

Policing and Commercial Sex Work in India

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AIDS Science Day 2007

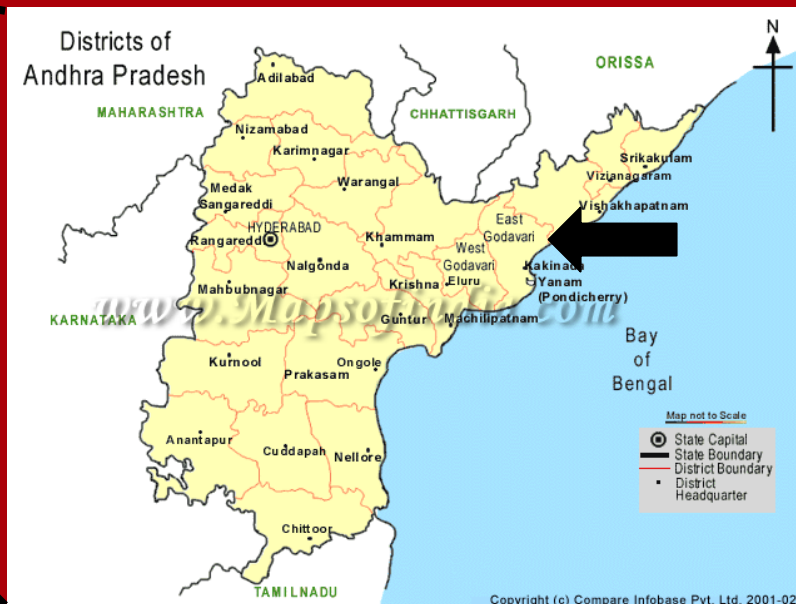
- **Funder:** The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's AVAHAN: India AIDS Initiative
- **Objective:** Analyze the implementation and impact of a community-led structural intervention for sex workers in East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, India
- **Intervention implementer:** CARE India's SAKSHAM project – a replication of the Sonagachi Project, Kolkata

Study Site



East Godavari District, AP

- Population: 5 million
- 2004: 16% FSW HIV+



- Cross-sectional survey of 812 sex workers
- Conducted April to June 2006
- Recruited via Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS)
- Included sex workers 18 and older that conducted sex work in the last year

SURVEY DOMAINS

- Demographics
- Sex work history and migration patterns
- Collective efficacy
- Sex behavior/condom use
- Relations with power brokers
- Violence
- Policing experiences
- KAP for HIV and STIs
- Access and use of essential services
- Exposure/participation in the intervention

- In India, sex trade regulated by the 1986 Immoral Traffic in Persons Prevention Act (ITPA).
- The ITPA criminalizes and prevents activities associated with prostitution (keeping a brothel, procuring women, having sex with minors etc.) while preserving a woman's right over her body.
- Under the ITPA a woman can sell sex as long as it takes place in private.
- The Act also makes it illegal for any third parties to be involved in, or benefit from, commercial sex.
- In effect, the law allows a woman to sell sex but makes it illegal to engage in activities to procure business. Even living off income made from sex work is illegal under the Act. Inevitably sex workers must break the law and sex work is, in effect, criminalized.
- And, police have considerable latitude in interpreting and implementing the law

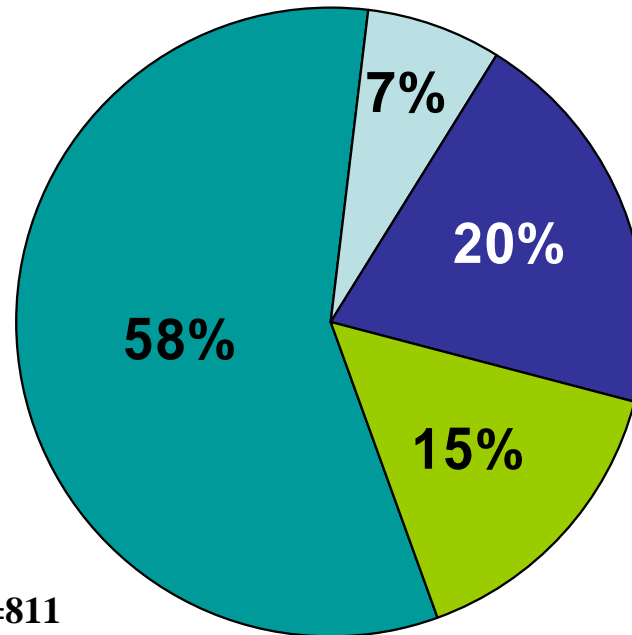
Some common forms of police interference with sex work, such as confiscating condoms, are not a problem. BUT the vast majority of SWs have arrangements in which they exchange something to avoid trouble with police

Police Negotiations	Frequency (%)
In the last 6 months, have you stopped carrying condoms with you because you were afraid of the police identifying you as a sex worker	9.6
In the past 6 months, police have taken condoms away one or more times	8.7
In the past 6 months, you have given something to the police to avoid trouble	83.7
Gave sex to avoid trouble with the police	4.2
Gave money to avoid trouble with police	14.0

Police Raids

In spite of exchanges to avoid trouble with police, police raids remain fairly common

In the past 6 months, how many times has the place where you work raided by the police?



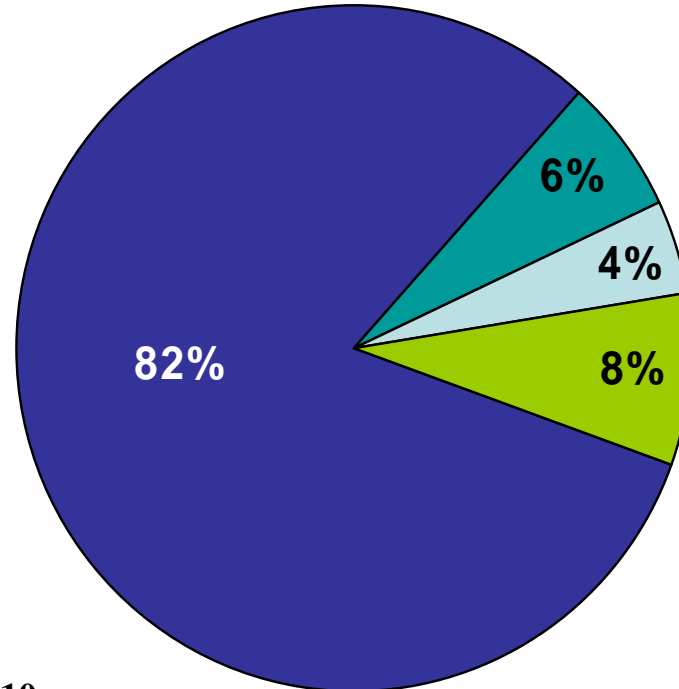
N=811

 Zero Once 2 to 3 4 or More

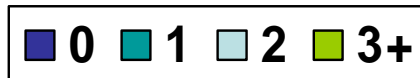
Perhaps because of exchanges to avoid trouble with police, arrest is fairly uncommon

Arrest History

In the past 6 months, how many times have you been arrested?



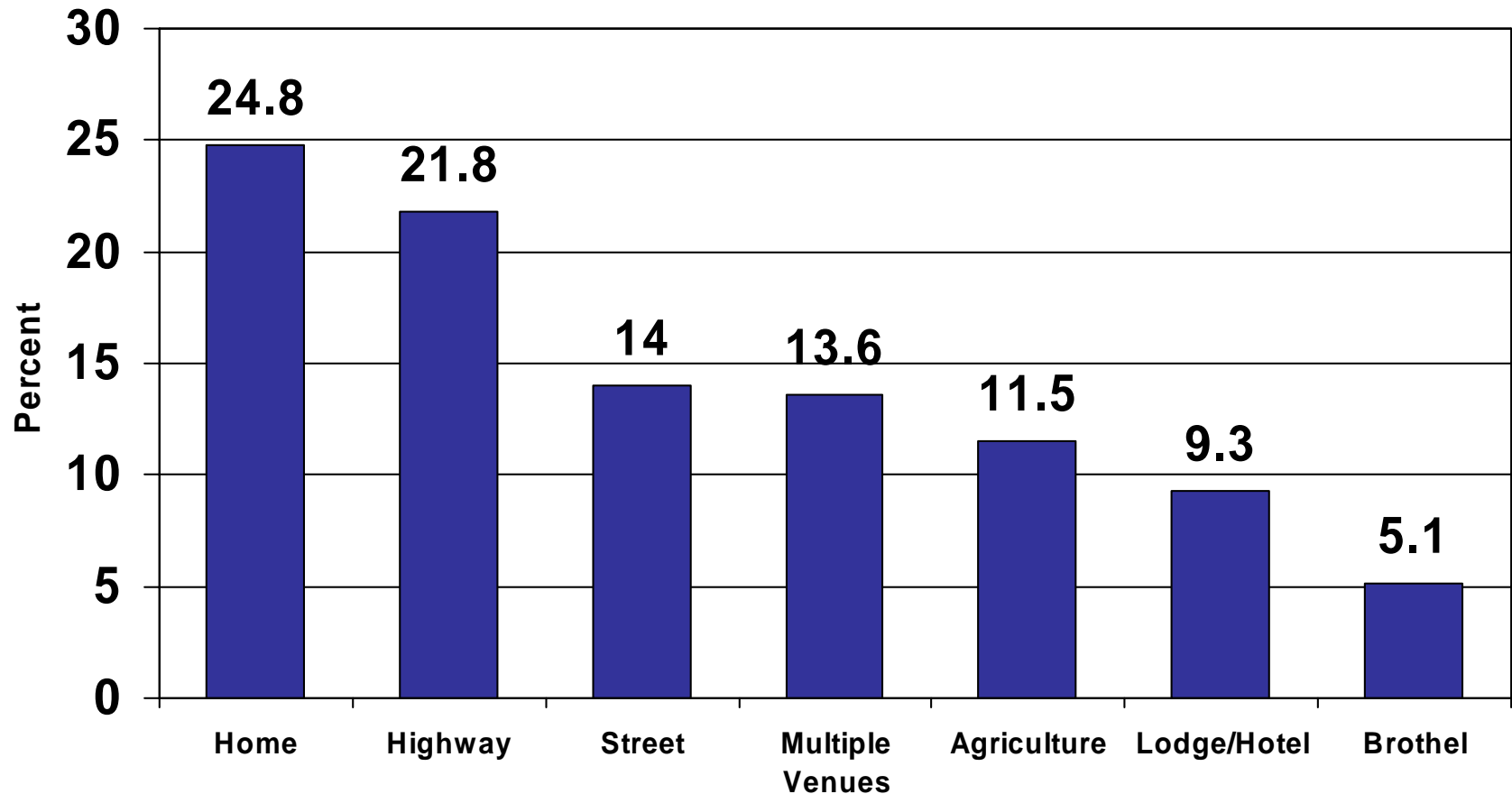
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Police and Clients

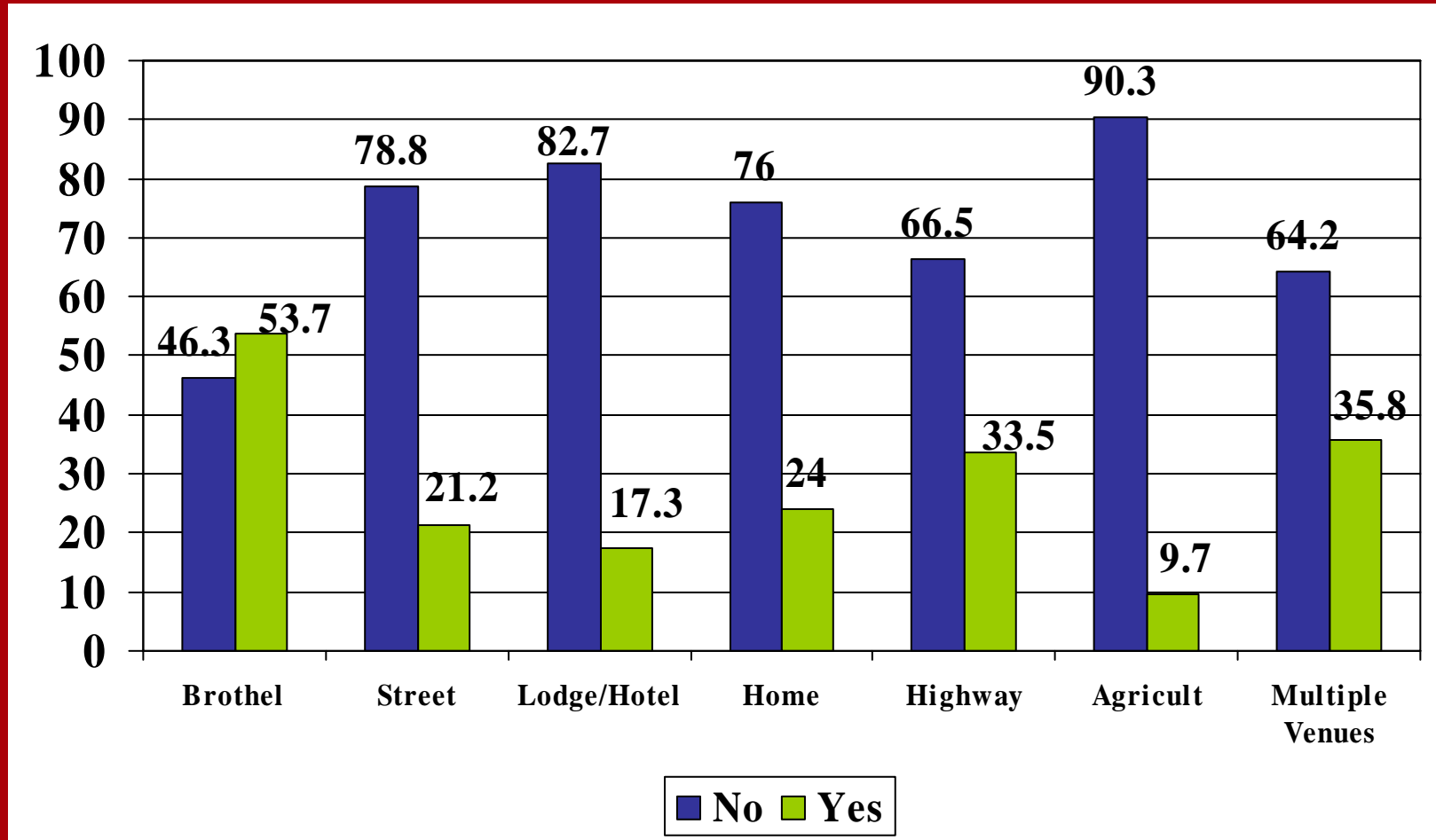
In the past 6 months, how many times did the police fine or arrest one of your clients while you were working?	Frequency (%)
Zero times	81.4
One time	5.9
Two times	6.7
Three or more times	5.9

There are many different types of sex work being conducted in EGD, and relationships with police vary

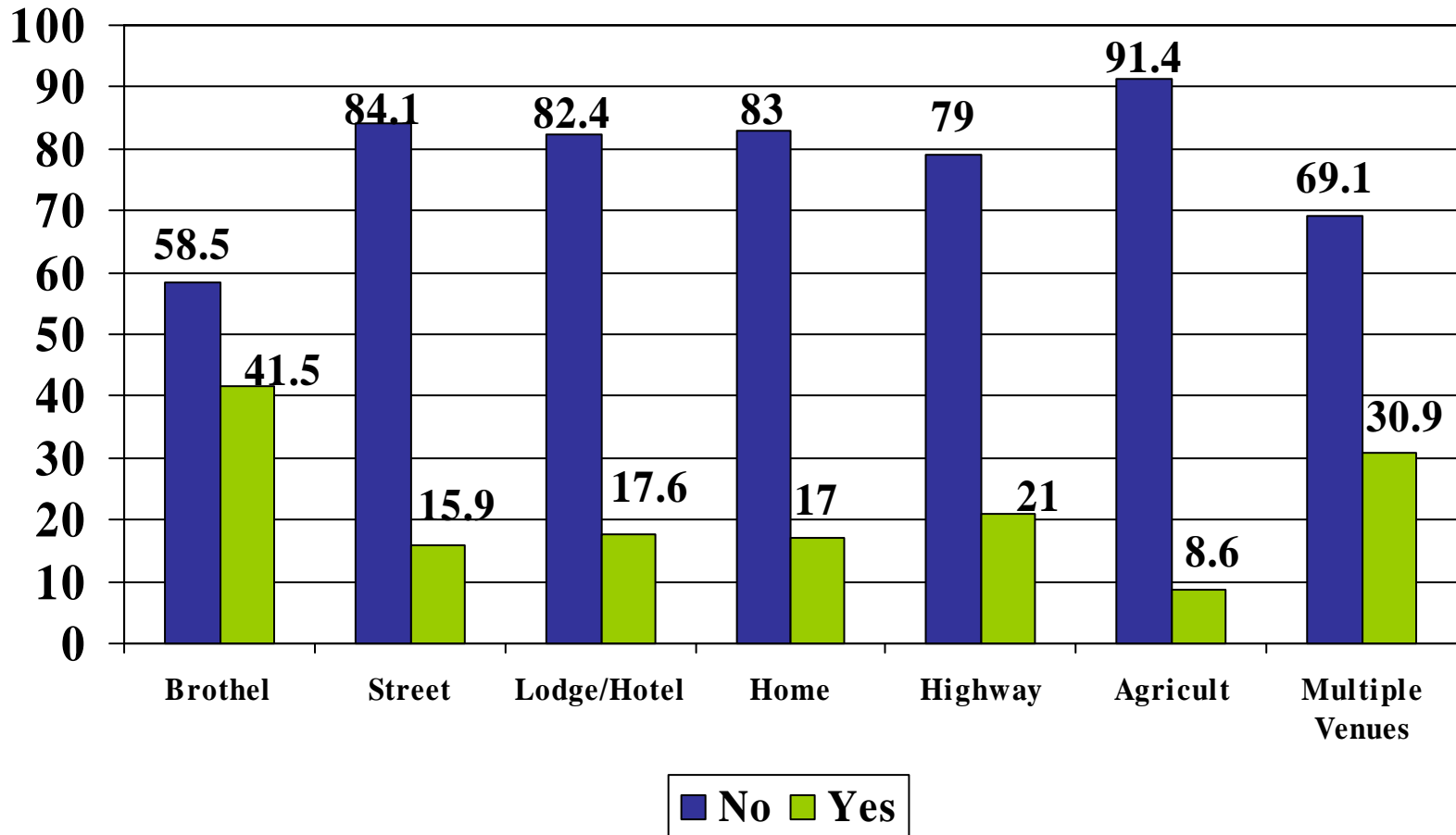


P=.000	No Raids	1 to 3 Raids	4 to 6 Raids	6 + Raids	Total N
Brothel	29.3	41.5	22.0	7.3	41
Street	57.5	34.5	4.4	3.5	113
Lodge/Hotel	70.7	16.0	9.3	4.0	75
Home	68.3	20.1	6.5	5.0	199
Highway	40.9	41.5	10.2	7.4	176
Agriculture	83.9	12.9	1.1	2.2	93
Multiple Venues	42.7	25.5	18.2	13.6	110

Has ever been arrested ($p = .000$)



Has ever had sex with a police officer
to avoid trouble ($p=.000$)



- In general, sex workers are vulnerable to police action
- Police action may take different forms with different groups of sex workers
- Police activity should be a target for prevention interventions with sex workers
- To be most effective, interventions with police may need to take into account the type of sex worker



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