



Causes and Effects of Commercial Sex Work among Females: A Survey of Gra in Oredo Local Government Area, Benin City, Edo State

Augustine Nwanosike Anyamene

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Benson Idahosa University, Benin City

Email: anayamene@biu.edu.ng.

ABSTRACT

The broad objective of this study is to draw societal attention and understanding on the causes and effects of commercial sex work amongst women and suggest solutions. The survey research design was used for the study and a sample of 50 females that have been involved or currently involved in commercial sex in G.R.A in Oredo LGA, Benin City of Edo state was used for the study. The primary data was generated using well-structured questionnaire. In filling the questionnaires the respondents were guided during the survey. Simple percentages and the chi-square non-parametric statistical technique was also employed for the testing of the study hypothesis. The findings of the study reveals the following; (i) poverty/hardship is a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work, (ii) Dropping out of school is a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work, (iii) Death of spouse/parent is not a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work, (iv) Difficulty of getting employment is a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work and (v) Commercial sex work is responsible for spread of HIV/AIDS amongst females. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested; firstly, there is the need for government to tackle issues of Poverty/hardship as this was discovered from our survey to be significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work. Secondly, the study recommends that non-governmental organizations and other welfare agencies of government should make effort to reach out to young females that have dropped out of school due to financial constraints and are now involved on commercial sex work. Scholarship schemes can be given to these females to enable them continue their education. Thirdly, there is the need for government to step up the provision of jobs as this will go a long way in reducing the prevalence of females in commercial sex work. Finally, there is need for massive health enlightenment by state and federal ministry of health, non-governmental organizations and other concerned agencies to be taken to areas where commercial sex workers operate.

INTRODUCTION

The term 'sex worker' refers to those engaged in prostitution. This is the preferred term the researcher is going to use throughout the literature on the subject. The term has been adopted as it is free of complicated, derogatory and sexist connotations which are more commonly associated with the term prostitute (May, Harocopos and Hough, 2000). A female sex worker refers to a woman who engages in transactional sex to survive. Transactional sex is the act of trading sexual activities for money, goods, gifts, favors and/or services. Sex work is a term used to describe a wide range of activities relating to the exchange of money (or its equivalent) for the provision of a sexual service. It is not only practiced in developing and poor countries but also thriving in developed economies. For example, According to Cusick *et al.* (2009) notes that in the U.K, calculating the number of commercial sex workers is very difficult as sex work is mostly hidden and the population is transient, with people moving in and out of sex work constantly. Nevertheless, the general consensus suggests the population is between 50,000 and 80,000 (UK NSWP, 2008). The heterogeneity of this population of sex workers is reflected



in the fluidity of engagement in sex work, as females sometimes mix sex work with other economic activities and move in and out of it over time. The factors that lead women and girls to enter sex work are not only unique for each individual, but are also unique at various stages of the involvement process. Globally, and particularly in the developing world context, sex work both causes suffering and is caused by suffering. Women and girls involved in the sex trade face many risks such as being beaten, being raped, not receiving payment, being robbed, contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, facing harassment and being subjected to social stigma directed at themselves and their children. Women make up the majority of the sex work population, with some estimates suggesting the proportion is around 85-90 per cent (Scambler, 2007). Sex workers come from a wide range of socioeconomic contexts (Roberts, Sanders, Myers, and Smith 2010). Despite the fact that sex work is risky in the context of a labor market, highly segregated by gender, it offers some advantages over existing alternatives: ease of entry, a ready market, and higher earnings, especially in relation to the labor time required. In the current economic climate, few other jobs offer these advantages for women. Ngugi, Wilson, Plummer and Moses (1996) in their study of Female Sex Workers (FSW) in Kenya, argue that sex workers are frequently stigmatized in ways that predispose them to economically marginal living conditions that make continued sex work necessary in order to maintain household income. For many FSWs in sub-Saharan Africa, sex work is not their only form of income and they enter and exit the sex trade depending on the availability of other income sources (Gysels, Robert, and Betty 2002). Ngugi et al . (1996) argue that most of the women who sell sex do so because of poverty and lack of opportunities for alternative employment.

Research into the conditions that necessitate women's involvement in sex work has traditionally focused on economic and social contexts. There is need for careful consideration of these contexts in order to effectively assist women with alternative viable economic opportunities (Elmore-Meegan et al. 2004). In her study of FSWs in a South African, Campbell (2003) identified common themes of why women entered the sex trade including: death of spouses or parents, dropping out of school after falling pregnant, and finding it difficult to find work, leaving an abusive man, or 'running away' from the hardships and poverty of home. This research will utilize the themes identified by Campbell (2003) to test whether these are common themes that also lead women in Oredo L.G.A Benin City, Edo State to become involved in sex work. This research will provide insights into why females resort to commercial sex work. An increased understanding of the factors leading females to enter the sex trade is effective for prevention programmes to be established.

Statement of the Research Problem

Several studies have shown clearly that commercial sex workers for most of those examined did not choose the practice as a preference but entered into it out of the need for survival. The following recurring factors have emerged as likely factors; (i) coming from a history of poverty, (ii) being raised in a single parent/no parent household, (iii) stopping school due to a lack of fees, (iv) coming to the city from a rural area without money, (v) a



friend introducing her to sex work, (vi) the dissolution of a spousal relationship and, (vii) supporting children, family and/or friends. These recurring themes show the combination of factors that contribute to leading the participants into sex work and highlight the complexity of exploring why women enter sex work. In addition, the risk faced by commercial sex workers has received global attention and has become a topic issue across several platforms globally. Physical, sexual and verbal violence are common experiences for many sex workers. The large majority of studies indicate that violence is a prominent feature in the lives of sex workers in almost all sex work settings. Some, such as Spice (2007), argue that physical violence is the single greatest threat facing sex workers. A study by Harding (2005), which examined the experiences of female sex workers, found that all of the women interviewed had experienced some form of violence, whether physical, emotional or sexual. The consequences of physical violence can often lead to poor physical health, as well as poor mental health due to trauma (Rossler *et al.*, 2004). At its most extreme, violence against sex workers leads to death. Sex workers represent a high-risk group where communicable yet preventable diseases, including TB, HIV, other Blood borne Viruses and STIs, are common (Collinson, Straub and Perry, 2011). Furthermore, research into the mental health of sex workers found sex workers often suffered from mental health problems, including depression, anxiety and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Rossler *et al.*, 2010); which can also negatively impact on physical health. In recent times there has been a rise in the number of government and nongovernmental initiatives aimed at providing alternatives jobs and opportunities for sex workers to make a living. A study of this nature on the causes and effects of commercial sex work will immensely improve advocacy towards proactive initiatives by government and NGO's by providing the basis for stakeholders to understand the critical and vulnerable groups that can be prevented from entering the "commercial sex trade market".

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Following Research Questions have been specified to Guide the Direction of the Study

1. Is Poverty/hardship a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work?
2. Is dropping out of school a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work?
3. Is death of spouse/parent a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work?
4. Is the difficulty of getting employment a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work?
5. What is the effect of commercial sex work on the spread of HI V/AIDS?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to draw societal attention and understanding on the causes and effects of commercial sex work amongst women and suggest solutions.

The Subsidiary of the Study Were

1. To examine if poverty/hardship is a significant cause of. Female involvement in commercial sex work.



2. To investigate if dropping out of school is a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work.
3. To determine if death of spouse/parent is a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work.
4. To examine if the difficulty of getting employment is a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work.
5. To determine the effect of commercial sex work on spread of HIV/AIDS amongst females.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The Hypotheses are all presented in the Null form below;

- H₁: There is no significant relationship between poverty/hardship and female involvement in commercial sex work.
- H₂: There is no significant relationship between dropping out of school and female involvement in commercial sex work.
- H₃: There is no significant relationship between death of spouse/parent and female involvement in commercial sex work.
- H₄: There is no significant relationship between difficulty of getting employment and female involvement in commercial sex work.
- H₅: There is no significant relationship between commercial sex work and the spread of HIV/AIDS amongst females

Literature Review

The commercial sex worker, is the act of performing sexual acts in return for money and valuable items. It is also seen as an act of offering one's body skills or talents for unworthy ends. Commercial sex work can also be 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. Commercial sex work 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 It is simply the practice of selling sex for cash or other immediate compensation. Commercial sex work is not restricted to females alone, it has indeed become complex in different ways as there are male sex workers in Nigeria who have sex with men for commercial reasons. Commercial sex work is both historical and cultural, with every culture adopting her own standards and attitudes. From ancient history, concubines and courtiers lived in the same house with the wife and often had the same rights (Jeness, 1990). Weizer (2000) sees commercial sex work as the business or practice of engaging in sexual relations in exchange for financial reward. The person who works in this field is called a prostitute and is a kind of sex worker and it is one of the branches of sex industry. Prostitution occurs in a variety of ways such as full time prostitution, some engage in legitimate business in the day time and go into prostitution at night while some indulge in it as an auxiliary service. Ganeemo & Tito, (2015), defined commercial sex work as an act of offering oneself for hire



to engage in sexual action for money. Of course, this definition justifies the activity such that it is voluntary and it is only for a financial reward. The root meaning of "prostitute" implies a transaction. It follows that a prostitute performs some kind of sexual activity in exchanging for money. Commercial sex work is any sexual performance carried out by a person for payment of certain amount of money or in exchange of goods and service. Laura (2007) redefine commercial sex, not as the social or psychological characteristic of a class of women, but as an income-generating activity or form of employment for women and men. As such, it can be considered along with other forms of economic activity. An employment or labour perspective is necessary if not sufficient, condition for making sex work a part of the mainstream debate on human, women and workers, and worker's right at local, national and international level. More so, the moment it is not done willingly, then it becomes rape while if it is not hired (on temporary basis) then the duration of the contractual agreement becomes questionable since the sex industry is constantly targeted at obtaining financial reward. Those involved in the commercial sex industry have been given different names such as hookers, call-girls, harlots, sluts, and courtesans, however; they are mostly preferred to be addressed as commercial sex workers. This business is facilitated by enticing their potential customers through pornography as Vance (1984) noted that pornography is the theory while sex is the practice. Sex tourism has become an avenue for the promotion of commercial sex work around the world today. According to Weizer (2000), commercial sex workers are generally regarded as a social category of women who do not adhere to sexual and other behavioural norms; pitied or despised; they are excluded from mainstream society, their lowly and marginal position analogues to that of a low caste or minority ethnic group.

Forms of Commercial Sex Work

Commercial Sex Work is divided into Different Categories. These are:

Call Girls: According to Weizer (2000) call girls are known to take good care of their health and visit doctors whenever necessary. Almost all of them want their client to use condoms, though they often comply when clients offer a much higher amount of money for condom-free sex, (Weizer, 2000). **Street Prostitution:** Those involved in this group are young girls, some of them in their teens. They do their soliciting in limiting but well known areas of the city. These areas include popular places like well-known hotels in the major cities and around girl's hostels in the universities. These sex workers usually dress in skimpy and provocative clothing, regardless of the weather, (Akpan, 2000). Street prostitutes are often called "street walkers" while their customers are referred to as "tricks" or "Johns". The sex is performed in the customer's car, in a nearby alley or in a rented room, (Akpan, 2000). **Child Prostitution:** In the world today, the problem of child prostitution is a frightening reality. Child prostitutes whether occupational or full-time also becomes involved in crime and abuse (Mill, 1997). However, because of the high incidence of sexually transmitted disease such as syphilis, customers are willing to pay for higher prices for children who are considered more likely to be virgins and thus, less likely to be infected, (Tolu, 1997). Ewah (2010) observed that child prostitution involves children between the ages of eight and twelve years. He further stated that at this age, girls often receive their introduction to this activity through their parents and other family members.



Child prostitutes generally continued their involvement because they earned a lot of money. Also many seemed to fear rejection by their families if they stop (Margaret, 2000). Sex Tourism: This type is simply described as travelling for sexual intercourse with prostitutes or to engage in their sexual activity, (Mencken, 2009). A specialized agency of the United Nations defines sex tourism as "trip organized from within the tourism sector or from outside, this sector but using its structures and networks with the primary purpose of effecting a commercial sexual relationship by the tourist with residents at the destination (The World Tourism Organization, 2007)

Causes of Commercial Sex Work

Poverty

The most common reason given for sex work is poverty. In sub-Saharan Africa it is the major factor that leads a woman or young woman to sex work. Most analyses of prostitution suggest that both men and women enter prostitution, either professionally or temporarily, as relative amateurs, for economic and monetary reasons or are forced to indulge in sex work profession. Because of the disintegration of the family, misery etc., hunger as a form of poverty has forced some parents to sell their children for prostitution. Some girls who engage in sex work do so because they see prostitution as the only means of survival in order to get daily meals. Poverty also leads some girls to sell their bodies for money and as a result become professional sex workers (Onah, 2000). The poverty faced by the women in Africa has led them for taking decision to sell sex in exchange for money and favors in order to support their children (Cabrera, 1998). In China, lack of money and economic necessities are the reasons of joining women sex work (Hong and Li, 2008).

Loss of Parents or Spouse

In her study of female sex workers in a South African mining town, Campbell (2003) identified common themes of why women entered the sex trade to include the death of spouses or parents. Abject poverty was often the result of women being left to fend for themselves because of the death of their parents or husband, divorce/separation, or spouse Thill-health (Saggarti, Sabarwal, Verma, Halli & Jam, 2011). Some of the findings of the study were that loss of spouse, severe economic repression (poverty), illiteracy, economic-driven migrational activities and unemployment were chief socio-economic risk factors that predispose females into commercial sex work.

Dropping out of School

According to Onyango et al (2012) dropping out of school plays a critical role in the path of female sex workers to sex work. 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. 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).



After dropping out of school or failure to continue with their education, prostitution becomes the only profession at their disposal.

Family Type

Single parent families either resulting from failed marriages cause rebellion, resentment among the teenagers who often displace their frustrations by engaging in various forms of deviant behaviours. The unfavourable home environment quite often becomes an excuse for the teen girls to model along their peers and joins sex work (Kangethe, 2015).

Unemployment

The lack of alternatives to gain a living is recognised by experts and international agencies as a strong driver to enter prostitution. Certainly, through most of history there were few professions open for women, especially if they had little or no family support or they lacked the education or class status to aspire to the few professions that respectable women could participate in. In the face of a lack of education and employment opportunities, and discrimination against women on the labour market, the decision to start selling sex may have economic drivers (Cho, Dreher & Neumayer, 2013). Unemployment has been identified as one of the reasons why most youths engage in sex work (Onah, 2000). Due to lack of job opportunities for the multitude of graduates, most of them resort to sex work as a means of livelihood and survival. Unemployment has also pushed many young people into sex work and in most cases, against their will (Onah, 2000). Reportedly, there are men, women and transgender people who consider working in the sex industry as a viable choice of job, pointing to the fact that prostitution is far from being the only job that entails high risks and poor working conditions (Jakobsson & Kotsadam, 2013). Some women even argue that prostitution gives them the chance to earn more and in a more flexible way. Researches in Russia indicate that lack of employment opportunities are the major reason of women involvement into prostitution (Aral *et al.*, 2003).

Effects of Commercial Sex Work

Commercial Sex workers are members of the society and interact with the population in which they live. As a result they impact on the various strata of the society in one way or the other. Such influences may subsequently have a multiplier effect on communities and the society at large. They include:

HIV/AIDS/Public Health Issue

Bongaart (1996) have demonstrated that sex industry is the most significant fact in creating a self-sustaining and expanding AIDS epidemic. According to him, frequent sexual contacts with individuals and frequent changes in partners are key determinant to the rapid diffusion of HIV. The risk for HIV infection is increased because of multiple partners and limited safe sex practices. For instance some customers are willing to pay more for a sexual encounter if they don't have to use condom. Based on research conducted by the Centre for Diseases Control and Prevention, the rate of HIV infection for prostitutes is three times higher if they smoke crack cocaine which may make them to do



anything (including attending to customers without condom) in order to get their daily dosage of crack. According to U.S Agency for International Development (USAID, 2002) AIDS deaths lead directly to a reduction in the number of available workers. These deaths occur predominantly among workers in their most productive years. Public Research Studies concerning commercial sex workers as a public health issue in urban communities have come primarily from developing countries. Members of these groups are mostly illiterates and semiliterate and are highly superstitious. They therefore have limited access to accurate information on HIV and other STI (sexually transmitted infection), clinical services and means of prevention and support.

Violence against Women

Commercial Sex workers are often victimized by the person for whom they work and by their customers. According to Farley, Lynne, Cotton, (2005), there is also the problem of harassment of prostitutes and their clients by criminals for example armed robbers, and drug addicts often times go into communities to rape female prostitutes and also rob their clients of their monies and other valuable things. The basis for this bad behaviour towards these women is that sex work is illegal and sex workers are looked down upon and stigmatized and have no access to legal rights. Most often, they do not have any sympathy whatsoever from the community within which they operate and this gives the perpetrators the cause to go in there and do whatever they like to them. Sex work and drug use invariably go hand in hand as drug users always hover around areas of prostitution. Prostitutes are also known to sexually interact a lot with drug users. In the same vein, organizations providing social and legal services are just not interested in issues concerning prostitutes, they are therefore left alone to face violence including sexually induced ones. In places where it is common, prostitution lowers the value of property. It also degrades the status of women. According to Ojo (2007) commercial sex workers prostitution is considered in Nigeria and many other countries as illegal.

Contributory Factor to Increase in Crime Wave

Prostitutes most often associate themselves with the activities of criminals. For instance they tend to have armed robbers and drug addicts as boyfriends and keeping for them in their possession the booties of the armed robberies and even weapons used in armed robbery attacks.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

In sociological analysis theories are indispensable. They form an integral part of sociological research as it is a general principle that explain or predict facts, observation or events. In this research study, the theoretical perspective adopted for this study is the social conflict theory.

SOCIAL CONFLICT THEORY

The proponent of this theory is Karl Marx (1818-1883), who saw the society as fragmented into groups that compete for social and economic resources. The social conflict theory advances the following arguments; that those practicing certain behaviours are labelled by



those in power or the dominant class, that society is characterized by conflict, dominance and oppression in social life, groups and individuals try to advance their own interests over the interests of others, power and resources are unequally divided and some social groups dominate others for economic gains. Conflict theory would assert that the main reason why commercial sex still exists is due to the fact that women have not had access to economic opportunity and have had to rely on economic support from men (Women have had to exchange sexual availability (a resource they control) for this support (a resource controlled by men). According to social conflict theory, commercial sex reflects the economic inequality in society and arises from women's poverty in a patriarchal society. It also reflects the continuing cultural treatment of women as sex objects who exist for men's pleasure. Many poor women feel compelled to engage in sex trade because of their lack of money; because wealthier women have many other sources of income, the idea of becoming a sex worker is something they have never to consider (Barry, 1966). The social conflict theory as well in trying to explain social behaviour has shortcomings; it presumes that everything only benefits the ruling class; it presupposes that the working class does not realize their subordination; it also posits that the working class does not rebel against the norms and values set by the ruling class; it doesn't explain how the individual is affected and is very deterministic. Nevertheless, this theory has academic relevance as it provides theoretical backing that commercial sex work is a form of oppression or exploitation in some form or another in our capitalist society.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research design for this study is the survey research design. Population samples, Ordeo L. G. A. has a population of 490, 600. GRA (Government Residential Area), which is the study area is a community in Oredo L.G.A, Benin City, Edo State. The total sample size is fifty (50) for the study. The choice of G.R.A is as a result of a popular hotel (Royal Manbol) located at Ihama road, in G.R.A. This is a meeting point for commercial sex workers of all category. A sample of 50 females that have been involved or currently involved in commercial sex in G.R.A. in Oredo L.G.A, Benin City, was used for the study. The simple random sampling and snow balling sampling technique was adopted for the selection of the 50 (fifty) respondents. The research instruments used for thus study are questionnaire and indept interview. Section a deals with Respondents Demographic Information. Section B deals with (i) Poverty/Hardship, (ii) Dropping out of school, (iii) Death of spouse parent, (iv) Difficulty of getting a job, (v) Commercial sex work is responsible for spread of HIV/AIDS amongst females. Source of data are the primary source mainly for first hand information and secondary data generated from other materials already written such as journals, books, magazines, internet, etc. The data collected were analysed using simple percentages for the data analysis. The number of responses in each response group were added together and divided by the total possible responses and then multiplied by one hundred. This tabular form of the analysis included percentages and frequencies of sex, age's education, occupation and marital status of respondents.



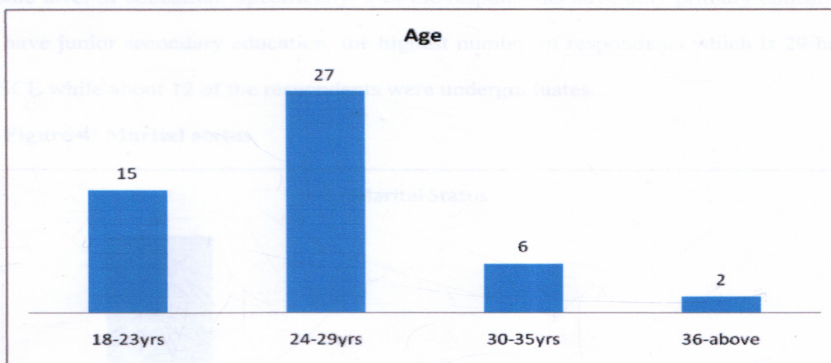
PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULT

This is the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the results of the study. It forms the basis for assessing the study objectives and also for the test of the hypotheses raised previously. It begins with the presentation and analysis of the demographic data and then examines the responses for the questionnaire and concluded by testing the study hypothesis.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Demographic Analysis

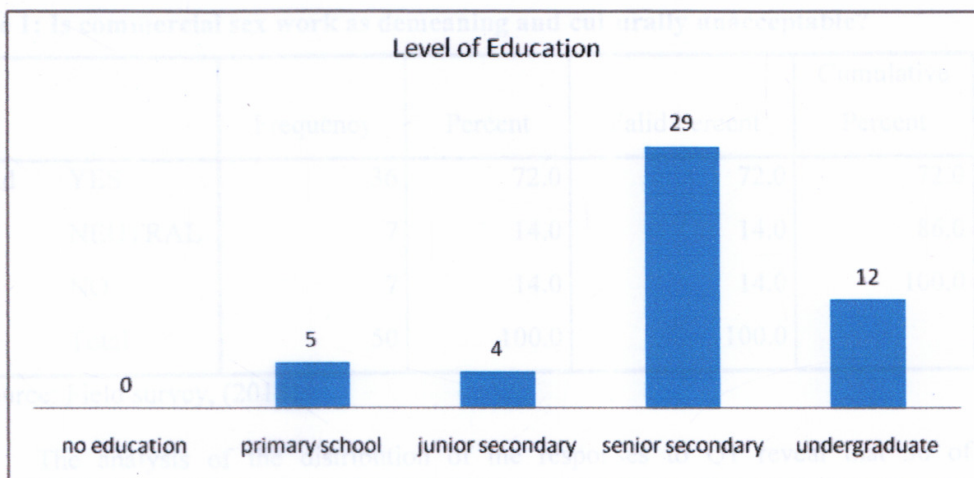
Figure 1: Age



Source: Fieldwork, 2019.

From the analysis of the data, 15 of respondents are between the age ranges of 18-23 yrs 27 of the respondents are within the age range of 24-29, 6 of respondents are between the age ranges of 30-35 yrs while 2 of the respondents are 36yrs and above.

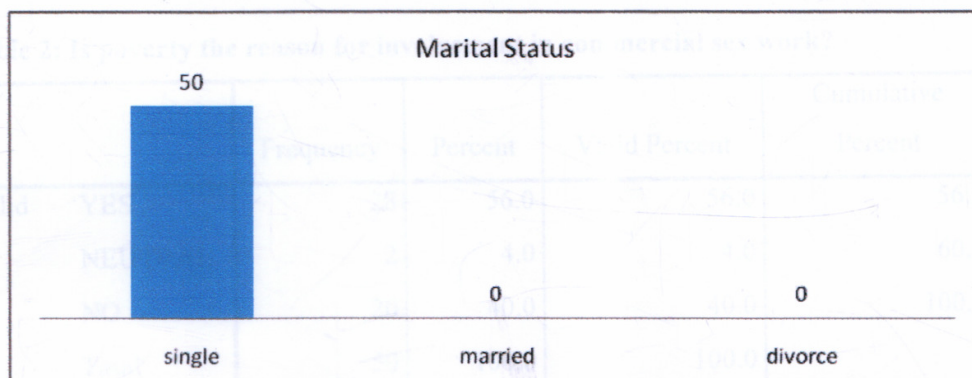
Figure 2: Education



Source: Field survey, (2019)



From the analysis of the level of education of respondents, all of respondents had some level of education. Specifically, 5 of the respondents have only primary education, have junior secondary education, the highest number of respondents which is 29 have SSCE while about 12 of the respondents were undergraduates.



Source: Field survey, (2019)

For marital status, the data reveals that almost all the 50 respondents are single and thus none of the respondent had ever been married or currently married.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Table 1: Is Commercial Sex Work as Demeaning and Culturally Unacceptable?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	36	72.0	72.0	72.0
Neutral	7	14.0	14.0	86.0
No	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2019)

The analysis of the distribution of the responses to Q1 reveal that 36 of respondents representing about 72% of the sample are of the opinion that commercial sex work is demeaning and culturally unacceptable, 7 of the respondents representing 14.0% held a different view in the opposite direction. In addition, another 7 of the respondents accounting for 14.1% were neutral in their response. From the data gotten from respondents, it appears that most of the respondents hold the view that commercial sex work is demeaning and culturally unacceptable.

Table 2: Is Poverty the Reason for Involvement in Commercial Sex Work?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	28	56.0	56.0	56.0
Neutral	2	4.0	4.0	60.0
No	20	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2019)



The analysis of the distribution of the responses to Q₂ reveal that 28 of respondents representing about 56% of the sample are of the view that poverty is the reason for involvement in commercial sex work. 20 of the respondents representing 40% held a different view in the opposite direction. In addition, another 2 of the respondents accounting for 4% were neutral in their response. From the data gotten from respondents, it appears there is no overwhelming support that poverty is the key reason for involvement in commercial sex as about 40% of the sample does not agree. Hence there are other variables that may influence involvement in commercial sex other than poverty.

Table 3: Does the Level of Education in anyway Influence a Person’s Decision to be engaged in Commercial Sex?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	38	76.0	76.0	76.0
Neutral	3	6.0	6.0	82.0
No	9	18.0	18.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2018)

The analysis of the distribution of the responses to Q₃ reveal that 38 of respondents representing about 76% of the sample are of the view that the level of education influence a person’s decision to be engaged in commercial sex. 9 of the respondents representing 18% held a different view in the opposite direction while 3 of the respondents accounting for 6% were neutral in their response. From the data gotten from respondents, we can conclude that the level of education influence a person’s decision to be engaged in commercial sex. Therefore improved literacy levels and empowering females with education can go a long way in influencing their choices especially away from commercial sex work.

Table 4: Are Less Educated Females likely to be more involved in Commercial Sex Work?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	35	70.0	70.0	70.0
Neutral	4	8.0	8.0	78.0
No	11	22.0	22.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2019)

The analysis of the distribution of the responses to Q₄ reveal that 35 of respondents representing about 70% of the sample are of the view that less educated females likely to be more involved in commercial sex work. 11 of the respondents representing 22% held a different view in the opposite direction while 4 of the respondents accounting for 8% were neutral in their response. This result further corroborates with the earlier response and hence we may reiterate that improving literacy levels and empowering females with education can go a long way to taking them off commercial sex work.



Table 5: Is the Death of Parent/Spouse one of the Reasons for Female Involvement in Commercial Sex Work?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	28	56.0	56.0	56.0
Neutral	2	4.0	4.0	60.0
No	20	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2019)

The analysis of the distribution of the responses to Q5 reveal that 28 of respondents representing about 56% of the sample are of the view that death of parent/spouse is one of the reasons for female involvement in commercial sex work, 20 of the respondents representing 40% held a different view in the opposite direction while 2 of the respondents accounting for 4% were neutral in their response. We can conclude that though death of spouse or parent can be a key reason for involvement in commercial sex, it is however, not so very strongly supported as 40% of the sample feel quite differently.

Table 6: Does Economic Burden Occasioned by Loss Involvement in Commercial Sex Work?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	32	64.0	64.0	64.0
Neutral	7	14.0	14.0	78.0
No	11	22.0	22.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2019)

The analysis of the distribution of the responses to Q6 reveal that 32 of respondents representing about 64% of the sample are of the view that economic burden occasioned by loss of parent is responsible for female involvement in commercial sex work, 11 of the respondents representing 22% held a different view in the opposite direction while 7 of the respondents accounting for 14% were neutral in their response. From the survey, it appears that it is not just the loss of parent but the economic burden that follows as a result that causes involvement in commercial sex work.

Table 7: Is the Difficulty of Getting Employment a Determinant Factor Explaining Female Involvement in Commercial Sex Work?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	37	74.0	74.0	74.0
Neutral	2	4.0	4.0	78.0
No	11	22.0	22.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2019)

The analysis of the distribution of the responses to Q7 reveal that 37 of respondents representing about 74% of the sample hold the view that the difficulty of getting employment is a determinant factor explaining female involvement in commercial sex work. 11 of the respondents representing 22%, held a different view in the opposite



direction while 2 of the respondents accounting for 4% were neutral in their response. The results show a strong support for the views that difficulty of getting employment leads to involvement in commercial sex work by females. Hence there is the need for government to step in this regards in the provision of jobs as this will go a long way in reducing the prevalence of females in commercial sex work.

Table 8: Do Females Prefer Commercial Sex Work as a Viable Alternative Rather than Skill Acquisition Initiatives?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	6	12.0	12.0	12.0
Neutral	4	8.0	8.0	20.0
No	40	80.0	80.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2019)

The analysis of the distribution of the responses to Q8 reveal a strong support against the view that females prefer commercial sex work as a viable alternative rather than skill acquisition initiatives with about 40 of the respondents representing 80% of the sample disagreeing with the opinion. 6 of the respondents representing 12% held a different view in the opposite direction while 4 of the respondents accounting for 8% were neutral in their response. The results show that respondents would prefer to have skills and earn income from them rather than through commercial sex work. Hence there is the need for government and other non-governmental organizations to step in this regards through provision of skill acquisition centers.

Table 9: Is Commercial Sex Work only Restricted to Females from Poor Backgrounds?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	16	32.0	32.0	32.0
Neutral	6	10.0	10.0	42.0
No	29	58.0	58.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2019)

The analysis of the distribution of the responses to Q9 reveal that 16 of respondents representing about 32% of the sample hold the view that the commercial sex work is only restricted to females from poor backgrounds. However, 29 of the respondents representing 58% held a different view in the opposite direction while 5 of the respondents accounting for 10% were neutral in their response.

Table 10: Does the Cultural Perception of Commercial Sex Work in this Part of the World Deter Females from Participating?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	19	38.0	38.0	38.0
No	31	62.0	62.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2019)



The analysis of the distribution of the responses to Q10 reveal that 19 of respondents representing about 38% of the sample hold the view that cultural perception of commercial sex work in this part of the world deter females from participating. However, 31 of the respondents representing 62% held a different view in the opposite direction.

Table II. Does Commercial Sex Increase the Chances of Contracting HIV for Females?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	40	80.0	80.0	80.0
Neutral	64	12.0	12.0	92.0
No	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2019)

The analysis of the distribution of the responses to Q11 reveal that 40 of respondents representing about 80% of the sample are of the opinion that commercial sex increase the chances of contracting HIV for females. 4 of the respondents representing just about 8% held a different view while 6 of the respondents accounting for 12% were neutral in their response. The results strongly support that chances of contracting HIV are increased due to involvement in commercial sex work by females.

Table 12: Are there Significant Cases of Threat to Life that Females Face in Commercial Sex Work?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	39	78.0	78.0	78.0
Neutral	3	6.0	6.0	84.0
No	8	16.0	16.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2018)

The analysis of the distribution of the responses to Q12 reveal that 39 of respondents representing about 78% of the sample are of the opinion that there are significant cases of threat to life that females face in commercial sex work. 8 of the respondents representing just about 16% held a different view while 3 of the respondents accounting for 6% were neutral in their response. The results strongly support that threat of life is one of the danger of involvement in commercial sex work by females.

Table 13: Do Females Involved in Commercial Sex have Access to Health Education?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	15	30.0	30.0	30.0
Neutral	8	16.0	16.0	46.0
No	27	54.0	54.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2019)

The analysis of the distribution of the responses to Q13 reveal that 15 of respondents representing about 30% of the sample are of the opinion that females involved in



commercial sex have access to health education but a higher number of respondents (27) representing 54% indicate that this is not the case while 8 of the respondents accounting for 16% were neutral in their response.

Table 14: Do Females Involved in Commercial Sex Insist on having Protected Sex? Frequency

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	32	64.0	64.0	64.0
Neutral	8	16.0	16.0	80.0
No	10	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2019)

The analysis of the distribution of the responses to Q₁₄ reveal that 32 of respondents representing about 64% of the sample are of the opinion that females involved in commercial sex insist on having protected sex. 10 of the respondents representing just about 20% held a different view while 8 of the respondents accounting for 16% were neutral in their response.

Table 15: Can the Government Play a Significant Role in Reducing Female Involvement in Commercial Sex Work?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	46	92.0	92.0	92.0
Neutral	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey, (2019)

The analysis of the distribution of the responses to Q₁₅ reveals that 46 of respondents representing about 92% of the sample are of the opinion that government can play a significant role in reducing female involvement in commercial sex work. None of the respondents hold a contrary opinion while 4 of the respondents accounting for 8% were neutral in their response.

TEST OF HYPOTHESES DECISION RULE

We accept the null hypothesis if chi-square asymptotic value is > 0.05 at 5% significance level, otherwise we reject the null and accept the alternative.

HYPOTHESES 1

H₁ There is no significant relationship between poverty/hardship and female involvement in commercial sex work.

To test this hypothesis, we conduct the chi-square analysis using Question 1



Table 16. Test Statistics

Chi-Square	47.949 ^a
Df.	4
Asymp.Sig.	.000

Source: SPSS, 22.0.

The chi-square test statistics stood at 47.949 and is significant at 5% as shown by the asymptotic sig value of 0.00. Hence we reject the null hypotheses that Poverty/hardship is not a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work. Indeed, the most common reason given for sex work is poverty. In sub-Saharan Africa it is the major factor that leads a woman or young woman to sex work. Most analyses of prostitution suggest that both men and women enter prostitution, either professionally or temporarily, as relative amateurs, for economic and monetary reasons (Onah, 2000). The poverty faced by the women in Africa has led them for taking decision to sell sex in exchange for money and favors in order to support their children (Cabrera. 1998). In China, lack of money and economic necessities are the reasons of joining women sex work (Hong and Li, 2008).

HYPOTHESIS 2

H₂. There is no significant relationship between dropping out of school and female involvement in commercial sex work. To test this hypothesis. We conduct the chi-square analysis on statement

Table 17 Test Statistics

Chi-Square	38.960 ^a
Df.	4
Asymp.Sig.	.000

Source: SPSS, 22.0.

The chi-square test statistics stood at 38.960 and is not significant at 5% as shown by the asymptotic sig value of 0.000. Hence we reject the null hypotheses that dropping out of school are not a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work. The finding is supported by Onyango et al (2012) as they hold the view that dropping out of school plays a critical role in the path of female sex workers to sex work. In addition, Nkala (2013) found that children and teens that lack the interest in the school are very prone to prostitution. Students who drop out of school have a high probability of getting into sex-industry. (Child Refugee, 2007). After dropping out of school or failure to continue with their education, prostitution becomes the only profession at their disposal (Mugaise. 2001). Mac leod (2006) also conducted a study in the United Kingdom on the causes of prostitution.

HYPOTHESES 3

H₃. There is no significant relationship between death of spouse/parent and female involvement in commercial sex work.

To test this hypothesis, we conduct the chi-square analysis on statement II.



Table 18. Test Statistics

Chi-Square	78.345 ^a
Df.	4
Asymp.Sig.	.000

Source: SPSS, 22.0.

The chi-square test statistics stood at 78.345 and is not significant at 5% as shown by the asymptotic sig value of 0.000. Hence we reject the null hypotheses that the Death of spouse parent is not a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work.

HYPOTHESES 4

H₄: There is no significant relationship between difficulty of getting employment and female involvement in commercial sex work.

To test this hypothesis, we conduct the chi-square analysis on statement II.

Table 19. Test Statistics

Chi-Square	12.655 ^a
Df.	4
Asymp.Sig.	.481

Source: SPSS, 22.0.

The chi-square test statistics stood at 12.655 and is significant at 5% as shown by the asymptotic sig value of 0.000. Hence we at the null hypotheses that Difficulty of getting employment is not a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work. Our finding is also supported by the works of other scholars. For example, Aral *et al.*, (2003) found that in Russia lack of employment opportunities are the major reason of women involvement into prostitution (Aral *et. al.*, 2003). Onah, (2000) also found that unemployment has also pushed many young people into sex work and in most cases, against their will. The lack of alternatives to gain a living is recognized by experts and international agencies as a strong driver to enter prostitution. In the face of a lack of education and employment opportunities, and discrimination against women on the labour market, the decision to start selling sex may have economic drivers (Cho, Dréher & Neumaver. 2013)

H₅. There is no significant relationship between commercial sex work and the spread of DIV/AIDS amongst females.

Table 16. Test Statistics

Chi-Square	23.839 ^a
Df.	4
Asymp.Sig.	.000

Source: SPSS, 22.0.



The chi-square test statistics stood at 23.839 and is significant at 5% as shown by the asymptotic sig value of 0.00. Hence we reject the null hypotheses that commercial sex work is not responsible for spread of HIV/AIDS amongst females. There are several reasons why female commercial sex workers are at higher risk than the general population. Firstly, commercial sex workers are at higher risk for HIV infection because they have multiple partners, remarked Darko, Asamoah-Ado, Gabriella, Kyerekoh, Agyarko-Poku and Nzambi (2006). The 2007 World Bank Report estimates that about 90% of all HIV transmissions in this region are through heterosexual intercourse. High rates of partner change have been identified as key risk factor for HIV infections in Africa. Based on research conducted by the Centre for Diseases Control and Prevention, the rate of HIV infection for prostitutes is three times higher if they smoke crack cocaine which may make them to do anything (including attending to customers without condom) in order to get their daily dosage of crack.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. There is significant relationship between poverty/hardship and female involvement in commercial sex work.
2. There is significant relationship between dropping out of school and female involvement in commercial sex work.
3. There is no significant relationship between death of spouse/parent and female involvement in commercial sex work.
4. There is significant relationship between difficulty of getting employment and female involvement in commercial sex work.
5. There is significant relationship between commercial sex work and spread of HIV/AIDS amongst females.

CONCLUSION

Commercial sex work is the act of performing sexual acts in return for money and valuable items. Commercial sex work is simply the practice of selling sex for cash or other immediate compensation. Commercial sex work is not restricted to females alone, it has indeed become complex in different ways as there are male sex workers in Nigeria who have sex with men for commercial reasons. Commercial sex work is both historical and cultural, with every culture adopting her own standards and attitudes. There is a renewed attention on the causes and effects of corruption globally. There are basic causes that readily come to mind such as poverty which many has dubbed the most common reason given for commercial sex work. In sub-Saharan Africa it is the major factor that leads a woman or young woman to sex work. There is also the issue of loss of parents or spouse and where this comes along with an economic burden for the individual, it may result in higher risk of getting involved in commercial sex work. There is also the role of dropping out of school which could also play a critical role in the path of female sex workers to sex work. Importantly also, is the challenge of unemployment with the lack of alternatives to gain a decent living. Commercial Sex work has also received increased attention as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Consequently, the aim of this study is to draw societal attention and understanding on the causes and effects of commercial sex work



amongst women and suggest solutions. Using a sample of 50 females that have been involved or currently involved in commercial sex in G.R.A Community, in Oredo LGA, Benin City of Edo state, the study employed primary data for the study. The data was generated using well-structured questionnaire. In filling the questionnaires the respondents were guided during the survey. The findings of the study reveals the following; (i) poverty/hardship is a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work, (ii) Dropping out of school is a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work, (iii) Death of spouse/parent is not a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work, (iv) Difficulty of getting employment is a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work and (v) Commercial sex work is responsible for spread of HI V/AIDS amongst females.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested; firstly, there is the need for government to tackle the issues of Poverty/hardship as this was discovered from our survey to be significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work. Secondly, dropping out of school is a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work and hence the study recommends that non-governmental organizations and other welfare agencies of government should make effort to reach out to young females that have dropped out of school due to financial constraints and are now involved in commercial sex work. Scholarship schemes can be given to these females to enable them continue their education and from our survey a number of these females sex workers still have the desire to go back to school. Thirdly, the study also found that death of spouse/parent is not a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work. Consequently, the study recommends that there is the need for government intervention in this regards. Fourthly, difficulty of getting employment is a significant cause of female involvement in commercial sex work. Our survey results show a strong support for the views that difficulty of getting employment leads to involvement in commercial sex work by females. Hence there is the need for government to step in this regards in the provision of jobs as this will go a long way in reducing the prevalence of females in commercial sex work. Finally, the study found that commercial sex work is responsible for spread of HIV/AIDS amongst females. Hence the recommendation is that there is need for massive health enlightenment by state and federal ministry of health, non-governmental organizations and other concerned agencies to be taken to areas where commercial sex workers operate.

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