

Trafficking In Namibia¹

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Abstract

US Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons Annual Report (CTIP, 2008) classified Namibia as a special case on the basis that whereas there was evidence that trafficking in persons especially for sexual exploitation, was rife, the trend remained largely un-researched and un-documented. This researcher therefore aimed to establish whether human trafficking as a social and economic activity existed in Namibia, and if so, its prevalence levels, extent, causes and impact and consequences on both its victims and society as a whole, and if so, whether it was targeting prostitutes into the regional and global sex trade industry in particular. The researcher thus gathered and analysed comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data generated through a standardized validated questionnaire to 230 respondent prostitutes representing 191 females and 39 males, and information provided by 18 case studies of real life human trafficking victims, 32 key informants and 6 Focus Group Discussion meetings (FGDMs) comprising mainly of interest groups in prostitution hot spots in 18 out of 35 regional metropolises and border posts of the country. The study further interrogated the concepts of trafficking, prostitution and exploitation within the context of its findings, existing social concepts and structures and the day-to-day realities of the lives of individual and groups of people exposed to them. The study results established that while sex trafficking as a social phenomenon exists in Namibia, it remained largely unknown and understood. Similarly, whereas it was a fairly new phenomenon, it was growing fast, affecting mainly unemployed young women, school-drop-out adolescents and orphans, who once they enter the industry, enjoy a symbiotic social and economic relationship with a mobile clientele of mainly tourists and long-distance commercial transporters. They inevitably get exposed to physical and health hazards including physical violence, abandonment, homelessness and diseases, among them Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) and HIV. The study concluded that prostitution and sex trafficking in Namibia are social, economic and gender-inequality issues that require urgent attention by relevant authorities and development agencies in terms of prevention and protection interventions at policy, legislative and service levels.

Introduction

USA Department of State Annual Report (CTIP, 2006, p.4) revealed that although slave trade was outlawed two centuries ago, it has resurfaced to become the World's second most profitable business after the trade in small arms. ILO (2005) characterises modern human trafficking as, 'an increasing global scourge' that over the past decades, has reached

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epidemic levels affecting all sectors in society for an estimated global annual revenue market of some US\$42 billion.

Combating in Persons Report (2004) adds that 80 per cent of the estimated 600,000 to 800,000 people annually trafficked across international borders are women and girls, 50 per cent of whom are children trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation. Combating Trafficking in Persons Report (2009) Report's Tier 2 Watch identified Namibia as a source, transit and destination of human trafficking.

The connection between human trafficking and sexual exploitation in Namibia and its neighbouring countries was first highlighted by the Deputy Minister of Safety Gabs Shihepo, who while addressing the December 2007² Namibian Senior Police Officers Conference, called upon the Police in both Namibia and SADC region to maintain tight security and more effective law and order to counter possible increased trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation during the Africa Cup of Nations in Angola and FIFA 2010 World Cup Games in South Africa.

The problem

While recent years have witnessed an increasing awareness among local, regional and international development agencies for empirical research to inform government policy formulation, legal reforms and development programmes planning, design and implementation for effective and sustainable service delivery, the same could not be said of human trafficking in Namibia. In fact, the Government of the Republic of Namibia, through the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Gender Equity and Child Welfare, the line ministry for women and child protection had already expressed an urgent need for formal research (Tjaronda, Wezi 2009:5) on human trafficking for exploitation purposes. On his part, the Minister of Works, Transport and Communications Joel Kaapanda (Sibeene, 2006) had emphasized the need to substantiate the link between social and economic mobility, sexual exploitation in the form of prostitution and the spread of HIV and AIDS.

Another problem was the contradiction between existing information on prostitution and trafficking for sexual exploitation in Namibia and its neighbouring countries. In fact, whereas Kiremire (2002), Sechogele (2008, P. 17) and Combating Trafficking in Persons Reports (2004, 2005, 2006, and 2008) had found sufficient evidence to show that Namibia was affected by the regional network of human trafficking, studies carried out in the neighbouring countries of Mozambique (de Barros and Taju, 1999), South Africa (Legget, 2004 and Pharaoh, 2006) and Molo Songololo (2000 and 2002), Zimbabwe (CONNECT, 2002) and Zambia (Fisher, 2003) had all omitted Namibia.

A further problem related to inadequate legislation to counter human trafficking, punish trafficking perpetrators and protect trafficking victims. While Combating Trafficking in Persons Report (2008) stated that Namibia, through its National Constitution, the 'Prevention of Organized Crime Act (POCA) of 2004, and the ratification of the UN Palermo Protocol had measures to address human trafficking, POCA omission of children and victims protection rendered such measures inadequate. In fact Namibia's NGO Shadow Report (2006, p. 18) did not find any evidence to suggest that the country had made clear and tangible efforts to combat human trafficking as it neither had a national policy nor a framework on compilation of UN reports, including the Palermo Protocol itself. This paper

² Anna Shilongo. *New Era*: Wednesday 12 December, 2007, p.3

will thus, through the study's findings, elaborate the impact of such gaps and suggest ways of harmonize these problem areas.

Overall objective

The main objective of this study therefore, became to investigate the existence and prevalence of trafficking for sexual exploitation in Namibia, establish its extent, impact, root causes, and effects and consequences on both its victims and society as a whole, and to make informed recommendations for both prevention and protection interventions.

Bearing in mind its main question as to whether 'prostitution is linked to human trafficking in Namibia', the study determined to establish and substantiate the level to which the Namibian society understands human trafficking as a contemporary social and economic activity; whether or not it particularly targets prostitutes for trafficking for sexual activities in and out of Namibia; and the sociological framework necessary to inform the development of an adequate legal, policy and service delivery frame-work by appropriate government institutions and development agencies. It subsequently adopted six different assumptions:

- Given its criminal nature that renders researching human trafficking a difficult and a risky endeavour, targeting prostitutes as the research's key subjects provides a lead to human trafficking in general and to traffickers in particular;
- Those people, particularly females who become victims of sex trafficking, are in the eyes of their societies, deviants who fail to manage their lives within the complex societal traditions and norms and modern capitalist circumstances;
- Prostitution and sex trafficking are as much work and business as any other work and business in capitalist societies, and therefore, need not be fought and morally condemned;
- Because prostitution and sex trafficking are dangerous activities for both their victims' physical and mental health, as well as their countries' social, economic and political development, the structures that create powerful trafficking perpetrators and their vulnerable victims should be fought and combated;
- Sex trafficking as a gendered social-economic activity is simply a channel and tool of sexual exploitation within a complex modern capitalist system in which the strongest survive, and the weakest fall into its underclass; and
- Adequate policy and legal frameworks will curb sex trafficking.

Methodology

For validity and authenticity purposes, the researcher combined different social research data collection and analysis techniques.

Cognisant of the complexity and dangerous nature of the topic of this study, she utilised a unique method (Kiremire, 2002) in which she identifies and capacitates specific members of the study's target group to lead her into areas which she would otherwise be unable to penetrate and involving them in data collection.

To ensure an adequately informed background, she first reviewed existing literature on trafficking in persons, prostitution and exploitation at local, regional and international levels.

With her 18 research assistants who comprised members of her research target groups she had trained in simple data collection methods, she then gathered qualitative and quantitative data in 18 out of 35 Namibia's regional metropolises and border posts including the country's capital City of Windhoek in Khomas Region, Oshakati in Oshana

Region, Rundu and Culai border post in Kavango Region, Katima Mulilo and Wanela Border Post in Caprivi Region, Grunau, Karasburg, Keetmanshoop, Ludertiz Port and Ariamsvlei and Noordoewer border posts in Karas Region; Swakopmund and Walvis Bay Port in Erongo Region; and Oshikango Boarder Post in Ohangwena Region, where she particularly targeted prostitutes, tourists, ordinary travellers, tour operators, truck drivers, border authorities, traders, hotels/lodges/ bar/shebeen night-clubs operators and patrons as well as street children and youths as her main information sources.

For the quantitative data, which aimed to indicate the profiles of the individuals or groups of people affected or involved in human trafficking, and the effects of such activities on them, the team administered a standardized validated questionnaire to a total of 230 respondents 230 respondent, mainly prostitutes aged between 10 and 49 years, whose life activities were related to prostitution, 191 of whom were females and 38 males.

For her qualitative data, they conducted systematic field observations, discussions and in-depth interviews among and with 6 Focus Group Discussion Meetings (FGDMs); 32 key informants most of whom were members of social interest groups such as law enforcement agents and government workers including border personnel, shipping agents, health and social workers, representatives of regional and international organizations and development agencies and media houses; and compiled 18 case studies of real life stories of individuals who, according to their own or other people's testimonies, had been victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation most of whom were interviewed in their dwellings.

To examine data characteristics and relations among variables, the quantitative data analysis utilised descriptive graphs and averages and while non-metric methods were used to determine the relationship between the various causal variables in sex trafficking and sex exploitation such as greed, economic constraints (poverty, peer pressure, teenage pregnancies, family status and educational status). Numerical data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science – SPSS (Pallant 2001).

Theoretical framework

Human Trafficking - The study adopted Palermo Protocol (UNGAS, 2000, p. 55/25) definition of human trafficking as, 'the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefit to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation'.

United Nations Organization against Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2007, p. 3) has dissected the human trafficking process into three constituent elements:

- a) A Criminal Act that constitutes the recruitment, harbouring, transfer, transportation and receipt of trafficked victims at the goal or destination point;
- b) The means used to secure targeted trafficking victims willingness, acceptance, collaboration, cooperation and conformity; and
- c) The reasons or purpose for which the action or trafficking crime is conducted.

This categorization implies that in order for human trafficking to occur, three acts must happen, namely, the trafficker(s) facilitate illegal recruitment, movement, transportation and transfer of a person by deception and/or coercion; and finally, the trafficked person is received and exploited. UNICEF (2006, p. 2) adds that such purpose usually involves

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exploitation (including sexual exploitation), forced or bonded labour or service delivery in the form of slavery, servitude, debt bondage and the removal organs.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher summed human trafficking as 'the act of taking a person from one place to another by others for purposes other than stated or agreed upon'. This definition, thus, constituted 'sex-trafficking' in this study.

Prostitution

Giddens (2005, p.133) defines prostitution as 'the granting of sexual favours for monetary gain', which like all other present-day social activities, borrows its emergence, growth and survival from social formation trends. He elaborates that the modernization of feudal societies which culminated in the 19th century industrial revolution; and the emergence of the capitalist mode of production that characterized rapid social, economic and political changes which revolutionised social organization from casual to orderly and bureaucratic processes which inevitably raised the need to optimize human labour; dramatically impacted on people's collective and individual lifestyles as well as their behaviour patterns and sexuality.

Giddens (2005, p.134) identifies four types of prostitutes, namely: a prostitute who solicits her business on the streets often referred to as a street-walker; a call girl, who solicits her sex customers over the phone and either receives them in her dwelling place or goes to their own places; a house prostitute, who operates in a private place such as a brothel or club; and a massage parlour prostitute, who operates in an established place where she provides her clients with her sex services.

Hodson et al. (2002, p. 55) categorise prostitution among 'illegal goods and services' (gambling, courier, sale of illegal drugs and weapons and gangsterism), which while with very little useful information of their production affects million of people's lives and remain largely invisible and obscure.

Scott and Marshall (1994, p. 529) link the emergence of prostitution to 'economic vulnerability in which the provision of sexual favours for financial reward has been institutionalized in the form of sex work in every society that has had a coinage, and the number of sex workers increases when there are fewer other job opportunities for women, while their international movements are nearly always from poor countries to richer ones'.

Karl Marx's (1978, p. 2021) locates prostitution in the, 'relations of production in which the mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social and economic inequality, and exploitation with a distinct gender pattern'. Giddens (2005, p. 670) concludes that such inequalities culminate in the 'appropriation of women's bodies and sexuality that convert them (women) into properties; while the Pontifical Council (IOM, 2009, p. 7) sums prostitution as 'a form of modern day slavery in which sexual exploitation pervades the world's social fabric'. This summary guided this study's search for a social-science-based truth.

Exploitation

Palermo Protocol (International Organization on Migration, 2009, p. 7) holds that 'exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others, or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs'.

Giddens (2001, p. 689) explains that exploitation is a social or institutional relationship in which one person benefits at the expense of the other through an imbalance in power. IOM (2009, p. 7) emphasizes that sexual exploitation is the most commonly recognized form of human trafficking, while Okin (1989, p.133-5) elaborates that 'the pivot of a societal system of gender renders women vulnerable to dependency, exploitation and abuse', and such exploitation and abuse includes forcing people into prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. UNICEF (2006, p. 2) adds that for children, exploitation may also include elicited international adoption, trafficking for early marriage or recruitment as child soldiers, street beggars, sports such as in child camel jockeys or football players, and in some cases, even for religious cults.

Findings

Prevalence

While previous studies on prostitution in Namibia (LAC 2002, p.2, Kiremire 2007, p. 4, Sechogege 2008, p. 7) had linked prostitution to human trafficking, and for lack of evidence for the long suspected existence of human trafficking CTIP Report (2008, p. 274) had classified Namibia as a 'Special Case', this study found trafficking for sex purposes in Namibia high. 106 respondents, representing 46.0% of the total sample stated that they had either personally (68 -29.6%) experienced sex trafficking or knew friends and/or colleagues, family members or neighbours (38 - 34.3%) who had experienced sex trafficking.³ 22 (9.6%) had just heard about it, while 102 (44.3%) did not know anything about it. This finding was corroborated by the study's qualitative data. 44 out of the 60 Key Informants confirmed that sex trafficking was happening in Namibia, while 9 out of the 20 Case Studies who included high-sea vessel stowaway⁴ stated they had themselves been victims of sex-related trafficking and 1 for domestic labour and 7 knew friends who had been trafficked for sex, 1 confirmed her teenage sister had been trafficked into pornography in London. The majority of the focus group discussion meetings acknowledged that both internal and external sex trafficking was taking place in Namibia, mainly by truck drivers, seamen, employment recruitment agents, sex customers and other prostitutes. One group emphasized the increasing trend of slave labour among the country's grape farms.

Strikingly 55 representing 51.9% of the respondents stated they believed the phenomenon of sex trafficking had been going on for some years. Another 37 (43.9%) stated they always witness it.

Extent and Impact: Characteristics and the link between prostitution and trafficking

Human trafficking both within and beyond Namibia's borders was closely associated to a fast growing prostitution phenomenon that was targeting and involving prostitutes. With an exception of only 2 respondents, 228 representing 99.1% were involved in prostitution, of which 185 (80.4%) were full time sex vendors, 17 (7.4%) part time sex vendors, 15 (6.5%) sex customers and 11 (4.8%) pimps. 159 representing 69.1% had entered prostitution in recent years between 2000 and 2007, against 60 (26%) who entered prostitution over a period of 20 years between 1980 to 1999. 38 (16.5%) entered in one year of 2005 alone. Furthermore, 13 of the 20 Case study subjects (16 females and 4 males) had fallen victims

³ Most respondents described trafficking as 'when their sex customers, truck drivers or older prostitutes take them to places they don't know for purposes other than previously agreed upon'.

⁴ This stowaway victim considered himself as a sex trafficking victim since he was now an illegal immigrant involved in street-prostitution-related and drug activities

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of sex trafficking after entering prostitution and not before. They included a full-blown AIDS prostitute who claimed that in August and December 2008, she had been trafficked to Cape Town and Johannesburg to work in prostitution brothels in readiness for 2010 World Cup.⁵

This finding affirms both assumptions three and four of this study which propose that ‘women, young adolescents and children involved in prostitution become easy victims of sex trafficking’ and therefore ‘targeting prostitutes as the key subjects of the research provides a lead to human trafficking in general and to sex trafficking in particular’. They affirm the Pontifical Council (IOM, 2009, p. 7) assertion that throughout the world, unjust complex economic systems have in recent years driven dramatically large numbers of women and children in street prostitution in search of sufficient means of living for themselves and their families only to end in a more complex cycle of exploitation.

Gender

While, on the onset, this study targeted prostitutes irrespective of their gender, it was none the less, surprised by its level of gender inequality. Only 41 out of a 230 respondent sample in prostitution hot spots in 14 cities and towns of 7 out of 13 regions of the Namibian nations were males, 11 of whom were pimps for prostitutes. Of the 185 who were in full time prostitution, only 1 was a full time male prostitute (mophie). Additionally, the prostitutes who were prone to sex trafficking were predominantly females. 64 (27%) out of the 191 (83.0%) females of this study sample stated that they had themselves experienced sex trafficking compared to 3 males (1.3%) out of the 38 (16.5%) male respondents, and 1 (0.4%) trans-sexual-male who had experienced sex trafficking.

This finding reiterates former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (CTIP, 2003, p. 7) and IOM (2003, p. 135)’s contention that ‘human trafficking is targeting females more than males, and females in economic vulnerability more than the advantaged ones’. It reinforces LaRRI (2009, p. 35)’s assertions that, ‘class stratification in Namibia has a substantial gender element’.

Nationalities

Of the 8 nationalities the study interacted with, the majority, 199, representing 86.5% of the total sample, were Namibians, followed by 31 foreign nationals of 9 South Africans (3.9%), 7 Tswanas (3.0%), 6 Zambians (2.6%), 5 Zimbabweans (2.2%), 2 Angolans (0.9%), 1 each Cameroonian and Rwandese who represented 0.9%.

In-country trafficking and Namibia as a country of origin, transit and destination

Of the 106 individuals who stated they had either been affected themselves (86) or knew people who had been affected (38), 33 went to 4 African countries of South Africa (18), Angola (11), Botswana (3) and Congo DRC (1). A total of 16 were taken to the Western Countries of Iceland (4), France (2), Germany (2), Spain (2), UK (2), Holland (2) and USA (2), while 9 arrived from Zambia (6), Zimbabwe (1), Rwanda (1) and Cameroon (1).

The Cameroonian woman who had been brought into Namibia from Cameroon through the Central Republic of Congo (CRC), Congo DRC to Angola and back to Namibia; and the Rwandese woman who was brought into Namibia through Uganda, Congo DRC, Tanzania, Zambia and Angola, make Namibia both a transit and destination country of human trafficking. The Tswana, South African, Zimbabwean (1) and Zambian (6) nationals who arrived in Namibia make it a destination country.

⁵ Interview with a respondent in her home in Windhoek City’s Katutura Settlement on 24 April 2009.

The sub-regional and regional perspective

Prostitutes' movements from and/or through Angola, Botswana, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Congo DRC represent half of the 14 SADC regional block countries, while the presence of a Rwandese and a Cameroonian nationals extend the prostitution wings in Namibia to the East African Community (EAC) and the Central African Region and the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS).

The international scope of sex trafficking in Namibia

Significantly, the 16 (6.9%) prostitutes who had been trafficked to 6 European countries of France (2), Germany (2), Holland (2), Iceland (4), Spain (2) and the United Kingdom of Britain (UK -2) and the United States of America (USA-2), confirm that Namibia has become a member of the global trafficking in persons' network.

Child Prostitution – was reflected by the large majority, 207, representing 90% of the research sample, who were children and youths aged 10 to 35 years. 37 or 16% were children between 10 and 18 years old. This finding corresponds with the findings of the only three previously existing empirical researches on prostitution (LAC, 2002; Sechogele, 2008; and Kiremire, 2007).

Sex Trafficking and child labour trafficking was evidenced by a 16-17-year-old Zambian girl⁶ found at a Windhoek child trauma centre who had been rescued from 9-years domestic work without pay. She had never had an identify document, nor attended any school. In Oranjemund, Police patrolling the Grape Farms had revealed⁷ that 9-14-year-old Kavango/Caprivi girls were regularly dropped by highway trucks to work as baby-minders for female casual labourers.

Trafficking routes, mode of travel and travel documents

46 (67.6%) trafficked respondents had gone by highways, 8 (11.8%) through airports, and 2 (3.0%) through coastal ports. 84 (79.2%) had been trafficked by trucks, 12 (11.3%) by cars/buses at, 8 (7.5%) by planes, and 2 (2.0%) by canoes, boats and ships. The migratory criminal nature of sex trafficking was evidenced by the finding that only half (15 - 6.5%), of the trafficked prostitutes had formal travel documents, compared to 30 (13%) who had none. Markedly, 8% of those who had travel documents stated they had been arranged for them by their recruiters and traffickers. 7% had secured theirs illegally through bribery.

The sex trafficker

Contrary to previously held perceptions that trafficking perpetrators are primarily groups of organized international 'criminal syndicates', this study found that the majority of the sex traffickers were people closely associated with their victims mainly long distance transporters, sex customers, fellow prostitutes, pimps and relatives with whom they (prostitutes) share common social and economic backgrounds and life circumstances and upon whom they depend. Among the 106 direct or indirect victims of sex trafficking, 47 (44.3%) had been trafficked by truck drivers, 32 (30.2%) sex customers, 12 (11.3%) fellow prostitutes, 7 (6.6%) job recruitment agencies, 3 (2.8%) relatives, 2 (1.9%) stone/drug dealers, 2 (1.9%) pimps, and 1 (0.9%) a businessman.

Sex customers' occupation

There was a close correlation between prostitution and the transport sector. More than half, 136 representing 59% of the respondents' customers were truck drivers who constituted 98 (42.6% of the sample, followed by taxi/bus drivers at 38. pimps at 15 and

⁶ Direct interview with the child at the trauma centre in Windhoek on Friday 29 January 2010

⁷ Direct interview with a senior Oranjemund farms law enforcer on 12 April 2009

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law enforcement agents at 11 combined to represent 26 (11.3%), followed by tourists, street gangs and factory workers at 10 each. The rest, 41 (17.8%) were traders, civil servants, diplomats, business executives, farmers, miners, seamen/fishermen and students.

Symbiotic affinity, mutuality and amicability that prostitutes and their traffickers share was appropriately illustrated by a 41-year-old prostitute who stated that without providing sexual services to hundreds of truck drivers that pass through her town of Karasburg, she would not be able to raise her 5 children. A 24-year-old South African truck driver explained that like prostitutes, truck drivers were mainly school-drop-outs with no access to more decent jobs, while his 40-year-old colleague be-mourned their poor working conditions which leave only 10 out of 100 truck drivers able to own a house, and 95% divorced. This information corroborates Giddens' (2005, p. 136) conclusions that, 'prostitutes cater for men who are away from home and/or who desire sexual encounters without commitment'.

Causes

168 (70.9%) attributed their entry into prostitution and exposure to sex trafficking to family poverty and lack of money. This figure collates with the Central Bureau of Statistics' latest review of poverty and inequality⁸ which classified almost one third (28%) of the Namibian households as poor and 13% as severely poor. Significantly, 45 (19.6%) attributed their entry into prostitution to what they termed as 'family confusion' 24 (10.4%); 21 (9.1%) to peer pressure; 4 (1.7%) to bad marriage; and 2 (0.9%) to teenage pregnancy.

Education

Markedly, the majority, 104, representing 45.2%, had dropped out of school between grades 3 and 9. Only 7 (3.0%) had attained tertiary education, with the majority, 64 (28%) having reached Grade 10, followed by 53 (23%) in Grades 8 and 9; 51 (22.2%) in grades 3 and 7; and 51 in grades 11 and 12. 4 (0.9%) had never been school at all.

The rate at which prostitutes in Namibia dropped out of school has progressively increased over the last two decades. The majority, 190 representing 86.2% dropped out over the last 17 years, with 91 (39.6%) having dropped out between 1991 and 2000, and 99 representing 43.0% in the last 7 years, between 2001 and 2007, compared to only 23 (10%) who dropped out between 1976 and 1990. The majority, 158 representing 68.7% attributed their dropping out of school to financial constraints.

Dangers and risks

Sex trafficking in Namibia, like all human trafficking activities world-wide (Ezeilo 2008, p. 3) was characterized by dangers and risks. 44 (64.7%) did not find their sex trafficking activities profitable, against only 13 (19.1%) who had benefitted, and 11 (16.2%) partly benefitted. 18 (26.5%) used their incomes for group survival, 17 (25.0%) for self survival, and 17 (25.0%) whose incomes were robbed.

When parasitism and symbiosis clash

Against the cordiality and comradely that seemingly characterize the relationship between prostitutes and their traffickers simultaneously exists a sharp contradiction. 62 (94.1%) of the 68 sex trafficking victims had faced various physical and bodily harm including 44 (64.7%) for prostitution, 11 (16.2%) rape/beating/deportation/sickness/arrest, 5 (7.4%) abandonment/homelessness, and 1 (1.5%) each who suffered theft and physical labour. Only 2 (2.9%) had not faced any risks during their trafficking experiences. The extent to

⁸ Denver, Isaacs. 'Nearly a Third of Namibians are Poor'. The Namibian, Wednesday 19 November 2008:12. Windhoek.

which the sex industry-based exploitation can go was demonstrated by cases of 2 (2.9%) husbands who had sold their wives into prostitution for their own livelihoods.

These findings reaffirm UNFPA's conclusion (Gender Watch 2008, p. 20) that, 'for women and young girls, poverty means not only lack of income but lack of control over that income as well as lack of autonomy, dignity and leisure', which are themselves the epitome of social injustice'. They resonate with Dottridge (2004, p. 9)'s belief that human trafficking is directly associated with its victims' subsequent exploitation by those people who violate their human rights through forcing them to make money for them, and to satisfy the demands of those who control them. Farley (2008, p. 65) equates the resultant harm and humiliation of a trafficked person to those of a prisoner-of-war conditions, while the Pontifical Council (IOM, 2009, p. 7) adds that 'prostitutes who get trapped in their controllers' debt bondage inevitably suffer pathological violence and/or sexual abuse'.

The captivity and hazardous circumstances of sex trafficking was stressed by 39 (57.3%) who had not yet returned to their places of origin, while 27 (39.7%) had been trafficked for some years, 23 (33.8%) for months and 12 (17.6%) for weeks. 11 (16.2%) had been deported, while 10 (14.7%) had managed to escape with the assistance of their mutual transporters.

Health risks

Health Risks among trafficked prostitutes was highlighted by 213 (92.6%) who did not or only used protection sometimes, against only 13 (5.7%) who always used protection. Exposure to Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV was indicated by high levels of sickness and deaths reported by Police Patrols among Oranjemund Grape Farms child baby minders.

Access to national protections

Legal protections

Although Article 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia protects all citizens against social and economic exploitation in the form of slavery, servitude and forced labour, Article 95 obligates the state to ensure the protection and welfare of all people against all harm including abuse and exploitation, and Sub-Sections 15 and 16 of the Prevention of Organized Crime Act (POCA) 29 of 2004 criminalises and prosecutes human trafficking in Namibia, 37.4% of the respondents did not seek any assistance from anybody or anywhere when they were in trouble. They cited the fact that while prostitution remains an illegal crime under both statutory and customary laws, it simultaneously remains unprosecutable. This desperate situation resulted in prostitutes' calling on the Government to recognize their profession and facilitate the necessary protection for them ahead of FIFA 2010 World Cup.⁹

⁹ Staff Reporter. 'Sex Workers Demand Government Protection as 2010 Nears'. Informante', Thursday 24 September 2009:1. Windhoek.

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Judicial protections

This study found that whereas prostitutes and trafficked adolescents and women, like any other members of the Namibian Society, enjoy available judicial protections, there was no specific unit within the current law enforcement system to deal with missing persons. Given the fact that trafficked persons are almost always moved under dubious circumstances, the absence of such a structure increases the vulnerability of those members of the society that are susceptible to the perpetrators of trafficking.¹⁰

Policy protections

The study found that Namibia has made considerable progress for the advancement of women and girls. These include, among others, the establishment of the Office of the Ombudsman and the Ministry of Gender Equity and Child Welfare. Gender Equity ministry has a comprehensive National Gender policy and Strategic Plan through which it implements the Affirmative Action which aims to equalise social, economic and political opportunities for Women by reducing female poverty, increasing education and training opportunities, improving access to quality reproductive health services, reducing violence against women and children, improve gender-based information and communication, enhancing gender-based decision-making balance, increasing gender-based environment management, and improving legal protections for woman and girls.

Care and support service delivery

Despite not being able to identify any human trafficking-focussed projects in terms of recovery, support, care, rehabilitation and reintegration, either at Government or Civil Society level, this study found a number of activities targeting prostitutes, human Trafficking and abused women and children. They included Stand Together¹¹, King's Daughters,¹²National Technical Committee on Women and Child Protection Units, Zero-Tolerance for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) National Campaign¹³, the Ministry of Labour's National Programme against the Worst Forms of Child Labour,¹⁴ and Churches United against HIV and AIDS in East and Southern Africa (CUAHA)'s advocacy project against human trafficking in Namibia.

Conclusion

Hope for their future

While 11 (4.8%) of the respondents felt it was too late for them to have hopes and aspirations, the greater majority, 190 (82.6%), wished to be rescued through counselling (68 - 29.6%), return to school (49 - 21.3%), life saving skills training (43 - 18.7%), and start a business (30 - 13%). 8 (3.8%) wished to be reunited with their families and children, get married and nurture what they considered 'decent families'.

¹⁰ On 27 January 2010, Inspector General of Police Sebastian Ndeitunga informed the general public (New Era, Thursday, 28 January 2010:7) that Police daily public briefings on crime would include making available names of wanted or missing persons.

¹¹ Catholic Church run drop-in-centre for Windhoek-based prostitutes and their children

¹² A Council of Churches of Namibia (CCN) initiated community-based NGO provides counselling, rehabilitation, support, vocational training to Windhoek-based prostitutes in conjunction with BEN Namibia (Bicycling Empowerment Network);

¹³ MGECW has published a pamphlet entitled 'Human trafficking/trafficking in Persons

¹⁴ Implemented by International Labour Organisation and the Ministry of Labour

Consequential parasitic symbiosis

In his articulation of the hierarchy of the essential human needs, Maslow (Hodson and Sullivan. 2002, p. 92) states that for a human being to feel complete, he/or she needs physiological satisfaction (food and sex), physical and emotional safety, social acceptance, social recognition, attention and appreciation, and attainment of one's full potential. This concept presumes the existence of a level of social consciousness and social responsibility over all the members of the respective social structure. It is this component of human life that this study found missing among the women and young adolescents of this study, who because of their particular social and economic circumstances resorted to prostitution, and their trafficking perpetrators, who because of their poor working conditions and dissatisfaction, resorted to trafficking for self gratification.

Indeed, while the two groups seemingly share a symbiotic relationship, rather than their relationship resonating social solidarity that promotes shared social and economic advantages, theirs is an unequal relationship that breeds abuse and exploitation. Consequently, the parasitic symbiosis between the two groups becomes a complex trap in which its victims, through deception, manipulation, violence, diseases and trauma meet their deathbeds at the hands of their 'comrades'.

It reinforces the criminology theory (Sweetman, 1995, p.2) that argues such social groups turn to deviance to gain social recognition and material wellbeing to fit in societies under transition to capitalist economic states.

It is in this light that in Namibia, acts of trafficking in persons and prostitution are illegal acts that are socially, culturally, constitutionally, and legally unacceptable. Anyone who, individually and/or collectively, engages and/or successfully carries them out, not only violates culturally and traditionally acceptable social norms, but commits illegal acts. He/she can therefore only do so in hidden circumstances, a situation that categorizes these vices under deviant behaviour characteristic of the underclass social groups whose existence sharply contracts the aims and objectives of Namibia's Vision 2030.

The manner in which the above social dynamics played out among the prostitutes, sex trafficking victims and trafficking perpetrators of this study convinced the researcher that any mode of production that promotes the concept of 'the strongest survive', while the 'weakest die away', is not only inappropriate to human coercion but to human development.

Recommendations

In light of the above conclusions, the researcher took the liberty to recommend to the Government of the Republic of Namibia, together with its stakeholders, to:

1. Develop and implement strong social and economic policies that reduce youth social and economic vulnerability such as high school drop-out and unemployment rates;
2. Promote gender equality;
3. Strengthen family structures;
4. Strengthen education system to promote youth opportunities such as skills training for employment creation;
5. Ensure adequate legal and policy protections and service delivery mechanisms to prevent its members from falling victims to this heinous modern crime, protect those who fall prey to it, and punish its offender. In this respect, Namibia should enact a comprehensive stand-alone anti-human trafficking legislation;

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6. Ensure adequate law enforcement by up-grading all porous borders, police stations and immigration and customs training programmes;
7. Strengthen existing, and develop and implement stronger national programmes against sex trafficking;
8. At regional level, Namibia, together with its neighbouring SADC member countries, and, in collaboration with African Prosecutors Association (APA), the Southern African Regional Police Chief Commanders Organisation (SARPCCO) and COSAFA should establish mechanism to combat human trafficking for sexual exploitation in Southern Africa.

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