

Factors That Influence the Increase of Prostitution in Bulawayo's Business Centre

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Abstract: *The study sought to assess the factors that influence the increase of prostitution in Bulawayo's Business Centre. It is generally noted that many young women married or unmarried, employed and unemployed, including teenagers of between 13 to 17 years are involved in prostitution. It is observed that there are many brothels, bars and hotels that attract quite a number of young women. The government's efforts initiated in curtailing the rate of prostitution through criminalising commercial sex-work by arresting and detaining those suspected of loitering or soliciting for clients seems to have failed. A Mixed Methods Approach which combines quantitative and qualitative paradigms was adopted. Due to the clandestine operation of prostitutes, the exact size could not be ascertained; however, a sample of 25 respondents was used in the study which was selected through snowballing sampling technique. The findings revealed that Zimbabwe's dire economic situation has forced many young women into prostitution. The majority of the prostitutes were also found to be drug and alcohol abusers. The study also revealed that the enforcement agents were the main prostitute-abusers who arrested women walking in the streets at night on suspicion of loitering or soliciting for commercial sex-work. The increase of women involved in prostituting activities in a country that criminalises the phenomenon indicates that the country is not addressing the problem but the symptom. Therefore, the major focus should be directed towards equalization of political opportunities in which women are educationally and economically empowered.*

Key terms: *prostitutes, commercial sex-workers, prostitution.*

I. Introduction

Prostitution has been regarded as the oldest profession, as it meets the natural urges of humans in return for money and it is claimed to be as old as civilisation itself (Bindel, 2006; Gangoli & Westmarland, 2006; Day, 2007). Origins of prostitution date back to the genesis of mankind. There appears to have been in every age men who did not avail themselves to the marriage covenant but driven by sexual instincts for illegitimate sexual pleasures who were satisfied by wicked women. This may be assumed to be the real origins of prostitution throughout the world, though in particular cultural groups this cause could have been assisted by female avarice or passion, religious superstition or mistaken sense to hospitality. Accordingly, prostitution exists in every society. It is constantly assumed as an existing fact in biblical history.

It is estimated that prostitutes were common among the Jews before the Birth of Christ (BBC). The Genesis account that prostitutes covered their faces with veil – to keep themselves from disguise. In the bible, it is revealed that Moses legislated the Jewish morals which included a command to prohibit prostituting daughter, which indicates that Jews of that era were addicted to prostitution. The Mosaic laws condemned adultery and rape with death. It is certain that Jews and Jewesses were subject to diseases apparently similar to gonorrhoea, and Moses reiterated injunctions and forbade all sexual intercourse, that was not within the Jewish law. So earnest was his desire to eradicate the evil from the people that he extended his prohibition to women during the period of their menstrual visitation. There is also evidence that prostitution existed in the Jewish history, specifically, during the reign of King Solomon prostitutes also called concubines were stigmatized and segregated because of being viewed as “sources of defilement.”

To further argument that prostitution is the oldest profession, Jesus saved a prostitute from being lapidated, more so, different forms of commercial sex can be traced in the times of the old Greeks and Romans (Posner, 1992).

In some societies prostitution is not a disgrace but a practice that is legitimised. The portrayal of prostitution in societies vary, for some people, prostitution is viewed as an expression of sexual liberation, as a public health issue to others as a form of violence against women. Kelsner (2002) argues that prostitution serves men's sexual needs and meets women's economic needs. In liberal feminism, prostitution in contractual sense is conceived as private business transaction, (Day, 2007). Radical feminists, on the other hand, view a prostitute as a human being who has been reduced to a piece of merchandise or an act of selling one's body, in which a prostitute rents out a specific part of their bodies – namely their genitals. Such a view, assumes that the client buys sex, does not care for the sex-workers sexual gratification, but requires the prostitute to provide sexual

enjoyment, (Klepper, 1993). The liberal contends that a woman is free to enter into contracts. However, the radical feminist does not believe that a prostitute's desire to enter into such a 'contract' is done of her own free will. The radical feminists see prostitution as an exploitative relationship in which the customer is interested only in the prostitute's services and not her personally, (Day, 2007). On a different perspective, the Marxist feminist response to the liberal position is that prostitution represents a corruption of wage labour, and is therefore degrading and oppressive. Contrary to radical, liberal and Marxist feminists, the existentialist feminism, views prostitution as an avenue which allows women to escape from dependency on men in a way that does not leave them victims, but empowers women. From a moralistic view, prostitution offends cultural moral standards and spreads sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis, herpes and HIV/AIDS syndrome (Barry, 1995). Used condoms, syringes and other paraphernalia left on the ground are potentially hazardous. Stuart (1995) observed that the presence of prostitutes may negatively affect the area by reducing property values. Prostitution is deemed inappropriate behaviour. However, shifting the ethical centre of sexual morality, from contemporary and classical ethical theory towards a morality, in which moral right and wrong is defined from patriarchal culture, which is male dominated; it would not logically convince opponents of patriarchy. Specifically, Imelda, (1995:37) states, "If male domination becomes the underpinning of morality, all systems of moral theory then must be explicable in consistent terms with this new moral centering in which male domination and the thirst for sexual power is central."

It is noted that most theoretical approaches in understanding factors that influence prostitution have limitations. For example, prostitutes and their clients have a world view about the degrading nature of prostitution. Exploiting sexuality is not uncommon, and it is not always men who are exploitative. There are many instances of men's exploitation by women who have used their sexual prowess to exploit them, for example, to get favours, money or promotions, (Dorchen, 1990). Barry (1995) and Stuart (1995) generally agree that prostitution is a form of moral decadence because it degrades a woman, who is generally viewed as a person of low social stature.

Society encourages certain forms of behaviours and discourages other forms for example, through enforcing prohibitory laws that criminalize or regulate certain personalities. In a sense, the abomination or abhorrence of selling sex reflects that societies value certain behaviours as better than others. The cost of prostitutes is that they are relegated to a lower social status which to some extent is stigmatized, denigrated and/or illegitimized.

Conceptual Framework

Goodlin (2009) says that the term prostitution typically calls for a variety of stereotypes with most people blaming the prostitute as 'slut, whore' for social problem. Prostitution is the business or practice of providing sexual services to another person in return for payment, (Wikipedia, 2011). The Criminal Law Codification & Reform Act, (2004) defines prostitution as an act of allowing other persons to have anal, extra marital sexual intercourse. In this definition, there is no mention of exchange of money although it goes on to say, "Solicits other persons to anal or extra-marital sexual intercourse or engage in other sexual conduct with him or her." However, in view of Overall, (1992), prostitution is defined in terms of buying and selling or more generally in terms of asymmetrical relationship of exchange in which the sex worker provides sexual services and the customer supplies recompense for those services, usually in the form of money, but sometimes in the form of food, lodging, clothes or luxuries or taking care of the prostitute's children. Most legal definitions focus on females as prostitutes rather than on the client (male) who pays for sexual services, consequently, countries like Zimbabwe have the law and criminal justice that focuses their attention on arresting and charging the prostitutes more than their male sexual client.

Therefore, the legal definition of prostitutes is biased and is strongly grounded on patriarchal-hierarchical-male domination. Miller (1971) argues that prostitution is the only crime where two people mutually agree on an illegal act but one of the participants is a victim of law, the female partner is, thus, subject to arrest. From Flowers' (1998) statistical analysis it was revealed that only two customers (male-clients) were arrested for every eight prostitutes. One explanation for lack of attention paid to the customers according to Davies (1993) is because women are held responsible for male deviance, which is viewed as double standard, Prasad (1999) is of the opinion that male clients are viewed based on the belief that the sexual behaviour of seeking prostitutes is natural for men which distorts the definition. Such biased definitions create negative stereotypes of prostitutes which dehumanizes them more than customers who pay for existing and flourishing of sexual services. Beyond this, it is important to note that the definitions of prostitution vary across cultures because of diverse societal standards (Bullough and Bullough, 1996) consequently; the gap in addressing the problem of prostitution differs. For example, some countries, especially in the west call for legalisation of prostitution while most developing countries, are grounded on patriarchal-traditional philosophies and cling onto policies that are espoused on the criminalisation of prostitution. It is also noted that in other countries prostitution is legalised while countries like Zimbabwe, the same behaviour is criminalised. Despite the variety

of definitions that are used to explain prostitution, in this study, the term prostitution refers to any woman who has ever reported to providing sexual favours in return for anything ranging from money, food, drugs, clothing or shelter at any point in one's life time (Goodlin, 2009).

Contradictory views on the Concept of Regulation and Criminalisation of Prostitution

The question of conceptualising the content of prostitution has varied interpretations embedded in different philosophical views driven by different cultural perspectives – and accordingly concerns continue to be raised in how to regulate this controversial behaviour of prostitution. Diverse agendas about the regulation, state role and the patriarchal views and socio-economic disparity have come together in the debates on prostitution policy often fusing and / or clashing with one another in complex, unpredictable and controversial ways (Manro & Giutsa, 2012). Considering the paradigmatic shifts that exist in modern societies, debates over prostitution policies have intensified, fuelled by the development of a number of high profile, and markedly diverse, legal and policy responses at rational and international levels. These responses range from regulative regimes for legalisation of the sex-industry, while by contrast, some regimes like Zimbabwe, have legal policies based on eradication of sex-industry through enacting jurisdictions that criminalise prostitution as a means to eradicate it. On the contrary, deconstruction of sex-work as legitimate labour has led to the legalisation / decriminalisation of prostitution in several countries especially the developed nations... grounded on the philosophies that focus on empowerment and equality of women in democratic societies. Legalisation of prostitution varies across national jurisdictions so long as they are conducted in accordance with specific requirements (Menon, 2012). For example, in Netherlands and Germany, since the lifting of the ban of brothels, prostitution is permitted in licensed, brothels, and in places that do not disturb the public. In Sweden, prostitution is officially acknowledged as violence against women, colonization of women and an exploitation or abuse man within a patriarchal culture society. The Swedish legal framework calls for no arrests of women, no blaming of the victim, no use of criminal justice system to control women, but appropriate use state system against men who viewed as the main culprits, (Ekberg, 2011).

There are developments in the legal approach to prostitution adopted by different countries especially in the western world, with a paradigm shift from prohibition towards legalization, decriminalisation and democratization of prostitution, (Mossman, 2007). However, there seems to be confusion over the legislative approaches to prostitution in different jurisdictions. Countries that support decriminalisation are involved in repealing of all laws against prostitution, or the removal of provisions that criminalise all aspects of prostitution (West, 2000). The benefits of decriminalisation of prostitution are many, and include the promotion of health, safety and working conditions of sex workers and their clients, lessening social exclusion, discrimination and stigmatisation of sex workers. In addition, the proponents of decriminalisation of prostitution believe such legal stance may improve the incomes of operated brothels (Gangoli, Westmarland, Bindel, 2006). Legalisation or decriminalisation is believed can reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS and improve the recognition of human rights of sex workers (West, 2000). The underlined premise of legalisation of prostitution is premised on an argument that it may reduce crimes which include organised crimes, police corruption and child prostitution. (Gangoli and Westmarland, 2006). In the same vein, Raymond (2004) supportively believe that legalisation of prostitution can reduce crime, improve public health by facilitating the testing of HIV/AIDS status of both sex-workers and help people out of poverty. The other argument in support of legalisation of prostitution is the belief that the conditions of sex-industry would improve through educating, conscientizing and psychologically empowering both the clients and sex providers about health behavioural practices, (O'Connell & Anderson, 2003).

Human rights lawyers, Post & Datta (2012) argued that legalised prostitution cannot exist alongside equality and humanity of women. The same proponents, critically view women who provide for men's sexual access as founded on structural inequality by gender class and race. Moreover, legalisation of prostitution is criticised for violating international and that the failure to challenge legalised undermines every human rights norm mandating the dignity of the person and equality for all.

Factors Associated With Prostitution

Sexual Abuse and Running Away According to Goodlin (2009) previous research estimates that 10-84% of prostitutes experience sexual abuse, thus indicating that those who are sexually abused are at a higher risk for prostitution, especially among females (Wisdom and Kahn, 1996). Therefore sexual abuse is often cited as an important correlate of prostitution (Daka, 2001). Simon and Whitbeck (1991) found that the combination of early sexual abuse and destructive parenting generally led to running away from home and increased participation in deviant behaviours including prostitution. Those who are sexually abused are more likely to escape the abuse by running away leading to prostitution in order to survive on the streets (Seng, 1980). Willis & Levy (2011) state that homeless runaway, or abandoned children are frequently pushed into prostitution and actively recruited by pimps and traffickers. In Zimbabwe, the Human Rights Report (2005) estimated 1.3 million HIV/AIDS victims, in some cases child-headed families being forced to drop out of school and look for

employment for survival. HIV / AIDS orphans are reported to be at high risk for child sexual abuse. Some children are reportedly forced to turn to prostitution as means of getting income (Vimbai, 2009). It is reported that many primary school level engage in prostitution. It is also noted that in Bulawayo there are many brothels, bars and hotels that attract quite a number of teenage and adolescent girls who are usually seen loitering at their foyers and premises in search of clients. Child prostitution occurs in brothels massage parlours, streets and discotheques. Lower prices charged by defenceless young girls are reported to fuel the demand for child prostitution. The girl prostitutes are easily controlled and exploited by bar owners and 'madams' (UNICEF, 2001).

In the Sunday News, Moyana (2012) reported that a number of girls who are expected to sit for their 'O' Level examinations either fall pregnant or drop out over the failure to pay school fees. The Bulawayo community is concerned with teenage girls' secondary education which is said to be disturbed by 'sugar daddies' that create what are euphemistically referred to as "small houses" by using their financial status to subvert these young students for sexual gratification. Recently, it was reported by Chiwanga (2013) that prostitution is rife in Bulawayo involving students as young as between the ages of 13 and 17, who are driven by poverty or orphanage to leave education to join the oldest profession. Prostituted children are at high risk of acquiring STDs other than HIV, transmitting these diseases to their infants and clients and developing drug-resistant forms of STDs (www.aid). Child prostitution often results in serious long-term psychological harm, including anxiety, depression and behavioural disorders. In a study conducted by Wills & Levy (2011) in Cambodia, many of the young prostitutes reported cases of depression, homelessness inability to sleep, nightmares, poor appetite and a sense of resignation.

Absenteeism and disinterest in school is closely associated with teenage prostitution. Nkala (2013) an educationist noted that children and teens that lack the interest in the school are very prone to prostitution. By being away from a learning institution provides them with the tools to combat negative aspects of society, and become very misguided and imprudent. Consequently, such children are prone to pimps and sexual abusers who view them as defenceless targets. Students who bunk lessons or subjected to expulsion, suspension, experience boredom or abandon knowledge and education have a high probability of getting into sex-industry, (Child Refugee, 2007). In another research study carried out by Moen (2012) it was revealed that the girl-child who abandons her home because of various reasons which may include among others, violence in the home, physical or psychological abuse and neglect, may be equated to abandonment of childhood assuming the street hood. Being independent in the streets, entails the responsibility of provision of basic needs such as food and shelter, and without any means to attain sustainability results in street prostitution and drug abuse as the only survivalist strategy.

The Effect of Poor Economic Condition

It is noticed that Zimbabwe's dire economic situation has forced many women into sex work. Owing to limited job opportunities and lack of capital to start income generating projects, most of these young women resort to selling their bodies, (Ncube, 1989). Scantly dressed ladies of the nights are commonly seen with blood shot eyes from lack of adequate sleep exacerbated with drug and alcohol abuse wandering around night clubs, hotels turned into brothels to enhance chances of getting a sex-buyer. Mugaise (2001) reported that these prostitutes dropped out of school or failed to continue with education and prostitution has become the only profession at their disposal. Prostitution comes with shame and guilt and the societies usually become concerned when very brilliant brains fall into notoriety. However, prostitution was not their initial choice of work but that of a social system that exposes vulnerable women and the girl-child. The high levels of unemployment (more than 90%) are blamed for the rise of prostitution in Bulawayo. The closure of industries in Bulawayo has made young women to resort to illicit deals as a way of generating income. Therefore, far from viewing the aspect of de-industrialisation in the centrismmantra, nor in the leftist or rightist state, UNICEF (2001) urges the nation as a whole to view its ripple effects to most populous constituency – the youths.

Zimbabwe Legal Stance against Prostitution

Prostitution in Zimbabwe, including solicitation, procuring, keeping a brothel and being under 18 years is illegal but thriving (Ncube, 2012). The act of prostitution is criminalised, reported cases of arresting women and charging them for vagrancy to appease the offended majority of law is common. However, commercial sex workers are viewed in Bulawayo's hotels, night clubs and brothels searching for clients. Despite the law prohibiting prostitution, the activity is rife and even in broad daylight, prostitutes wander around foyers in hotels waiting to serve their clients. In the commercial centre certain flats and houses have become known venues for prostitution and many sex workers now wait for customers inside rather than wander the streets. Zimbabwean police are viewed as the worst abusers of prostitutes. The survey, conducted by the UK-based Open Society Foundation released in July-2012 which covered Zimbabwe, South Africa, Russia, Namibia, United States of

America and Kenya revealed that Zimbabwean police rank top in terms of harassing and physically abusing sex workers.

Local police ranked as 85% of the prostitutes surveyors confirmed to have been physically and sexually abused by the law enforcement agents. The same report heavily criticised the police for making arbitrary arrests on women walking in the streets at night on suspicion of loitering or soliciting for prostitution. Some sex workers claimed they opted not to carry condoms because of the fear of police harassment and detention, thus increasing their risk of exposure to HIV and comprising their health and the health of their sexual partners (Feltoe, 2004).

It is generally argued that it is a mere absurdity to assert that prostitution can ever be eradicated (Day, 2007). Strenuous and well-directed efforts for this purpose have been made at different times. The prohibitory laws on prostitution are viewed as more than useless considering the rate of prostitution in Bulawayo's Commercial Centre. The efforts made to enforce the law are inadequate and seem to serve little or nothing to talk about.

The researcher is of the view that prostitutes as well as those directly or indirectly involved in prostitution are human beings who need better assistance in the form of material and psychological support to improve their well-being. The youth in particular, who are viewed as the future leaders of our society when they engage into prostitution become vile from natural instincts; become poor victims of circumstances given adequate receptive society, they might amend if proper means are used at the most convenient time. It is therefore necessary that this research study might reveal the scope and rate of prostitution in Bulawayo Business Centre. Considering that large sums of money have been poured into assisting HIV/AIDS victims, consequently from promiscuity and sexuality there is need to channel sums of money for scientific studies that might seek ways to reduce the problem of prostitution.

Statement of the problem

Prostitution is viewed as one of the oldest professions which exist in every society. It is a profession that comes with guilt and shame to any society exacerbating to stigmatisation, discrimination and forcing some governments including Zimbabwe to adopt a criminalising approach as a means to eradicate its existence. A lot of government efforts have been initiated towards curtailing the rate of prostitution in Zimbabwe through vagrancy laws used against sex workers in which prostitutes are rounded up, detained and forced to pay fines for committing the crime. Prostitution is viewed as a public nuisance, which offends cultural-moral standards and spreads sexual transmitted diseases such as syphilis, herpes and HIV/AIDS. Used condoms, syringes and other paraphernalia left on the ground are potentially hazardous. The presence of prostitutes may negatively affect the area by reducing property values. It is of great concerns that in Bulawayo's business centre, over the past few years, a large number of young women and children between the ages of 12-17 have continued to rise who are involved in commercial sex. Therefore, the question is *what are the factors that influence the increase of prostitution?*

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to assess the factors that influence the increase of prostitutes in Bulawayo's central business centre.

Significance of the study

The researcher who is an educationist and counsellor hoped to gain in depth knowledge about the dynamics that exist in the sex industry that might enhance a comprehensive understanding of the causes and effects of the phenomenon in our multi-cultural society whose government adopted a criminalising approach. However, the grotesque is that it seems the government has failed to completely eradicate commercial-sex work. It is hoped the findings will contribute to the knowledge gap and to other scholars and relevant stakeholders about the psychological and socio-economic challenges experienced that are linked with prostitution in Bulawayo's Business Centre. The study might also be important to the public in that it sought to expose our communities including the government through its polices in influencing young women into becoming prostitutes.

Research Questions

- **Main Research Questions**

What are the factors that influence the increase of prostitutes in Bulawayo's Business Centre?

- **Sub-problems.**

What challenges are experienced by prostitutes in the sex industry?

What is the role of law enforcement agents in eradicating prostitution?

How can prostitution be minimised?

Assumptions of the Study

The following were the assumptions of this study;

- Socio-economic and political factors influence women to engage into prostitution activities.
- Government's criminalisation policy fails to adequately address the problem of prostitution in Bulawayo's Business Centre.
- Prostitution is a risky business.

Limitations of the study

The following factors were posed as the limitations of the study:

- Some interviewees might have found the study to be sensitive and became suspicious of their involvement especially considering that prostitution is a criminalised trade in which those deemed to be involved are prosecuted through the courts of law. More so, prostitution is a shameful phenomenon and those involved are stigmatised and discriminated in our culture. The researcher assured the research participants that the findings of the study would not be reported on the basis of individual identities but rather on the overall reports of respondents.
- There might have been some respondents who exhibit only socially acceptable views. During the collection qualitative data, some interviewees might have been defensive when asked questions relatively to sexual work. To overcome this problem, the researcher assured them that the data would be treated confidentially and that anonymity would be guaranteed through the use of pseudonyms (Cresswell,2007)

Delimitations of the study

The study was limited to the area bordered by the 12th avenue to the north and 12th Avenue to the south , between Robert Mugabe and Samuel Parirenyatwa Streets (Bulawayo). This was viewed as the predominantly operating zone of most prostitutes. The prostitutes operating from this area formed the population of the study.

Definition of the terms

Prostitution: In this study the term prostitution refers to a female who engages in Sexual activity for monetary gains ,or a female person who sells her Body

Sex-worker: In this study the sex worker refers to an individual female who is involved in any sexual activity to get money or any valuable item. The other term which was used interchangeably for sex-worker is prostitute.

II. Methodology

This study adopted a Mixed Methods Approach which combines the positivists /interpretivist empirical approach. The pragmatist argue that this approach focuses on collecting ,analysing and mixing both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study(Cresswell & Clark ,2011).The mixed method approach ,in this study, adopted a survey design fused with a case study.

Population

In this study the target population comprised of the entire group of women who were involved in prostitution. The population of interest was the prostitutes who solicit for sex work in an area between 10th avenue and 12th Avenue along Tongogara Street including Robert Mugabe and Samuel Parirenyatwa Streets. Due to the clandestine operation of prostitution, the researcher could not ascertain the exact size of the population.

Sample and Sampling Procedures

Given the illegality and intimate nature of prostitution, the researcher assessed twenty five prostitutes/sex workers who were used for this study. Because of the sensitivity and secrecy associated with the problem under study the researcher used snow ball sampling technique also known as chain-referral sampling.(Esternberg ,2002). In this technique, the researcher began with an initial interview or key informant who was then asked to refer to her acquaintances. In this way the sample snowballed. This technique was deemed to be

the best under the current circumstances in which the activity is criminalised, hence done clandestinely. The researcher felt that this was the only way to recruit and access the respondents.

III. Research instructions

Questionnaire

The study used the questionnaire as the main data collection tool since all the elements (research participants) could read the items that were written. The questionnaire was chosen because it was fast and efficient to capture data in a hidden population of people who engage in stigmatised behaviour. The questionnaire with closed and open ended questions was distributed to the research participants without having to see all the respondents personally, and the respondents remained anonymous and enhance confidentiality.

Interviews

To complement the findings from the questionnaire, the researcher interviewed ten prostitutes who were sparsely dotted in the foyers of hotels waiting for clients.

Data Collection Procedures

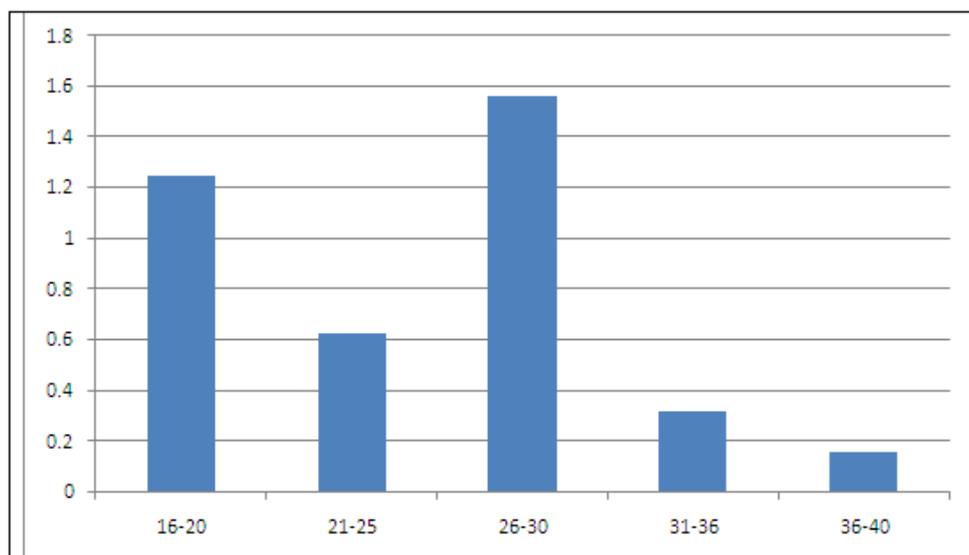
The researcher sought permission from Bulawayo Central Police Station to conduct the study in the prostitute operating zone. In the case of a police raid, the researcher would be cleared; the letter of authority permitted the researcher to mingle freely without the fear of harassment from the law enforcement agents. The researcher used the key informant who introduced him to her colleagues until the 25 respondents were accessed. Anonymity was enhanced by working in the foyers and dark spots. After negotiating for a price of \$3.00 per questionnaire and \$5.00 per interview, the data was collected.

Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data was presented in clear descriptive statistics employing frequencies, percentages and numerical figures.

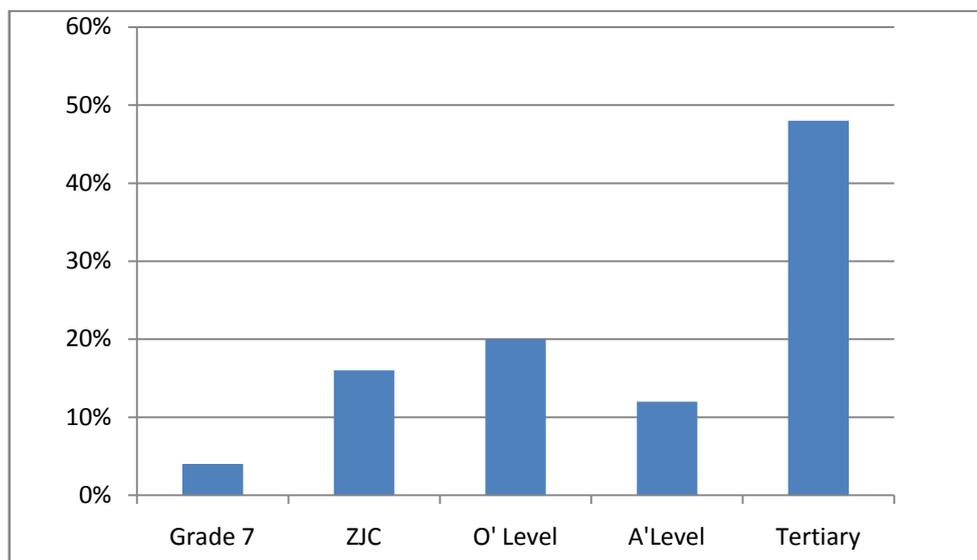
IV. Data Presentation, Analysis And Interpretation

Graph Demographic of Ages of Respondents
n=25



The bar graph indicates that the respondents were aged between 16yrs to 40 yrs. Most of the prostitutes accessed were in the range of between 26 and 30 years followed by 16 to 20 years. Only one prostitute was above 40 years of age. It is evident that prostitution is rife among the young women.

Bar-Graph 2: Distribution of Respondent's Academic Levels
n=25



The bar graph shows that most of the prostitutes are professionals who have attained tertiary level of education, however because of lack of employment opportunities they choose to indulge in sex work. The findings also indicate that prostitution is not limited only to the uneducated class.

Table1 Distribution on the respondents' knowledge of sex- work (prostitution).
n=25

Statement	True		False		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
• Commercial sex involves having sexual relationship for money	24	96	1	4	25	100
• The society stigmatises prostitutes	21	84	4	16	25	100
• Prostitution is criminalised in Zimbabwe	25	100	0	0	25	100
• Prostitution involves people from all different socio-economic classes	21	84	4	16	25	100

Ninety six percent of the respondents said that they were forced by the extreme poverty and lack of employment opportunities to be involved in commercial sex-work. Eighty four percent of the respondents disclosed that prostitution is a shameful human service, however those interviewed criticised the government for its lack of coming up with concrete policies that would create job opportunities.

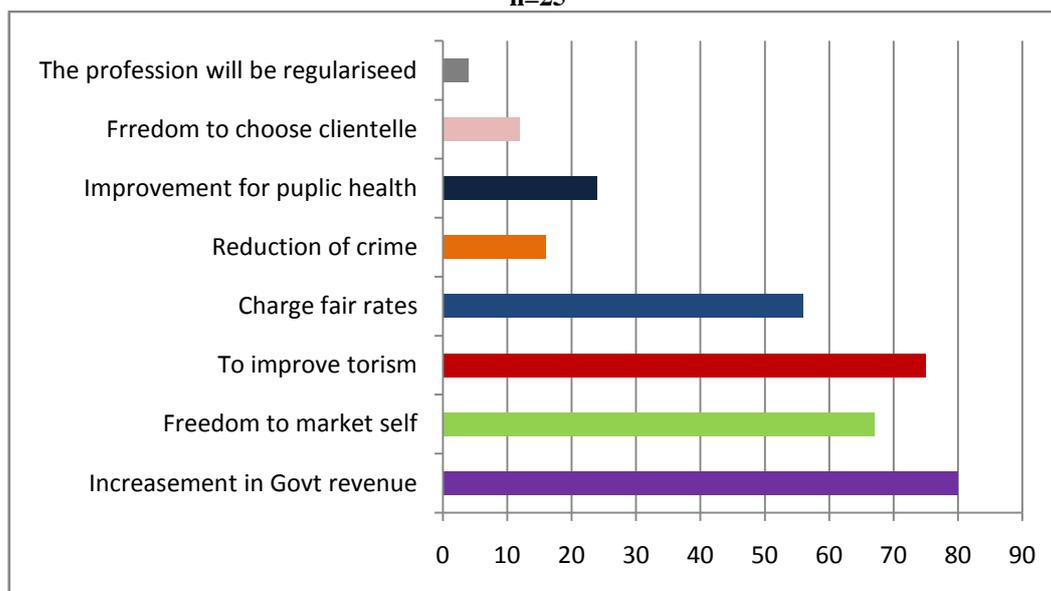
Table challenges Experience by Prostitutesn=25

Statement	Yes		No		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
• Prostitution is filled with dangers such as violence.	23	92	2	8	25	100
• Commercial sex work is associated with drugs and criminality.	21	84	4	16	25	100
• The police physically abuse sex workers.	25	100	0	0	25	100
• Prostitution is an unhealthy business which can spread diseases.	24	96	1	4	25	100

Ninety –two percent of the respondents confirmed that prostitution is harmful and dangerous. The findings also confirmed that although commercial sex industry exists, most of the interviewed respondents disclosed that it was a shameful trade which is stereotyped, stigmatised and with no social support. The dangers

caused by prostitution include the spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhoea and HIV/AIDS pandemic diseases. It was also established that the majority of the prostitutes are drug and alcohol abusers. Sex workers confirmed that police made arbitrary arrests on women on suspension of loitering or soliciting for prostitution. It was also established that some male police demanded bribes and sex in exchange for freedom. Some sex workers revealed that they did not carry condoms because they feared that the police would use that as the evidence in the court, thus increasing their risks in exposure to STDs. To circumvent being arrested for committing the offence, the prostitutes were forced to join imbibers in the bars. The young teenagers and adolescents bribed security-bar men to be allowed into bars or secluded places.

Bar-Graph 3: Distribution on the views on the legalisation of Prostitution.
n=25



From the figure above, the majority of the respondents (80% indicated that once the profession was regulated it would cease to be illegal. Sixty-eight percent said that once the prostitution was legalised they would have the freedom to choose for their clients. The least mentioned reason was that they would be an increase in government revenue. The respondents put forward a variety of responses such as “government revenue would increase”, meaning that if the profession was to be made legal, all the prostitutes would have to register and pay taxes to the government, hence increase government revenue. To improve tourism this could mean an increase in sex tourism.

V. Conclusions of the Study

The following were the conclusions of the study;

- The high levels of unemployment have forced many young women into sex-work. The closure of industries in Bulawayo has compelled young women to desperately resort to illicit deals as a way of generating income. It was also established that some of the prostitutes who were formally employed, but because of low pay or absence of regular work, they were compelled to enter into sex-industry. The findings also revealed that Zimbabwe's youth which was once considered Africa's brightest learners of one of the continent's best education system has virtually crumbled with no panacea. The collapse of the Zimbabwe's economy without sound political and clear socio-economic strategies has claimed high levels of poverty which has fuelled prostitution among the majority of the young women.
- It is mere absurdity to assert that prostitution can ever be eradicated. The prohibitory laws made to criminalise prostitution serve very little or no concretised purpose. The findings established that prostitutes suffered either psychological or physical sexual abuse at the hands of the overzealous police force accused of demanding sex as bribes. Although prostitution is harmful and dangerous, the victims do not report most assaults to the police because they either feared retaliation from offenders or believe the police may charge them for soliciting.
- In light of the findings, the study views prostitution as a symptom bearer of a dysfunctional socio-economic and political system and not the problem itself. More so, the problem is embedded in patriarchal

culture whose manifestation include among others; inequality, stigmatisation, inequitable distribution of resources and undemocratic political system. The people of Zimbabwe through their government need to turn their focus from the symptom to the underlying problem. The focus on stopping demand could be one method that may be successful. Equalization of political opportunities in which women are educationally, and economically empowered, is assumed may significantly reduce dehumanization perpetrated by violent men against poor defenceless women.

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