participants expressed feeling proud that their bodies could earn money. The participants appeared to feel that they deserved to treat themselves and to have happiness and good times. They also, felt that they had the right to earn money for a service that they provided and enjoyed. These women felt that they should have the resources that other people have acquired easily. They also followed their own opinions about their perception of obtaining a better life through sex work. Further, they did not refrain from taking the challenge. These tend to be reflections of high self-esteem. These participants appeared to be locked into their lifestyle.

The participants were able to navigate life from being extremely poor, dependent, unemployed, and staying home to a situation where they were able to earn some money and enjoy a good time. They felt happy and secure inside their network. The Canadian task force pertaining to federally sentenced women (1990); indicted that low self-esteem decreases women ability to cope and unfortunately increases self-destructive behaviors. However, the FSWs in this study did not tend to punish themselves, but rather, as they reported, they did not know that open sexual relationships involved risks. This dynamic seems inherent in a lack of information, not low-self-esteem. However, some symptoms of feeling of worthless and low self-esteem have been traced to the sex work. For, instance, those FSWs reportedly accepted any rate a pay that the clients offered.

This situation seems contradictory, as these folks supposedly had high selfesteem, yet they demonstrated low self-esteem at times. Even though submission can be considered as a symptom of low self-esteem, the researcher would argue that there is an underlying cause for that attitude and behavior that needs to be addressed deeper in future research.

Low self-esteem is typically associated with feelings of uselessness. The self-report of these participants reflects a pattern of low-self-esteem. The researcher would argue that this report was taken after the fact that these sex workers were trained in risky behavior. At that point, they described their situation as exhibiting uselessness and not being worthy. However, most participants, who are active in sex work, have a higher sense of worthiness and are using condoms to protect themselves. After the intervention, the patterns of the preserved self-esteem fluctuated between amplified and low self-esteem. This fluctuation is associated with the failure and the success of the projects. Participants whose projects are successful have a pattern inflated self-esteem, while those who failed shows a pattern of low self-esteem.

However, at the beginning of the projects, the researcher noted the perceived level of self-esteem was improved for all participants. With the awareness sessions and funding, the participants felt another level of worthiness. They felt that they worth support. Further, they felt that they have the right to protect their bodies. Almost all of them indicted that they left sex work. Most of them said that they deleted phone numbers of their clients from their devices. Some of them spoke proudly about their declining of sex invitations. However, with the failure of their projects, the participants suffered doubts about their qualities and their abilities to do things that were being done by most other people. Their self-esteem had been influenced and most of them are now working

on demand in sex work for low rates. On the other hand, those who succeeded with their business enterprises had high feelings of self-esteem.

#### **Emotional Stability**

Emotional stability is the ability to develop a degree of independence or self-reliance. It enables individuals to "develop an integrated and balanced way of perceiving the problems of life". Therefore, it is closely connected to empowerment. Before the intervention, themes related to emotional stability took two major directions across the sub-traits, such as anxiety, anger, depression, self-consciousness, immoderation, and vulnerability". Before the intervention, the exhibited pattern was mostly low emotional stability. Participants were vulnerable to manipulation by clients and by peers. They rebelled against the community, but they had to find alternative protection in their secret network. Those participants tried their best to become free and independent, but they fell into another social binding. The network created its own culture and norms, and the power of the group was imposed on its members' behavior. Everyone is hocked in the group where they work/ They tend to think and behave collectively. Several participants indicated that they were hocked because of peer pressure.

The participants were severely poor, they were consumed in everyday living events and for these reasons failed to have clear plans or directions for the future. For that matter these participants do not appear to have the ability to think or plan for the future. Their perception about life is to live it day by day. They were neither pessimistic or optimistic about the future, nor were they anxious nor calm. However, many of these participants showed symptoms of apathy, in which they had some anger with society.

They felt that the system had failed them. A few of them were aggressive and even were resistant to change.

A few of them even had even a hostile feeling toward the personnel of JASMAR. These participants had a feeling that the system was trying to subjugate them to its values instead of accepting them. This reflects that their prevailing patterns exhibited low emotional stability within a spectrum of regular emotional stability.

After the intervention, the pattern changed slightly to a more regular emotional stability for most of the participants. Even though, most of them did not benefit economically or financially from their projects, their perceptions about work and planning for the future had changed. Most participants shared with the researcher that they were thinking about finding funding resources with the intent of having a stable career. Themes regarding vulnerability tended to diminish. Most participants continued to use condoms to protect themselves. Several of the participants reportedly began declining invitations for sex without protection. The successful projects owners were enjoying more autonomy and independency. An example is that a successful business project's owner announced that she is doing sex work according to her own will and terms. She feels empowered with her decision to continue in sex work rather than feeling stigmatized. The owner benefited from the experience, and she is more optimistic and is trying to apply logic to change her situation instead of applying intolerance. She is looking and hoping to find financial support for a new business.

#### Locus of Control

Locus of control refers to the perception of individuals that life's events are determined by their own behavior or by forces beyond their control such as fate. Several empirical studies have shown that perceived control is strongly correlated with rehabilitation outcomes, not the least of which is empowerment (Erbin-Roesemann & Simms, 1997). Before the intervention, the pattern among participants in relation to the perceptions of control and controllability followed two directions. They were internal control and external control. In the following section, control of resources, such as welfare receipts, household budget, access to, control of cash, household income, assets, and unearned income will be discussed.

Access to or Control over Resources. One of the empowerment indicators is that women have control over income from loans and other household activities and property. Seventy percent of the participants in this study come from poor families, while 30% come from middle class families. Furthermore, those who came from middle-income class families were unemployed and had no access to financial resources. Therefore, all participants are fragile and lack access and control over resources. The prevailing pattern is the feeling of a "lack of resourcefulness". However, the sex workers in this study expressed a feeling of agency and control over their main resources, namely their bodies and time. For instance, all participants exhibited through their words and deeds that they do not care for what the community says about their behaviors. In a traditional Muslim community like Sudan, women's freedom is exhibited by showing that their bodies have

always been limited and restricted by religion and traditions. Despite these restrictions, the sex workers used their bodies to access financial abilities.

Freedom of Movement in Public Spaces and Vocalization of Views. Women's freedom of mobility is one of the parameters of empowerment. This notion is also closely related to the previously discussed parameter of control of one's body and time.

Women's mobility, as well as their control over their bodies and time are restricted by culture and religion. The FSWs in this study expressed their right to move in public to do sex work. The pattern is that sex worker participants showed agency and control of their decisions to move freely. However, the participants decided not to be vocal about it, but to sneak around.

Ability to Negotiate Sex. Ability to negotiate is one of the skills associated with empowerment. It indicates control of acting as powerful partner in the transaction. The prevailing pattern regarding ability to negotiate is no control. FSWs in this study indicated that the sex was contextual. However, they generally accept any rate without negotiation. They are consenters or settlers, with no control. Even though incidences of cheat and fraud were rarely reported, the researcher saw indicators that the FSWs were simply abused, they have no power to complain or report their abuse to the community or the government. One possibility is that they were just coping with the situation by denial. The obvious proof is that when the researcher discussed their spending during sex work, it turned out that the work just covered the transportations to work with a little extra money. Examples of stuff that they were able to buy after paying for transportation were make-up tools, such as lip sticks, eyeliners, and body cream. The FSWs justified the

situation saying that their worth or opportunity costs are less than the paid rate because of the lack of expenses for any training or skills to purse an alternative job. From the discussion of control dimensions, it can be concluded there is a spectrum of full, weak, and no perceived control among these participants.

## Discussion, and Recommendations for Practice and Policy

The researcher noted that the experience of empowering poor and most at-risk women through Income generating activities is unique and can provide useful lessons for policy makers and practitioners. There are several observations, insights, and conclusions that can be drawn from the results of this study.

From the previewed study results, the JASMAR program output was less than anticipated at all three dimensions, namely involvement, project success, and sustainability, including the individual empowerment. of women. The interest in pursuing a business was not high among the program beneficiaries. Most projects in this study collapsed and shut down before completion of five years. The impact on individual empowerment reflected mixed results. In this section the researcher will provide observations and insights regarding all aspect regarding the program.

As stated, the idea behind using Income Generating Activities (IGAs) as tools for empowerment is based on two implicit hypotheses (Tasli, 2007; Cole, 2014). The first one is that providing financial access will allow women to be involved in economic activities to better their lives. The other implicit hypothesis is that economic empowerment will lead automatically to women's empowerment. Theoretically, one would argue that there are well-off women who are fragile and lack empowerment, while

there are some poor women who are powerful and lead influential roles i(Leigh & Harlot, 2004). In this study, no signs of exploitation from family members emerged (Goetz & Gupta, 1994; Mayoux 2011). However, the researcher found that the JASMAR empowerment program experienced mixed results regarding women's empowerment. Some participants were empowered by doing business, some were affected negatively, while no influence was observed for other participants. However, the most evident result was that most of the projects failed.

A study with 520 small and medium lines of businesses in Pakistan concluded that financial resources, technological resources, government support, marketing strategies, and entrepreneurial skills affect business success significantly (Hsu, Kraemer, & Dunkle, 2006). Additionally, the study specified that financial resources are the leading factor in the success of small and medium enterprises (Hsu, Kraemer, & Dunkle, 2006).

From this study of the FSWs with IGAs projects, the researcher has concluded that providing funding is necessary but not a sufficient condition for the success of business projects. Lack of entrepreneur mentality, motivations, and skills appear to have had a negative and significant influence on the successes of the businesses in this study. An outcome of this study is a recommendation that the participants should be trained in a real business environment for an adequate period of time. Specifically, the government should create "Business incubators" from all the stake holders in women's empowerment to support their projects.

Poor rural women in Sudan lack several skills and face traditions and customs that limit their mobility for business work. For, instance, the rate of illiteracy is high among women in rural areas, which makes it difficult for a single small business owner to keep records. Also, married women have less freedom of mobility, which make it difficult for them to market their products compared to widows or elderly women. The researcher would recommend that empowerment programs should not be a one size model fits all, but rather be built on local objective conditions, values, traditions, and cultures. Based on the socioeconomic context in the Kūstī area and in Sudan in general, the researcher recommends that empowerment programs for woman should adopt a group or a cooperative business model. Since most women in Sudan lack essential skills and capabilities, this model would allow the group to utilize the various capabilities of its members. Further, the proposed model would allow the team to manage the barriers associated with customs and traditions. Group business would allow all the participants to work cooperatively to perform the essential operations of their own businesses. In addition, the proposed approach would allow the owners to use a large amount of start-up capital to develop their businesses.

Sex wok has been a controversial issue, in which some feminists believe that the work is a sign of fragility and dis-empowerment, as it is considered degrading for women (Kabeer, 1999; Batliwala, 2014). Other feminists believe that sex work represents a sign of empowerment as it is considered a part of women's freedom to control their own bodies (Leigh & Harlot, 2004) From this study, part of the participants believe that the freedom and control of their bodies, is associated with sex work, while some felt that they

were in a fragile status and had been used by men. However, both parties reported health issues related to sex work. The researcher would argue that women's advocates should be pragmatic and focus on each woman's situation rather than taking a general position. If a woman or a group of women approach sex work from an empowering position, as a demonstration of her/their agency, awareness programs should be focused on the health the dimensions of sex work. On the other hand, if a woman or a group of women are practicing sex because they need money and are being used, abused, or exploited by others, empowerment programs should include the entire package of legal, health, and economic support. The researcher's recommendation is for policy makers and organizations to design custom empowerment programs that address poverty and other fragilities from disempowerment issues. Such an approach requires a deep understanding for each targeted group with consideration of underlying causes for attitudes and behaviors, including coping with poverty and/or adapting to risky behaviors.

Finally, several empowerment definitions described empowerment as a multilayer concept (Sutton-Brown 2011; Drolet, 2005). The reference was specifically made to social, economic, legal dimensions. From this experience, the researcher believe that empowerment is not only multilayers concept, but also, is situational. The individual empowerment process among participants in this study show that an intervention could strength and empower a participant in one aspect such as Generalized Self-Efficacy, but lead to disruption in their self-esteem. This new definition of women empowerment necessitates equivalents adjustment at the policy making, implications at educational leadership, and at practice levels in women empowerment arena. The recombination is to

empowerment programs should have well trained counselors. The problem with the least developed countries, such as Sudan is the scarcity of the trained staff specifically in remote areas. An expensive alternative is to bring experts from big cities or outside the country, where their salaries might exceed the allocated budget for the business itself. The JASMAR program was not an exception with this approach. The researcher has identified an opportunity in networking among organizations that work on empowerment programs, particularly in the area under consideration. For instance, organizations in each area that work in women's empowerment, should develop a joint consulting body or entity that would provide sustainable support for a targeted group. The use of such a joint entity would reduce costs, time, and efforts with each organization supporting fewer groups of women.

#### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Most empowerment studies have been focused on poor women. This research showed that disempowerment is not exclusively linked to poor women. The researcher suggests future research distinguish between poverty and empowerment studies. For instance, studies on the empowerment of women should be based on criteria other than economic abilities. For instance, a study could be conducted on the empowerment of rural women, which would help develop strategies that are adequate to their circumstances. Analogically, there could be empowerment research on empowering urban women, which would develop tools that would enhance women in urban settings'.

An emerging factor that influences women's empowerment in developing countries is technology. The researcher would recommend that research on the influence

of technologies on women empowerment in developing countries or in Sudan be conducted. Limitations among third world women, especially in Sudan, requires studying endeavors that stem from the culture to widen the access to more resources for female prostitutes. The researcher would recommend that studies be conducted regarding cooperative models to enhance the entrepreneurship of women in developing countries

## Glossary

Abbreviations Definition

CBS Central Bank of Sudan

FSWs Female sex workers

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GNI Gross National Income

GII Inequality Index Report

HDR Human Development Report

HIV/AIDs Human Immunodeficiency Virus infection and Acquired

Immune Deficiency Syndrome

Hudud The crimes that have fixed punishments in Islam

ICC International Criminal Court

IGAs Income Generating Activities

IMF International Monitory Fund JASMAR

JASMAR Human Security Organization

MARPs Most At-Risk Populations

MDGs Millennium Development Goal

NGOs. Non-Profit Organizations

(ROSCA) Rotating Savings and Credit Association

SAPs Structural Adjustment Programs

SECS Sudanese Environment Conservation Society

Shari'a, Law The body of formally established sacred law in Islam based

primarily on Allah's commandments found in the Koran

and revealed through the sunna of Muhammad,

SNAP Sudan National AIDS Program

SRCS Sudanese Red Crescent Society

Sudan The republic of Sudan. The northern part of the old Sudan

before the country was divided into two countries; Sudan

and S. Sudan

Sunna The sayings and deeds of the Prophet Mohammed.

SWGU Sudanese Women General Union

UNFPA United Nations Population Fund

WB World Bank

WFP World Food Program

WHO World Health Organization

Zina Adultery Crime in Islam

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## **Appendix A: Consent letter**

Understanding the Impacts of Income Generating Activities on Women's Empowerment: A case Study of the impact of JASMAR Human Organization's Project on Female Sex Workers in Sudan, 2011-2017

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Tegwa Fadl Alla, Patton College of Education, Ohio University, 2017

I would like to thank you for being willing to participate in the interview. I am doing this research as requirement for my PhD degree at Patton College of Education, Ohio University under the supervision of Dr. Emmanuel Jean-Francois. I would like to know if you would be willing to participate in this research. The research aims to study the impacts of the Income Generating Activities on female empowerment. You contribution will be by answering the interview questions. I confirm that all the information you provide will be strictly confidential, your identity will not be revealed, and your name will not appear on the study. This study aims to understand how women perceive the impact of the Income Generating Activities on their empowerment. This study seeks to document women experience and to give them a voice. We will have three rounds of interviews. Each interview will last on average around 45-60 minutes during which I will be asking you about your background information, your previous work experience before JASMAR intervention, and then questions regarding your experience with the Income Generating Activities with JASMAR project.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You can decide not to participate and you may discontinue your participation at any time during interviews. I am ready to answer any questions or concerns you have regarding your contribution. I confirm that all our discussion is confidential. Please note that there is no compensation for your participation, but your contribution is invaluable to my study, and I appreciate it so much.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign your name and date to this
orm
pove. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, I understand I
rill be interviewed by the researcher.
Name
DateThank
ou.
Tegwa Fadl Alla Emmanuel Jean-

Francois

Associate professor

**Educational Studies Department** 

The Gladys W. and David Patton College of Education

## **Appendix B: Interview protocol**

#### Introduction

Greeting; and thank you for accepting to participate in this study. Please understand that you are free to decide at any point of our conversation if you want to stop or to decide not to participate. Also, I want to confirm that this interview is confidential, and your identity wills not be revealed in the study and the content will not be shared with any person or institution other than been used for the study. Please let me know if at any point you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record. If you have any questions, please ask and I will be glad to response to your questions. If you agree we can move on to begin the interview.

## First round questions: Background and self-identification

Questions are concentrated on the beneficiaries' personal information, education and skills, work experience, family, and socioeconomic status

Please tell me about yourself

Tell me about your education background and skills. Tell me about your family members. Who is the head of your household? What is his/her relationship to you? Tell me more about your responsibilities in the family. Do you have dependents in your family? How many? At what age? Do they go to school?

Tell me more about you family, their ages, education, jobs, social status, and relationship.

Tell me about your entire work experience.

Generally, do you feel satisfied with your life and situation? Do you feel you have been provided good chance to fulfill your dreams?

How do you think you can improve your current situations?

How do you perceive your future?

Did you have a business of your own before JASMAR intervention? In case yes, tell me more about it.

Did you continue with the same business after JASMAR intervention?

Do you think you have good entrepreneur qualities and skills? What exactly do you think makes you a successful entrepreneur?

In your opinion, how did your entrepreneur skills affect your business?

Thank you for responding to my questions.

Second round questions: Empowerment process, output and impacts before and after the intervention

I appreciate so much your participation and would like to thank you for the valuable information you provided the first round of interviews

I would like to ask you about your experience with JASMAR project.

How did you know about JASMAR project? Tell me about your experience with the first communication with the JASMAR officials, what was your impression?

Was the objectives and conditions of the project are clear for you from the beginning of the communication? Specifically did JASMAR tell you why you were selected by the project management?

From you might recall, what was your impression? Did you agree immediately to participate? Did you have any concerns, or uncertainty about the project?

• Did you completely understand the project conditions before signing in for the project? What were the parts that were not clear or confusing for you? How do you think that affected their projects and performance?

Have you ever participated in a similar project before JASMAR project?

Whom from your family did you tell first about the project? What was their reaction? Did they encourage you?

What was the most interesting part of the project for you?

How did you perceive change that the project would bring to your life?

To be more specific, in what aspect did you feel that the project would help you?

Were you facing any challenges with your sex work at that time?

How would you describe your experience with sex work before JASMAR?

Tell me more about how did you start your sex work? Why specifically you did you choose sex work over other work opportunities?

How do you describe your life when you were depending mainly on sex work? Was it satisfactory for you?

Have you enjoyed the work? Tell me more about the happy times you had during that period of time.

Do you think your career was a success? What were the most luring aspects of it? Did it meet your expectations?

How about the income, was it satisfactory?

How do you choose your rates for sex work?

Was there a fixed rates or rates are negotiable? Tell me more about how you decide about

the rates?

Do you feel these rates are fair for you? Why do you think it is/or not fair? Please explain more?

Do you usually compare your rates to other sex workers that you know? How do you rate yourself? Usually less or more, why is that? Please explain more.

Was your income stable? I mean did you have times where you did not have clients or income?

On average, how many clients per day you meet? Where do you meet your clients? If you have to travel, who pays the transportation cost?

On average, how much time do you spend on your work per day?

On average; what was your daily or weekly income?

Before JASMAR intervention, what kind of protections you used to use? Have you ever declined a client for the refusal of using a condom?

Is there any person, such as a middle person or facilitator involve in the process between you and your clients? Do you pay for this middle person? Do you think she/he is helping you or you can do your job without? Is she/he being fair to you? Tell me more about this experience.

If you recall, how do you use to spend your money? Who is the main contributor to the household expenses?

On average; how much of your income you used to spend on your family during that period of time?

Do you think your income have helped your family? What was your major achievement

when you were basically focusing on sex work? How do you think your family, souse/partner appreciate that? Were you encouraged? Discouraged?

How do you describe your relationship with your family at that time? Were they supportive? Tell me more about any issues of concerns with your family or the local community in relation to your sex work.

In relation to your work; How do you think that your job affected your relationship with your family?

Who has the most influence and control over your decision during that period of time?

Have you experienced any restrictions from family regarding your freedom to travel or to go out? What was your reaction?

Can you please tell me more about specific types or situation of conflicts between you and your family? Was there any violence involved? Please describe more for me? How did you react to the situation? How did you come to settlement? Were there any ramifications to this incident?

Did you have any incidents with violence from men in the family or from the clients?

Tell me about specific accidents?

Have you encountered any police arrest or court trials in relation to your work?

Have you ever experienced depression or stress before you started your new business?

Who helped you in that situation?

Do you follow safety measures in your job; such as condom use? What are other protection measures do you use? How do you think using protection affect your market? Before JASMAR intervention; had you ever had to accept a client invitation while you

were not ready for serving? Do you recall declining a client's invitations because you were not ready to serve? How often that happens?

Have you ever got pregnant as a result of working in sex work? Tell me about that experience? Who is sponsoring the child now? Is the father involved in the child's life now? What was your family reaction? How did you deal with the situation? How do you see that have affected your relationship to neighbors and the local community? What was your reaction to that?

How did you feel about that experience?

Before JASMAR intervention, have you ever been arrested by police in relation to sex work? Tell me more about this experience. Were there any ramifications to this incident? Were your family members supportive during this incident? Who helped you with that? Tell me about your major concerns during this job? From your point of view what are the positive aspect regarding involvement in sex work?

What do you think are the negative aspects?

Let us talk about your business after JASMAR intervention:

As we all know, the project includes HIV awareness training, have you attended the training? Was it your first time to be exposed to information about the HIV? How do you feel about the training, was it useful for you? Have you ever after that attended any awareness sessions by JASMAR or by any other organization? Don you ask your friends to join these awareness sessions? Tell me more about your experience with these awareness sessions.

What other services do you get when attending these awareness sessions? Do they

provide HIV test? Do they provide condoms?

How to you feel your protection measures after the intervention? Do you use condoms more or less? How do you get the condoms? Do they cost you much? Do you feel you do not need to use them because of the cost? How do you feel about the client acceptance of using condoms; is it the same as in the past or there is an improvement?

Another training provided by JASMAR project is the small business management training. Have you participated in that training?

- How do you perceive the amount and the quality of the training for project management? Was it sufficient? Did it help them? Specifically, what part about the training was helpful? The project selection? The project management? The marketing? Bookkeeping? How can the training be improved?
- How did they choose their own projects? Did you plan your project by yourself or you got some help? Who help you with the selection? With the planning?
- How much time do you spend in the project? What is the average income- or loss
  per month, was the beneficiary able to pay back the loan or any part of it? Is there
  any plan for repay?
- How do you perceive the effect of the project on your life?
- What do they think are the major concerns? What are the major factors for the success or failure? What are the steps that the beneficiaries think you can do to improve their projects performance? What are the steps and efforts other stakeholders need to do to help them improve performance?

- How do you feel about the relationship between you and the JASMAR staff, the Women Union staff, the Economic consultant? Do you think they provide the needed support? What are the things that may improve the performance of those stakeholders?
- How do you think about the current status of your project; is it successful? Do
  you feel happy with the progress you are achieving?
- Tell me about the project expansion since you started?
- Do you think that your projects can continue growing and flourish?
- How do you perceive how to grow your project in future?
- Do you think that this project has a positive effect on the surrounding environment and community; how can you identify these effects.
- Have you involved in any other business project by yourself or with other partners?

Generally, how do you feel about your project? Do you think it is successful?

Do you think your project is growing overtime or no improvement is achieved? Tell me more about your project situations

Do you achieve profit?

Is your monthly profit is increasing or remains the same since the project started?

Do you keep your account records?

Do you have a bank account? Tell me more about how you save your money?

Do you receive technical support from the economic consultant regarding running your business? Is it satisfactory for you? Do you find any difficulties in accessing the

economic consultant or any of the project administrators? Tell me about any concerns you may have in your relation to the project administration?

How often does the consultant or any of the project administration's members visit your project?

Do you think these visits are helpful? How satisfactory are you? What changes do you wish happens that will improve your project performance?

Who are regular customers? Are they neighbors and local community or from all over the area?

Tell me about things for yourself or family that you bought in the last month suing your project

What is the most valuable thing that you have bought or achieved using you project revenues?

Do you have any losses? savings? Loans? Inventories?

In the last month; does the project run profit or losses? What are your major concerns regarding operating your project or marketing you products? How do you perceive solutions for these problems?

Do you think that your experience with the business has affected people surrounding you; family members and neighbors?

Do you have any plans to develop or extend your project in the future? Do you think you can run and expand your business without need for help from the organization?

Do you have any plans for alternative projects?

Is there any one of your family members or neighbors involves in work or help you

running your business? Tell me more about that.

Do you currently receive any financial help from any person or institution?

Currently, who is the bread winner in your family?

How much do you participate in the daily expenses in your family?

Do you provide any financial support to any person other than your nuclear family?

Please, tell me more about that.

Has your social status changed since the intervention? Tell me more details about that.

Do you think this have any relationship to your business?

What are other the major changes that occurred to you since the intervention?

Can you tell me about your sex work in the last month? How do you feel about time allocation between the project and your sex work?

Have your rates change after you started working in your business or project? How did your client react? Were there any ramifications for that?

Around the last month; have you accepted an invitation that you did not want to accept?

Tell me more about that

In the last month; have you practiced sex without using condoms?

members or clients? Tell me more about that.

Do you clients refuse your use of condoms? How do you deal with such situations?

In the last month; have you encountered a violence incident from any of your family

In the last five years, did you get pregnant as a result of your sex work?

How old is the child right now? Is the father involved in the child's life? Who take care of the child while you are at work?

How do you describe your relationship to your husband/partner; have you observed any changes after you started your business?

Do you think violence incidents are less or more as a result of your involvement in your business?

How do you perceive changes in relationship to your family after you started your business? Tell me specific examples of attitude or behavior change.

Have you recently experienced any issues with the police? How did you manage it? Tell me more about that.

Do you feel any differences in community and clients' attitude/behavior after you run your own business? Can you please describe some incidents for me?

Are you a member in any of the local community organizations?

In the last month, have you volunteered in any ways to the community? How do you see your impact on your family? On your local community?

How does your family react to your involvement in the community work? Do they allow you to go out? Do they pose any restrictions to your movement? How do you feel about the difference in their attitude/behavior before and after you started working on your own business?

What are the major differences in your attitude and behavior that you feel changes as a result of your involvement in your own business?

What are the major differences in your family members and community's attitude and behavior that you feel changes as a result of your involvement in your own business?

Can you tell me what was your behavior or reaction toward a situation or a conflict

between you and your spouse/partner or family member; please refer to the most recent incident. Do you feel now your behavior or attitude was fair? Do you think you will change your position if this happens again in future?

When you go out in a trip regarding your business, do you take permission for that? Who do you have to consult with? Have they always been understanding and supportive? Can you go out without permission in case of emergency? How do your family usually react? How do you manage the situation? Do you feel it is fair for you?

How do you think you can change this situation?

Do you have any health concerns? How you seen by a doctor recently? What is the most recent time you visited a doctor? Are you taking your medicines?

Have you ever felt stressed or depressed recently? Tell me more about that.

Generally, are you satisfied with your current situations? How do you spend your leisure time?

How is your relationship with the other beneficiaries in the project? Do you meet regularly? Do you share experiences?

If you compare yourself with the other beneficiaries, what will you say regarding your success in relation to theirs? What have they done differently that led to their failure or success from your point of view?

Are you optimistic about future?

What will you tell anyone who is intending to involve in IGAs activity with any of the NGOs in the Whit Nile State?

What are the things that you wish to change to make your life better?

What are the things that you expect me to ask you and I missed that? Why do you think this is important to your experience?

What are the things that you want to tell me and you feel are important to your experience?

Thank you so much and I appreciate your participation in this project.

**Third Round:** Checking with participants to see if they need to add or clarify any information.

# Greetings

I would like to express my gratitude for the time you spent with me and for the invaluable information you shared. I wanted to ask if you would like to add anything to the information that you shared. Also, feel free to clarify or comment on any part of our previous discussion. After listening to the beneficiaries' responses, I will thank her again for her time.

**Appendix C: Key Informant Interviews Protocol** 

Introduction

Greetings;

I would like to thank you for participating in this study. I want to confirm your participation is voluntary. You are may decide at any point of our conversation if you want to stop or to decide not to participate. Also, I want to confirm that this interview is confidential, and your identity wills not be revealed in the study and the content will not be shared with any person or institution other than been used for the study. If at any point of this interview you need to say anything off record, feel free to let me know so that i will turn the recorder off.. If any questions you want to ask or clarify something, please ask and I will be glad to response to your questions. If you agree we can begin the interview.

First round questions: Background and self-identification:

Please tell me about yourself and your experience in working with women

Tell me about how all this idea about the project for FSWs started

Tell me about the relationship between your organization and the other partners and stakeholders of the JASMAR project for FSWs.

Tell me about your office role in the project?

Second round questions: Empowerment process, output and impacts before and after the intervention

How did you get to select partners/implementing bodies for this project?

Do you think this process was efficient?

What are your concerns about the selection process?

Would you recommend using same selecting criteria in future?

How do you see the cooperation between your institution and the partners? Tell me more about areas of success and areas of concerns.

How areas of success and areas of concerns are affecting the project performance.

Can you please provide specific examples?

How do you perceive your institution experience, do you think it was a success or failure?

From your point of view, what are the major reasons for success or failure?

How do you perceive the experience of women in the project overall?

Tell me more specific cases of success or failure?

What do you think the major impact on women empowerment as a result of the project?

Are would you describe the progress made in women empowerment regarding the

beneficiaries?

What were the major challenges you faced in relation to dealing with the FSWs?

How do you see ways for developing this experience?

Do you recognize any differences from your expectations and the actual progress made regarding empowering FSWs?

Would you recommend replicating this experience in other communities in Sudan?

What would your advice be to ensure advancement in women empowerment and gender issues?

I would like to hear from you in case I have missed any pint you were expecting to share or believe it bring insights in examining the FSWs experience with JASMAR project.

Thank you so much for your valuable time and your invaluable responses.

What would be your recommendation to improve the performance?



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