

PROSTITUTION IN BAMENDA: A TRADE AND A COPING STRATEGY FOR SOME WOMEN

Sammy Besong Arrey-Mbi

The University of Bamenda, Bambili, Bamenda,
CAMEROON.

sammybesong@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This article aims to exhibit sex work as a trade and a coping strategy for most women and girls within Bamenda. It examines the engagements of the sex workers and the government of Cameroon in the fight against commercialisation of sex. The negative reputation of the trade or business on the society prompted the government to enact laws to control the trade and put a stop to it. The measures became inadequate with the imprisonment of sex workers due to its illegality in Cameroon. Those who went in for sex workers continue to access the areas thereby empowering the women and encouraging them. The control measures had lapses and were misdirected because these women were not empowered by the government. This occasioned more women to do the trade and argued that poverty drove them into it. The major instrument used for data collection was interviews, secondary literature, author's personal experience and a multidisciplinary approach to present the facts. The development of this trade touched human rights, public health as well as international law. Sex work triggered other economic ventures around the area which were lucrative to some people but created more problems to the society. It was a social concern that was not only to be handled by the government but also agencies. It was degrading to the community at first but the pain soon disappeared as survival instincts outweighed the pride of the indigenous people.

Keywords: prostitution, trade and strategy

INTRODUCTION

Bamenda town is found in the Bamenda plateau of the Western Grasslands. Bamenda town is a well-defined geographical area with natural boundaries and shares borders with other sub regions. It is the administrative headquarter of the North West Region of Cameroon. It is a junction town which leads to all divisions of the North West as is the gate way into the region. Bamenda was the first settlement (capital) of the German colonial administration after the defeat of the Mankon people in the nineteenth century.ⁱ The town in 1950s had a surface area of 60.7 hectares and covered the areas of Mankon, Nkwen, Mendankwe, Ndza and Nsongwa.ⁱⁱ In 1980 the area was 767.9 hectares with a population of over 58.400 inhabitants.ⁱⁱⁱ Her position in the area during the German days as well as under British administration and post colonial era as an administrative headquarter coupled with her rapid

ⁱ F.L. Fombe, "The Bamenda Urban Space: Evolution and Organisation" (a memoir for a post graduate Diploma DIPES II in Geography, University of Yaounde, 1983),14.

ⁱⁱ A. S. Besong, "Social and Economic activities of Bamenda Central Prison Inmates, 1924-2013(Masters dissertation in History, the University of Bamenda, 2018),30.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid

urbanisation attracted an influx of people from Nigeria, Bamileke area and its environs. Its economic potentials were understood to be the attraction of many from within and out of the region as it served as both the regions' economic city and political capital.

Prostitution as a practice by women or men (though generally identified with women) dates as far back to the biblical era, settlements of people and evolutionary changes in the globe. Prostitution as a practice has a complex understanding and a divergent social underpinning with complex forces which played major roles in the sex trade. The sensitive nature of the trade in many communities sent signals which were often accompanied by responses from various quarters. Though a practice that was not common in the Cameroon society particularly Bamenda area where it was regarded as a "taboo" was soon accepted due its deep rooted nature. This practice was like in most other towns and cities in Cameroon not accepted. Despite the resentment by the populations, it stubbornly implanted itself in the town of Bamenda. It became an inevitable social reality and the punishment that went with such a practice was despised by the prostitution industry that developed and the promoters of the trade. It became an inevitable social reality and slowly but steadily, a prostitution industry developed in spite of the contempt that was regarded for the trade. The motivations for prostitution inevitably centered on economic remunerations. The practice became a trade and simultaneously a market developed (which was principally the selling and buying of sex by men) and men bought sex with money and other material things and the trade soon expanded to other parts of the town. Competition, drug, and human trafficking became the de facto in the business.

The premise of this paper is that the development of the prostitution industry was envisaged as a trade and a coping strategy by the sex workers involved in the trade. In fact, corroborating the adage of "using what you have to get what you want". It also exposes the fact that class values, social restraints and poverty had much to play in the trade. To many the practice was threaded through by the moral conduct of some particular tribes and women and men who had deviated from the acceptable norms of the society and had followed a weaker way to make money and other gains for themselves. This paper from this point and its narratives from interviewees expatiated on the fact that prostitution was both a trade and a means for survival and it worked for many because they succeeded in their venture.

Conceptual Framework

It must be conceded that, while prostitution was a trade to those who admitted to the business to others it was a vice which threatened the purity of the society to those who saw it that way, though both groups interacted along each other in the society. Shahid et al.(2013) posits that prostitution as a business became universal many decades ago with various societies doing it openly or in secret and in other societies in sacred places.^{iv} There has been no generalised definition to the term prostitution and it has never been defined without making reference to sex. To this end, J. Miller (2009) posits that, prostitution involves the exchange of sex activities for economic benefit with persons with whom there was no earlier connection or relationship.^v He went ahead to posit that women involved themselves in prostitution due to economic and structural constraints that blocked them from earning and making good money

^{iv} Qayyum Shahid et al., "Causes and Decision of Women's involvement into Prostitution and its Consequences in Punjab, Pakistan" *Academic Research International* Vol. 4, No 5 (September 2013):398.

^v J. Miller "Prostitution" in the *Handbook of Crime and Public Policy*, edited by Michael Tonry (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009),549.

in both the legal and economies^{vi}(Ibid). Thus their engagement into the trade was a coping strategy to curb the numerous economic or financial challenges they faced.

According to E.S.D Fomin,(2016) prostitution is the commercialisation of sex for fortune which was an urban phenomenon.^{vii} To D. Asuagbor,(2004) posits that prostitution is the exchange of acts of a sexual nature for financial compensation^{viii} for exclusive risk, boredom as well as psychological and physical inconveniences incurred during the act or labour. On the other hand, C.Overall (1992) sees prostitution as the buying of sexual activity and not the activity itself.^{ix} And according to Patience a retired prostitute, prostitution is giving out parts of your body to those who come for them for quick money. They give you the money and they have the part they want though it has not cut off from your body. She went further to say it was using your “woman skin” to have money.^xThis is the *Pidgin English language* manner to call the female sex organ in this part of the country which was under British colonial rule. And to N. Vincent prostitution is the illegal business carried out by women who could not stay in their married homes by engaging in multitasks sex activities for immediate cash.^{xi} He further puts it this way “you pay money for nak canda”^{xii}(you paid money to a woman prostitute to have sex). This paper defines prostitution as the selling and buying of sexual services for money as a means for economic and social survival.

Trade here refers to an agency for prostitution where people paid for their sex services and indiscriminately were served with the sex commodity as an object in the trade. In the conventional sense of it, trade pertains to the behaviour of individuals in a commercial environment where one person sells and the other a buyer in an exchange process. According to Takor,(2011) in his write up “The Bamenda Grasslands in Long Distance Trade”, sees trade as part of exchange in a market situation.^{xiii} And to him exchange aims at selling and buying goods under the best conditions and this naturally occurred in a market place. Thus, trade as used in this context is the tendency to pay for sex services which were rendered after payments. Here the prostitutes had the goods (body) and the customers or clients paid to have pleasure. Shively (2008) emphasised that prostitution takes place in a chain of demand and supply process common in trade and operates in an illegal market^{xiv} Thus, this has raised arguments in favour of prostitution as a trade for which money or other material things were given in exchange for sex eventhough some do not qualify it as a trade but see it as “profession”

^{vi} Ibid, 551

^{vii} Fomin, “Towards Deconstructing the prostitution stigma on Female Bayang Migrants of Cameroon, 1930-1984.” *Pantikar Journal of History*, Vol.3, No. 4 (March 2016): 7.

^{viii} D. Asuagbor “The commercial sex Industry in Douala, Cameroon: A Qualitative Investigation (Doctorate Thesis, University of New Jersey, USA, 2004), 10.

^{ix} Overall Christine, “What’s wrong with Prostitution? Evaluating Sex Work” *Signs Journal of Women in Culture* Volume 17, Number 4, (1992):706.

^x Patience, 50 years retired prostitute, interviewed in Bamenda, 01/04/ 2020.

^{xi} N. Vincent 76 years a retired driver and customer to prostitutes at old town, interviewed at old town Bamenda 17/05/2020

^{xii} Idem

^{xiii} Nixon K. Takor “ The Bamenda Grasslands in Long Distance Trade C. 1850-1981: Evolutionary Dynamics, socio-Economic and political Transmutation (Doctorate Thesis in History, The University of Yaounde I 2011), 8.

^{xiv} Shively Michael et al., “A National Overview of Prostitution and Sex Trafficking, Demand Reduction Efforts” Final Report, 2008, 28.

Culturally, prostitution did not have a place in the grassfield communities. As a result of evolutionary dynamics (colonisation, urbanisation and other developments) likewise social economic and political changes, those who moved into the area as unmarried girls or better still free girls had to practice this trade (illegal) due to decline in economic activities (more need to be advanced as some of the challenges they faced or frustrations that prompted them to get involved in the business). Thus, as a means and strategy to cope in their new environment, sex trade thus became a survival instinct. The young women had to use their “sex organs” as a means to survive. Sex was therefore used as agency for survival and a means of supplementing incomes from the other economic activities they pretended to do.

In spite of the difficult nature of the business, some individuals have likened it to an act for the weakest of the weak^{xv} (Stephanie 2002) in the society. According to Mimi, she had to use her head to survive in Bamenda especially as she just came in into town and had no family member to support her. She had to live and had to do prostitution as a trade for some time to have money and start a small business of her own.^{xvi} Thus, survival instincts caused a few to go in for prostitution. However, the uncomfortable life style in the suburbs, economic hardship (economic crisis) of the country in the early 1980s, high cost of living in the town as well as the desires to have endless economic varieties in the town of Bamenda pushed many young girls to prostitute. This paper therefore queues up from other studies to contribute to the debate by saying that prostitution was a trade and a coping strategy in a town like Bamenda.

Rationale for Prostitution

At first most early researchers on this topic saw it as an activity for adults but recent research suggested that juvenile runaways and the homeless^{xvii} also engaged in the trade as advanced by Miller. From individuals who had been actors, customers and those still in the trade, it was realised that “economic motivations” were the prime motives for women turning and transforming their “sex organs” as a trade commodity.

According to Dilys (2004) who quoted Zalwango, the main reason for this sex trade was for economic support. She posits that economic needs were the bases for prostitution.^{xviii} Some women talked to supported the argument that it was the only trade that did not need capital to start with but you made money thus, corroborating McCaghy (1994) position that prostitution was just for money.^{xix} Calhoun and Weaver (1996) equally held the opinion that quick financial and easy gains motivated many into prostitution.^{xx} They argued that such decisions were “rational” and mostly from men than women^{xxi} (ibid). As Barrett (1996) commented, poverty was a precondition for many to prostitute.^{xxii}

^{xv} Wahab Stephanie, “For Their Own Good” : Sex, Work, Social control and social workers, a historical perspective *the Journal of Sociology and social welfare* Vol.29 Issue 4, 39-57 (December 2002): 40.

^{xvi} Mimi 34 years prostitute interviewed in Bamenda 10/01/2015.

^{xvii} Miller “Prostitution”... .549.

^{xviii} Asuagbor “The commercial sex industry....16.

^{xix} C.H.Mcaghy and C.Hou, “Family Affiliations and Prostitution in a Cultural Context: Career onsets of Taiwanese prostitutes. *Archives of Sexual Behaviour*, 1994,23(3):258.

^{xx} T. Calhoun and G.Weaver, “Rational Decision making among male street prostitutes” *Deviant Behaviour* 17, (1996):211.

^{xxi} Ibid

^{xxii} D. Barrett and W.Beckett, “Child Prostitution: reaching out to children who sell sex to survive” *British Journal of Nursing* 1996, 5(18):1120.

Just like in any business where capital is accumulated, most women went into the trade to raise money to invest in other business of their choice and passion that made more money such as agriculture (cocoa), real estate and motor transport business as Bayang women in Douala, Kumba, Limbe and Bamenda did. Persak (2014) held the view that it was a means of making money and having a self-sufficient life.^{xxiii} Ashu Agartha said, “the Bayang women involved in prostitution in Holland, Gabon, Switzerland, Yaounde, Douala and Bamenda invested back home in other money making businesses”^{xxiv} she went further to say such investments at home motivated some women to move into the sex trade.^{xxv}

The rapid urbanisation of Bamenda and its spill over effects precipitated other women into prostitution. Urbanisation saw necessitated the massive arrival of people from surrounding towns and villages like Nkambe, Kumbo, Wum, Ndop, Bafut, Santa, Fundong, Bali amongst others. The growth, transformation and economic opportunities offered by Bamenda town caused the movement of large numbers of women into the urban center (town). While in town, life became difficult with no ready-made jobs and the absence of other alternative jobs that might make quick money, most women went into sex business as a means to make ends meet. Quoting E. Penttinen, (2010) women did not have alternatives to sex work that are “nearly as profitable and lucrative.”^{xxvi} Bamenda like in Douala, Kumba, Yaounde and even Gabon, vast majority of sex traders were children of struggling families with acute poverty condition. Qayyum argued that poverty in Africa caused many women to “sell sex in exchange for money.”^{xxvii} In this regard, some indulged in sex trade in an attempt to cope with life in Bamenda and also to maximize their chances of survival by taking the opportunities they saw in their environment especially those around Nkwen market area. As argued by J.K. Anarfi, (1998) the only resources some of these women had as economic capital were their “sex organs.”^{xxviii}

It was therefore a coping strategy to many free women to survive the hard life in town just like those in France, Switzerland, Holland, Italy, Belgium, China, Philippine, Britain, USA just to name but a few who had poor families and had to do something fast to survive and to support their families knowing where they came from. Thus, used of agency to provide for themselves and families. Phoenix (1999) saw prostitutes as business women and survivors who commercialised their bodies to survive.^{xxix}

Some of those involved in prostitution in Bamenda did so for material gains and other economic gains. Sex to some of them was not a matter of feeling or enjoyment (pleasure) but what has given in return. According to Gillian, “I went into prostitution because I saw it gainful and in a short time you made much money and acquired properties for something customers consume and it does not finish or they do not take away.”^{xxx} In the same direction, families have pushed their children out into prostitution due to their desire to enjoy material things which other children in the prostitution job had provided for their parents. Thus, in

^{xxiii} Persak Nina, *Reframing Prostitution: From Discourse to Description, from Moralisation to Normalisation*(ed) Gert Vermeulen (Portland: Muklu Publishers, 2014),38.

^{xxiv} A. Agartha 70 years retired Post and Telecommunication worker interviewed in Bamenda, 04/01/2019

^{xxv} Idem

^{xxvi} E. Penttinen, *Globalisation, Prostitution and Sex Trafficking* (New York: Routledge, 2010),75.

^{xxvii} Qayyum Shahid et al., “Causes and Decision of Women’s involvement into Prostitution...” 400.

^{xxviii} J.K. Anarfi “Ghanian women and prostitution in Cote d’Ivoire” in *Global sex workers: Rights, Resistance and Redefinition*, edited by Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema (New York: Routledge, 1998),109.

^{xxix} Phoenix Joanna, *Making Sense of Prostitution* (New York: St Martin’s Press Inc. 1999),4.

^{xxx} A Gillian 36 years sex worker interviewed in Bamenda, 04/01/2019.

order to have material possessions and live a good life without hard work motivated many to go into sex trade.

Making a decision to prostitution as a trade according to Eboteta M. was due to genetics. Some women to her were born sexually active and one man could not satisfy her sex drive and as such, women became sex starved (especially those in polygamous marriages) and had to move out in order to quench her desires even though financial gains were attached.^{xxxix} To her, some women from some areas in Mamfe where female circumcision was done, was due to a biological malformation of these women. Some had long clitoris that touched their pants gets them excited much often desired sex. The reason why to her female circumcision was done in those communities to reduce such uncontrolled sexual desires. These were the women that easily divorced or ran out from their marriage home to have sex liberty and to have money through sex in towns such as Bamenda, Douala and some went abroad or to neighbouring African countries like Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria.^{xxxii}

According to Sunyila Yuh, her decision to become a prostitute and trade her sex organs for money was her envy for the cosmetic life style of her village girls who displayed wealth in what they wore and the manner in which they were hailed in their community.^{xxxiii} Just like in many other societies, many wanted to copy the examples of others and soon found themselves in prostitution in the major city of Bamenda. According to some, they envied their friends and decided to follow them in the same line of business especially as they considered other jobs hard to make money. Asuagbor(2004) quoting Finckenauer and Chin writes that some went into prostitution because “they were deceived or coerced into by their boyfriends or pimps or chickenheads especially those who were trafficked victims.”^{xxxiv} According to Tarh Ambrose, those men and women trafficked into towns like Bamenda, Douala and Kumba in the early 1960s to serve as house helps (domestic servants) shop keepers, cooks, and cleaners only saw themselves doing prostitution which was not initially part of their arrangements before they moved to these towns. While there, their mistresses or masters urged them to carry on with prostitution.^{xxxv} In the case of Bamenda, lazy boyfriends solicited customers for these types of girls and they acted as managers to their girlfriends. The men had to go out with wealthy women for money equally especially to satisfy the women who could not do without sex.

Other reasons that were advanced by respondents were the decline of social and economic activities in most communities around Bamenda. Frustrated by hardship and other setbacks, most women especially in the 1990s resorted to prostitution. Parents had to send their children to relations in town who in most cases did not cater for them properly and they ran out of home due to insufficient supply of needs and some due to physical as well as sexual abuse to live as prostitutes in order to survive.

Other respondents said the improvement in transport infrastructure and the cheap fare motivated them to move to Bamenda, spend time with friends and have fun. Good roads made them to do the “business” and easily move back home without any suspicion. To

^{xxxix} M. Eboteta, 58 years trader interviewed in Mamfe 22/01/2019.

^{xxxii} Idem

^{xxxiii} S. Yah, 30 years sex trader interviewed in Nkwem Bamenda 27/03/2019.

^{xxxiv} Asuagbor, “Commercial Sex”...,18.

^{xxxv} Ambrose Tarh 70 years retired Bank manager and traditional bone healing specialist, interviewed in Bamenda, 02/11/2018.

Patience, financial crisis at home pushed her to go to the streets of Bamenda in the 1990s, to easily assist her parents who were already old to work and support themselves.^{xxxvi}

To some, their involvement in commercialization of sex was due to cult discrimination (institutions rejected women in some cultures). This pushed women to the large Town of Bamenda where they could freely integrate, enjoy liberty (personal liberty as was the case with Bayang women in Bamenda). Widowhood also explained why some went into prostitution to be able to run the family and educate the children especially the younger women between eighteen and twenty five years who became widows. The dream of finding economic power and living a good life made some to become thigh workers. Barenness, lasciviousness, marrying young without exposure also motivated many to prostitute in Bamenda town. Thus, a subsistence way of life was therefore understood as a means to live the numerous strange situations in town not to be beggars on the streets of Bamenda, but found a means of making a living (prostitution). According to Juliet,

My position in the family was provoking; the family situation in our community was not good. So I had to think on how my mother and my siblings will survive, so I had to do sex work for money despite resistance from my mother to provide for them. I must confess that for twenty yes in the trade I achieved much.^{xxxvii}

Many of the girls had no parents, others lived with step parents and others with no family to care for them and these girls unfortunately had to face life realities as indicated by Chi and Laura (2011) and burdened with life demands had to do sex trade to meet up since the informal sector was unstable and farming failed some of the times.^{xxxviii} Genemo and Tito (2015) went further to also say that lack of education caused many girls to take prostitution as a trade.^{xxxix} To Monica Atem;

My step mother always asked me what I was doing at home when my friends were already out. At first I did not understand her until one day she told me I need to go sleep with men to have money or else there would be nothing to eat at home. I tried hard to resist but seeing the condition of the house, at seventeen years I started prostituting.^{xl}

Evolution of prostitution in Bamenda

The first thoughts and references to prostitution in Bamenda couldnot be easily traced but the idea to its character and spread was during the British rule. According to Ngoh, (2019) in 1938 when the Bamenda Division was created,^{xli} its population stood at 260,422. The growth was marched with urbanisation and the people according to culture were grouped into small communities of men and women and the men controlled and had monopoly over sex.^{xlii} The canal instincts of sexual intercourse and promiscuity in the town were only occasioned with habits that were brought in from other women from outside.

It was presumed that prostitution was imported into Bamenda but soon the environs embraced it and women used their sex organs as formidable weapons or commodities to

^{xxxvi} Patience, 50 years retired prostitute, interviewed in Bamenda, 1/04/2020.

^{xxxvii} M. Juliet 40 years, prostitute Bamenda, interviewed in Bamenda, 05/12/2019.

^{xxxviii} Mgbako Chi and Smith A. Laura, "Sex work and Human Rights in Africa. *Fordham International Law Journal* Vol.33, Issue 4 (2011):1179.

^{xxxix} Genemo Meaza and Tito B. Mesfin, "The Causes and Consequences of Child Commercial Sex Work in Arba Minich City, South Ethiopia *American Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2015,4(5):118.

^{xl} Monica Atem, 40 years, prostitute in Bamenda interviewed in Bamenda, 05/12/2019.

^{xli} V. J Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884- Present (2018) The History of a People* (Limbe: Design House, 2019),148.

^{xlii} Fomin, "Towards Deconstructing" ...p.7

make money in the urban area. In the 1940s right up to 1980s prostitution in the town was accompanied with leisure. In Abapkwa^{xliii} town (Bamenda) the center of enjoyment was at Ntambang (old town) where the heartbeat of the town was found. Here areas such as Golden Fleece bar, Makandee club, and New city hotel were hot spots. In 1962, "Ghana bar" owned by Jonas Puwoh popularly called 'Pa Guranti' a Bamileke business baron was also a place that harboured thigh workers. It should be noted that the street "Ghana Street" derived its name from this bar especially as it was within the time when Gold Coast the first African country south of the Sahara gained independence in 1957.^{xliiv} Other areas such as Happy day Hotel, Ideal park Hotel, Elderado snack bar, Cana sucre (Fon's street), People palace Hotel (PPH), Ring way Hotel, Ayaba Hotel, Monte Christo snack and club, Sky Line Hotel and others served as places for enjoyment (leisure) and this was accompanied by the presence of sex traders. Night clubs such as Njang night club, also becoming breeding centers for prostitutes (hunting grounds free women and rich men).

These areas were affiliated with prostitution and pimps (middle men/women) were always around and made acquaintance with owners of these leisure centers just like in other areas where sex industry was active like in France, Switzerland, Holland, Russia and Italy. This type of sex work that occurred in Bamenda was referred to as bar prostitution.^{xlv}

Brothel and hotel prostitution was rampant in the late 1980s because a grassfield person has a culture of protection. As time progressed as earlier mentioned, young girls from other tribes and ethnic groups moved into Bamenda with the prime motive of doing business that was not specified and in guise to this, did sex work. Bayang women who had migrated into the town in the early 1940s up to 1980s settled at old town Bamenda at a place called "Seven Door" which was a residential area for Bayang girls from Mamfe area. Just like "Nyangi" quarter in Douala, this was the heart of prostitution in Bamenda by then. The women were smart, beautiful and were ready to deliver the 'goods' upon payment what Lapiro de Mbanga a Cameroonian musician once sang and said "Money for hand back for ground." Meaning you paid money first before any sex activity. That was how it functioned and was in the individual rooms, inns, hotels or mortels. It should be noted that women from many tribes did prostitution at first (hiding) clandestinely. According to A. Joseph, they did not want to be shamed.^{xlvi}

Influenced by modernity, prostitution took another twist and the center moved from Bamenda center, old town (Mankon area) to Nkwen in the 1990s with the proliferation of leisure areas in Nkwen such as; Kakoli, one spirit, Rota snack bar and inn, Bush House, Chambo masters bar, Sun City snack, Binam snack, Jet Set snack, Ways snack bar, Sheraton and others. The sex workers also during the era of telephones (fixed and mobile) also practiced what was called "telephone prostitution". Some kept their contacts in hotels like Ayaba hotel, Mondial hotel, International hotel and others including photographs and they were called up by receptionists when customers needed their services. Ngwenon Charline, J. Mpula and others were actors of this type of sex work. The corridors between 'way in' Nkwen Park, Ghana Street (popularly called mobile Nkwen) and Cow Street became the new market areas. Sex

^{xliii} Abapkwa was the name given to the settlement established by the Hausa Moslems from Nigeria who moved from Upstation due to their activities during the British rule in British Southern Cameroon to down town to the area of Ntambang which was a reserved area for the Fon of Mankon. This area is present day Old Town from where the Town of Bamenda developed. Abapkwa to many refer to Bamenda a city in Cameroon.

^{xliiv} P. A. Kumase, 77 years, retired warder, interviewed at Ndamukong street Bamenda 25/02/2019.

^{xlv} M. Ngo Bakang, 63 years retired civil servant interviewed in Bamenda 01/04/2020

^{xlvi} Joseph Agwa 65 years inhabitant of Old Town Bamenda interviewed in Old Town 12/12/2019.

work in these areas like in most parts of the world began in the early hours of the evening and by 6 am in the morning most of them had gone into their homes (hide outs) but could still entertain clients.

These sex workers during the period mention above were mostly “road side” prostitutes’ ready to be “hired” and never loved going to hotels or inns for fear of being killed by occults who were clients due to numerous stories about occultists. Those along these corridors appeared most of the time almost naked exposing their breast, thighs and to some extent their bare buttocks. They seduced customers and veiled them from reasoning and extorted goods sums from them through parole which was a base for negotiation.

Most respondents opined that Bamenda town did not only tolerate prostitution but also in a way protected the institution by way of not rejecting it when it began in the early 1940s. They argued that as time went on in the early 2000s, a new batch of prostitutes emerged and these were the low class (common prostitutes who slept with anyone who paid her) who appeared dirty at times, some owned rooms around the popular drinking places around mobile Nkwen which were used as outlets for their acts. Young girls voluntarily prostituted and at times were trafficked^{xlvi} by men and women into town to do prostitution for them. As pointed out by Schulze,(2014) migrants^{xlvi} were those mostly involved in prostitution in most parts of the world just like in Bamenda where girls came from Kom, Nkambe, Bali, Nso, Baf-wum, Bamum, and Mamfe areas and their looks and body language could not hide their profession or what they “sell.” The price was a thousand francs for a “round”^{xlvi} but was not very stable because others took less this was for the common prostitute and the price was different with those who were called to spend a night with but the range was from five thousand francs.

Mobile Nkwen became a place where decent people shunned just like the seven door area in the early 1960s right up to early 1980s. The argument here was virtually a moral one as people feared stigma in as much as they went to such areas in town at particular periods of the day. Just like in Paris, Brussels, New York, Geneva, Rome, Douala, Yaounde, Bafoussam and Bamenda, brothels, hotels and inns worked hand in gloves with prostitution. Esong (2019) says that sex workers of the computer era just like some in Bamenda have online pages where nude pictures, telephone contacts and their price list are posted.¹

Table 1: Prostitutes and their origins from 1950-1980 approximated

Tribe	Number	Percentage
Bayang	10	33.3
Nso	08	26.7
Bamum	05	16.7
Nkambe	03	10

^{xlvi} Farley Melissa, “Prostitution and the Invisibility of Harm” *Women and Therapy* 2003, 26(3/4):4.

^{xlvi} Schulze Erika et al., “Sexual Exploitation and Prostitution and its Impact on Gender Equality” A Report to the Directorate General for Internal Policies, Policy Department C: Citizens Rights and Constitutional Affairs. 2014, 8.

^{xlvi} A round here refers to the moment a customer ejaculations but there were moments when the round did not come as anticipated and the customers at times deliberately delayed and it ended up in quarrels and pimps had to come in to seize their prostitute from the customer.

¹ Liengu Etaka Esong “New niche :online Prostitution Gets Higher” <https://www.cameroon-tribune.cm> accessed 20/08/2019.

Bikom	02	6.6
Bali	02	6.7
Total	30	100

Source: data collected (approximated) by researcher through an Interview with Rose M. 2019.

From table 1 above, Bayang top the chart with 33.3% followed by Nso with eight persons scoring 26.7%, then Bamum with five with a score of 16.7 % Nkambe with three scoring 10%, Bikom two and had 6.6%, Bali two with 6.7%. A keen look at the table also revealed that those into this sex trade were not from Bamenda central area itself but generally from outside and this provided them with some anonymity even though many families know what their daughters were into.

Table 2: Prostitutes and their tribe of origin 2000-2015 (mobile Nkwen corridors)

Tribe	Number	Percentage
Bikom (Kom)	08	26.7
Nso	05	16.7
Nkambe	08	26.7
Bamileke	04	13.3
Ewondo	03	10
Mankon	01	03.3
Nkwen	01	03.3
	30	100

Source: Field Survey by author at Mobile Nkwen 20/01/2015.

From table 2, much changed from 1990 as other tribes came into the sex industry and changed the order of the trade. Bikom and Nkambe had eight and scored 26%, Nso with five with 16.7% Bamileke four and scored 13.3%, Ewondo three and scored 10%, Mankon and Nkwen with one each with percentage of 0.3%. This corroborates Schulze's (2014) argument that most prostitutes were migrants.^{li}

Challenges to this sex trade in Bamenda

Cameroon as a nation had a character of control in all aspects. Though often said it's a nation with great attractions when it came to women, the laws of Cameroon criminalises prostitution and sanctioned even promoters. Due to the heavy hand of the law in this sector it was a serious challenge to these sex traders. Section 294 of the penal code titled immoral earnings says that; whoever procures aids or facilitates another persons' prostitution or shares in the proceeds of another's prostitution... or who is subsidised by any person engaging in prostitution shall be punished with imprisonment from six months to five years and with a fine from 20,000 to 1,000,000 francs^{lii} (Penal Code 2016). In another clause, it states that, whoever lives with a person engaged in prostitution shall be presumed to be subsidized by her unless he shows his own resources are sufficient to enable him support himself.^{liii} The

^{li} Schulze et al., "Sexual Exploitation and Prostitution and its Impact on Gender Equality" ...8.

^{lii} Penal Code Law No 2016/007 of 12 July 2016, 92.

^{liii} Ibid

offence is accompanied by coercion as by fraud... or where he is the owner, manager or otherwise in charge of an establishment where prostitution is habitually practised. It went further to say there is punishment where the offence has been committed to the detriment of any person under the age of twenty-one.

Section 294(7) targeted pimping to outright sex trafficking where the sex trader is not treated as accessory.^{liv} In section 295, the law was to punish those who committed indecent act in the presence of people without their consent^{lv} like having oral sex in bars, sex at the road side for those with no rooms and want “quickies”. These persons were punished by the law. Section 343 on prostitution stipulated that; any person of either sex who habitually engages in sexual relations with another person for remuneration shall be sentenced to six months to five years imprisonment and a fine of 20,000 to 500,000francs. The same sanction is applied to those who for purpose of prostitution publicly solicit persons of either sex through gestures, words expressed orally or written or by any means.^{lvi} As a result of these laws, sex workers had stayed mute when assaulted due to the illegality of their business. As reliably informed, the forces of law and order at times when out to such areas, sent by the authorities or acting on their own often extorted money from these prostitutes and the unlucky ones taken for the law to take its course. As reported by some sex workers, in most cases to avoid going to prison they negotiated sex with the uniform men for free and on such days they might go home without a dime. According to Anwi, this situation made rape and theft from their clients and even assaults very common on them because they operated illegally.^{lvii}

In spite of the gain derived from prostitution, most of them have been stigmatised^{lviii} (Goffman 1963) and discriminated in society vis-à-vis their families. Even more important was the fact that prostitution was regarded in the area as a “taboo”, a dirty business and usually carried out by “badly brought up children.” Many were abused and all sorts of names given them such as *ashawo*^{lix} others *akwara* to some *public toilet, sans calison* and to many from the year 2008, it was *waker*^{lx} *nkolo ya more*.^{lxi} Some people identified them as *wandering beings, harlots* and the book of Ezekiel (16:28-34) corroborates the wandering nature of a prostitute.^{lxii} The trade was dehumanising but they shunned shame continued the trade. To some respondents, they acted as retailers in a market place because no one will come to marry them but were there to satisfy those who want to quench their sex fire. This affected the lives of many even after they had abandoned the practice.

^{liv} Ibid; 93

^{lv} Ibid

^{lvi} Ibid;115

^{lvii} Anwi, 34 years (at the time of interview) prostitute interviewed in Bamenda, 20/01/2015

^{lviii} Elvin Goffman, *Stigma-Notes on the Management of Spoiled Ideality*. (New Jersey: Penguin Books, 1963), 63.

^{lix} Ashawo is a Nigerian pidgin slang used to refer to a prostitute or sex worker. It was mostly used as an abuse to address the women in sex trade and anyone who exposes the body parts as the sex worker do to attract clients on the streets and where ever they were found.

^{lx} Waker was a pidgin English way of describing someone who was not steady and was always on the move changing several positions within a short space of time. It was derived from the English word walk or to make move. There was always this movement to meet a client as well as gesticulation with feet to expose or present their body parts that to them could catch the attention of those who need them.

^{lxi} Nkolo ya more was the local parlance which meant with a thousand francs you get sex from the prostitutes since their fixed price was a thousand especially for the common prostitutes.

^{lxii} The Good News Bible: (The United Bible Societies, Second Edition, 1994), 853.

This study also found out that pimps at times became dubious and treated the prostitutes under their care poorly and even with threats of life. While some clients mounted pressure on the sex workers especially in carrying out activities that they do not want, their pimps because of money urged them to do so.

Florence narrated a situation when she just got into the business as follows;

I did not like clients who were alcoholic, smokers and young but one day I had a middle age man who was connected to me by a man popularly called “Eboa Solo” in Dallas Snack bar. He needed a “quicky” in his car, unprotected, and above all anal which I had never done with any client. I denied and threw back the bank note Eboa Solo had slipped into my breast and the man said he paid more. Eboa Solo threatened me and I only had to do other services to the clients who later paid well.^{lxiii}

Another great challenge was the presence semi (or part time) prostitutes (those who did not take prostitution as a job but were into other things but from time to time went into the sex trade to have quick money). They caused stiff competition as they were younger, beautiful and took just any amount and at times needed just food to eat. This was the case with students from some higher institutions of learning in the area who did prostitution just to cope with life. Others were secondary and high school students from the schools around town such as Longla Comprehensive College, City College of Commerce, Progressive Comprehensive High School Bamenda, Comprehensive High School Bambui and others. This group with their inexperience, and their desire to have money to satisfy their needs took just any amount at times from the flat rate of a thousand (1000) francs and this resulted to fighting for clients especially in spots like Titanic snack bar, Concord snack, Bikutsi snack bar, Denver casino bar, Sun city bar and others. At times fight with clients occurred because the expected services were not provided by the workers and the clients demanded a refund of their money. J. Still (2014) quotes Belinda saying “To some extent, some groups of prostitutes were very organised”^{lxiv} and would not go fighting over a client who had approached his choice just like in other parts of the world.

The trade in sexual services operated in spatial perspective that even the sex worker had very little control over her morals but found themselves doing unimagined things with clients because of money. They were often related with diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhoea and skin diseases such as eczema and scabies. This was also associated with stigma and unchastely blamed on the women and some transgendered (GT) men. This hampered their activities too for a while especially when accompanied by fever they had to stay at home for treatment and it added to their misery because they are not on the streets, (no money for treatment for some) and some in that state still went out for their sexual practices and distributed the disease to more clients. HIV/AIDS only came in the 1980s to worsen the situation and many clients still opted and paid very high for unprotected sex with the prostitutes some called dirty^{lxv} (Gould 2008). As opined by De Zaluondo, (1991) multiple sex relation accounts for the spread of HIV/AIDS in most countries south of the Sahara.^{lxvi}

^{lxiii} Florence 38 years (at the time of interview) prostitute interviewed in Bamenda 11/11/2015.

^{lxiv} Still Judith, “Identifying Effective Social Work Practices in Response to Prostitution” (Master Thesis in Gender Studies, Lund University, 2014),9.

^{lxv} C. Gould, *selling sex in Cape Town: sex work and Human Trafficking in a South African city*. (South Africa: Institute for security studies 2008), 69.

^{lxvi} De Zaluondo B., “Prostitution Viewed Cross-Culturally: Towards Recontextualizing Sex Work in AIDS Intervention Research Sex” *The Journal of Sex Research* Vol.28, No.2 (May 1991):223.

The greatest challenge they had was the absence of a sex worker unions like in areas where prostitution is legalised. This caused great difficulties for sex work in Bamenda. This is so because the prostitutes faced multifaceted problems and the absence of law or association, or feminist organisation or agency to protect them only brought them more pain. Abuse, physical and psychological violence and coercion and even police harassment had not been regarded as Human Right Abuse. Rough boys (mboko or nanga mboko) night watchmen and gangs exploited them, drugged and raped^{lxvii} (Joanna 2000) some without use of preservatives. They had kept their worries and frustrations to themselves and functioned in pain. To Rachel, “sex work is a possibility to finance oneself and I valued my sex organs very high so that I can always have enough money to fight my way since it is dangerous for us due to no association”^{lxviii}.

Some have received fake bank notes as payment and coin which were counterfeit from clients. To some, they were tricked and not paid the full negotiated amount and were threatened with death. According to Rosa, some responsible client took me for a trip to Yaounde and promised to pay my balance after the trip but upon return to Bamenda he disappeared but I had 50,000francs from the trip though he used me twice a day for ten days^{lxix}.

Implications of Prostitution in Bamenda Town

Prostitution had a broad array of consequences on the sex workers themselves, their clients, their families and the society. In reality, the risk involved in their quest for money and a strategy for survival was unimaginable.

Some of the women and men who migrated into Bamenda town in search for a better life through ‘sex trade’ subsequently found it worthy as it paid off especially those who made up their minds to prostitute as a trade. Those who also had in mind to go into prostitution as a way to do businesses also succeeded to an extent. It facilitated many to have the finance to engage in other economic ventures such as hair dressing (salon) real estate, agriculture in large scale, transport business and many others. In the 1970s and 1980s, individuals like Ojong Pauline, Tabi Ebob, Ayuk Noline, Awu Mary, Monica T. and Agbor Alice all of Bayang origin had acquired lands, opened up cacao farms, some bought cars for transportation all from prostitution in Bamenda.^{lxx} Many built houses and furnished them for their families with money earned as sex traders. Others with business interest took to petite trade while others became suppliers of house hold utensils from Nigeria and loins such as *wax, holland, lace* and other beautiful clothes.^{lxxi} Off-licenses, restaurants were also set up by some which became new venues for sex work an example was ‘Makandee club a bar and restaurant owned by Okeke Rose at old town who was also a sex worker.’^{lxxii} This fact is further supported by Andri’s statement that; “urban women carried out other economic

^{lxvii} Phoenix Joanna, “Prostitute Identities: Men, Money and violence” *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol.40, Issue1,(January 2000):51.

^{lxviii} Rachel 42 years prostitute interviewed in Yaounde 19/05/2018.

^{lxix} Rosa 30 years prostitute in Bamenda interviewed in Bamenda 12/04/2020.

^{lxx} A. Argatha . 70 years retired post and Telecommunication worker interviewed in Bamenda, 04/01/2019.

^{lxxi} Idem

^{lxxii} B. Lum, 36 years a relation to Rose Okeke, interviewed in Nkwen Bamenda 07/04/2020.

activities coupled with prostitution.^{lxxiii} She also argued that those who were prostitutes in Old Town were unmarried women.^{lxxiv}

Many sponsored their kids and other family relations in schools and Universities both in Cameroon and abroad from the sexual services^{lxxv} (Cecile and Finstad 1992) they rendered. Mbiwane Margrette sponsored four of her relatives in the 1970s in the University of Yaounde the lone University in Cameroon at the time. Furthermore, many trained their siblings as carpenters, mechanics, and tailors and gave them the opportunities to become independent through the various trades they learned and it proved their success in their urban ventures.

The virtual and the actual life posed by these workers earned them some fortune. After having a particular client for some time opened up to them and were taken out of the street into homes as married women and men. Margrette got married to Tibang in the 1970s as a prostitute and a Bamoun boy by name Atine hooked up with an older woman from the prostitution corridors and the lady married and sponsored him.^{lxxvi}

Though sex work was criticized, many families and young girls saw the business as profitable and voluntarily accompanied some of their friends and relatives to Bamenda. Many women also trafficked young girls to town. A good example was ‘mami Yanou’ of Nso origin who had a brothel and brought in many young girls who became workers for her and at the same time served as prostitutes for Nigerian drivers and other visitors who had fun with them.^{lxxvii} She also did so because she wanted to push the Bayang women out of business who were very beautiful though ageing and many still loved going to ‘seven door.’^{lxxviii} Bringing in young Nso and Kom girls, she hijacked the trade and finally caused older women to go on retirement or out of business.

In relation to the above point, it caused many older women to resort to the use of charms,^{lxxix} (Robert 2011) magic and other devices to attract clients. William (1858) in his work “the History of Prostitution” holds that in ancient China and Roman Empire prostitutes used “philters”^{lxxx} to have and keep customers. This was a common practice with prostitutes in Bamenda of the various generations and they used fetish. Some sought for powers and some used herbs and portions on clients. Magic was often resorted to solve problems just like in other societies where prostitution occurred and these prostitutes consulted herbalists as well to fight the penile of trade. In the same line, sorcerers emerged and women had to consult them for magic and even fortune telling an act which has remained till this age. Charline said;

^{lxxiii} Van Den Berg Andri, *Women in Bamenda: Survival Strategies and Access to Land* (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 1992),43.

^{lxxiv} Ibid

^{lxxv} Hoigard. Cecile and Liv Finstad Backsreets: *Prostitution, Money, and Love*(USA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992),60 .

^{lxxvi} O. Remy, 50 years, business man an inhabitant of Old Town, interviewed in Bamenda, 28/01/2019.

^{lxxvii} Rose Mofor,84 years one of the first inhabitants of Old Town interviewed at Old Town Bamenda, 21/03/2019.

^{lxxviii} Seven doors was the center for prostitution in Bamenda at Old Town. The name came as a result of the structure which hosted the Bayang prostitutes in the early 1950s and the structure had seven sleeping rooms with outer doors which were seven in number.

^{lxxix} Knapp C. Robert, *Invisible Romans, Prostitutes Outlaws, Slaves, Gladiators and Ordinary Men and Women...The Roman That History Forgot* (Britain: Profile Books Ltd, 2011),76-82.

^{lxxx} Sanger W. William, *The History of Prostitution Its Extent, Causes, and Effects Throughout the World*(New York: Harper and Brothers, 1858),37.

I consulted a woman at old town who gave me charm and some concoction to always use on my clients in order to keep them. Since I am not like those on the streets and dark corners, when called by a client I rub the concoction and take my charm along. That was the only way I had huge sums of money of about 50,000 just for a night and some rich men after spending a few days with them paid me off with 100,000 or 150,000 thousands francs and I am sure it was due to my charm on them.^{lxxxix}

Another landmark result of prostitution was that of stigmatization^{lxxxii} (Pintah 2014) which kept many out of associations or village *njangi* groups and family meetings, marriages. The various names^{lxxxiii} (Shahid 2013) called them harmed them psychologically and caused many to find solace in drugs which was harmful and dangerous to their health. Tramadol was used to by many in the mid-2000s to be bold amidst insults while others took the drug to withstand many clients and violent sex from some clients without getting tired or experience serious body pains. The drug just like weed that most consumed, later caused more harm to them.

Sexually transmitted diseases(STD) such as syphilis,^{lxxxiv} (William 1858) gonorrhoea and even HIV/AIDS^{lxxxv} (Pratima and Jenny 2000) had been easily spread through prostitution^{lxxxvi} (Bhunu 201) just like in Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, France, USA, Italy, Switzerland and other areas where prostitution is done. As pointed out by Farly and Kelly, STDs and HIV were associated with misuse of alcohol and drug^{lxxxvii} (Malissa and Vanessa 2000) and refusal to report status to clients and vice versa. According to Rose, a sex worker, she was infected with an STD (gonorrhoea) in 2008 by a client who just arrived town and paid high to have unprotected sex.^{lxxxviii} This concurs with Monterrubio (2019) argument that “tourism and individual behaviour might have an impact on sex workers”.^{lxxxix} Promiscuous sex life of some men associated with ‘Mobile Nkwen’ had ruined and scattered families with diseases carried home and spread in the community.^{xc} In Bamenda just like in other parts of the world, diseases contracted through prostitution had caused death especially HIV/AIDS. According to Grace N., most of the pronounced prostitutes of the 1980s around Ghana Street had all died from the pandemic.^{xci} The disease was ignorantly attributed to “slow poison” others called it “musong” an appellation in the Duala language and some said they were bewitched by other prostitutes and neglected going to hospitals and they died.^{xcii}

^{lxxxix} Charline 30 years prostitute interviewed in Bamenda 10/01/2019.

^{lxxxii} Nkala P. Printah “Factors That Influenced the Increase of Prostitution in Bulawayo’s Business Centre” *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Volume 19, Issue 6, Ver IV(June 2014):72.

^{lxxxiii} Qayyum Shahid, “Causes and Decision of Women’s Involvement”...,409.

^{lxxxiv} Sanger W. William, *The History of Prostitution Its Extent, Causes, and Effects Throughout the World...*,50

^{lxxxv} Poudel Pratima and Carryer Jenny, “Girl Trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and the position of Women in Nepal” *Gender and Development* Vol.8, No.2(July 2000):75.

^{lxxxvi} C.P. Bhunu et al., “Exploring the Impact of Prostitution on HIV/AIDS Transmission” *Internationally Scholarly Research Notices*, Volume (2014):2.

^{lxxxvii} Farly Melissa and Kelly Vanessa, “Prostitution: A Critical Review of the Medical and Social Sciences” *Women and Criminal Justice* 2000, Vol.11,(4):4.

^{lxxxviii} Rose 39 years prostitute in Bamenda interviewed in Bamenda 23/01/2020.

^{lxxxix} Monterrubio Carlos, “Tourism and male homosexual identities: Directions for Sociocultural research” *Tourism Review* Vol. 74, Issue 5,(November 2019): 1059.

^{xc} P. Haveripeth, “Prostitution and Its Impact on Society- A Criminology Perspective” *International Research Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol.2(3) March (2013):36

^{xci} N. Grace, 60 years, retired journalist interviewed at Ntamulung, 5/07/2019.

^{xcii} Idem

In spite of the economic gains brought in by prostitutes to the snack bars and casino owners around Nkwen and the parts of the town, they equally were responsible for some criminal behaviour in the town. This study revealed that many sex workers indulged into crimes such as armed robbery, stealing (from clients and society), drug trafficking (marijuana especially Nso women) and abandonment of children at home^{xciii}(Abdullahi 2015) like elsewhere in Africa where prostitutes do same. Some even engaged in murder, scamming and other illegal businesses all due to their insatiable quest to have money. Abortions^{xciv}(Shahid 2013) were common and many drugged clients to steal from them (dropped portions in drinks).

CONCLUSION

In Bamenda, prostitution is a social fabric which was carefully webbed in the community though an illegal and criminal activity. The flesh trade of selling the body for financial and material compensation had multifaceted motives. To some it was to make money and for survival, others became prostitutes due to family constraints, poverty, genetic and large sex appetite, peer association, childhood abuse, trafficking and forceful initiation by friends. From the research, it was realised that disease, rape, imprisonment were some of the challenges the 'flesh traders' witnessed. From the forgoing, it was also noted that the trade gave those involved mental and psychological problems especially with the wrong use of drugs. There was increased criminality, occasioned trafficking, and it also brought unwanted pregnancies and caused diseases like syphilis, gonorrhoea with HIV/AIDS being the most deadly. Many gained materially and financially, helped families and above all contributed to the education of siblings and other family children opportunities most of them never had. The benefits from the trade have caused many to go into prostitution and had cared less about their health for in the trade money came first. From the lens of many, the government of Cameroon would fight the activity but might not eliminate it because prostitution is masked and its moral and social threats only has much to be resolved in the Country and Bamenda in particular.

^{xciii} K.G. Abdullahi "The Socio-Economic Factors and Effects of Prostitution in Nigeria" *European Journal of Research in Social Sciences* Vol.3, No.5,(2015):76.

^{xciv} Qayyum S. et al, "Causes and Decision of Women's Involvement" ...407

REFERENCES

Books

- [1]. Adri, Van Den Berg (1992). *Women in Bamenda: Survival Strategies and Access to Land*. Leiden: African Studies Centre.
- [2]. Anarfi, J.K.(1998). "Ghanian women and prostitution in Cote d'Ivoire" in *Global sex Workers: Rights, Resistance and Redefinition*, edited by Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema .New York: Routledge.
- [3]. Cecile, Hoigard and Finstad Liv (1992). *Backstreets: Prostitution, money, and Love*. USA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- [4]. Goffman, Elvin (1963). *Stigma-Notes on the Management of Spoiled Ideality*. New Jersey: Penguin Books.
- [5]. Gould, C. (2008). *Selling Sex in Cape Town: Sex Work and Human Trafficking in a South African city*. South Africa: Institute for Security Studies.
- [6]. Miller,J. (2009). "Prostitution" in the *Handbook of Crime and Public Policy*, edited by Michael Tonry New York: Oxford University Press.
- [7]. Ngoh, Julius Victor (2019). *Cameroon 1884- Present (2018) The History of a People*. Limbe: Design House.
- [8]. Nina, Persak. (2014). *Reframing Prostitution: From Discourse to Description, from Moralisation to Normalisation*(ed)(Portland: Muklu Publishers.
- [9]. Penttinen, E. (2007). *Globalisation, prostitution and Sex Trafficking*. NewYork: Routledge.
- [10]. Robert, C. Knapp (2011). *Invisible Romans, Prostitutes, Outlaws, Slaves, Gladiators and Ordinary Men and Women...The Roman That History Forgot*. Britain: Profile Books Ltd.
- [11]. The Good News Bible (1994). The United Bible Societies, Second Edition.
- [12]. William, W. Sanger (1858). *The History of Prostitution Its Extent, Causes, and Effects Throughout the World*. New York: Harper and Brothers.

Articles/ Journals

- [13]. Abdullahi, K.G. (2015). "The Socio-Economic Factors and Effects of Prostitution in Nigeria." *European Journal of Resaerch in Social Sciences*, 3(5) :70-83.
- [14]. Babara, De Zalduondo B., "Prostitution Viewed Cross-Culturally: Towards Recontextualizing Sex Work in AIDS Intervention Research Sex." *The Journal of Sex Research*, 28(2) (May 1991):223-248.
- [15]. Barrett, D and Beckett, W. (1996). "Child Prostitution: reaching out to children who sell sex to survive." *British Journal of Nursing*, 5(18):1120-1125.
- [16]. Bhunu C.P.(2014). "Exploring the Impact of Prostitution on HIV/AIDS Transmission." *Internationally Scholarly Research Notices*, Volume (2014):1-10.
- [17]. Calhoun, T. and Weaver, G. (1996). "Rational Decision Making among Male Street Prostitutes." *Deviant Behaviour*, 17:209-227.
- [18]. Carlos, Monterrubio. (2019). "Tourism and male homosexual identities: Directions for Sociocultural research." *Tourism Review*, 74(5), 1058-1069.

- [19]. Chi, Mgbako and Laura, A.Smith. (2011). "Sex Work and Human Rights in Africa. *Fordham International Law Journal*, 33(4) :1178-1220.
- [20]. Christine, Overall.(1992). "What's Wrong with Prostitution? Evaluating Sex Work." *Signs Journal of Women in Culture*, 17, 705-724.
- [21]. Fomin,E.S.D. (2016). "Towards Deconstructing the Prostitution Stigma on Female Banyang Migrants of Cameroon, 1930-1984." *Pantikar Journal of History*, 3(4), 1-20.
- [22]. Haveripeth, Prakash. (2013). "Prostitution and Its Impact on Society- A Criminology Perspective." *International Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(3), 31-39.
- [23]. Joanna, Phoenix. (2000). "Prostitute Identities: Men, Money and violence." *British Journal of Criminology*, 40(1), 37-55.
- [24]. McCaghy, C.H. and Hou, C. (1994). "Family Affiliations and Prostitution in a Cultural Context: Career onsets of Taiwanese prostitutes." *Archives of Sexual Behaviour*, 23(3):251-265.
- [25]. Meaza, Genemo and Mesfin Balgu Tito. (2015). "The Causes and Consequences of Child Commercial Sex Work in Arba Minich City, South Ethiopia." *American Journal of Applied Psychology*, 4(5):115-119.
- [26]. Melissa, Farley. (2003). "Prostitution and the Invisibility of Harm." *Women and Therapy*, 26(3/4):1-39.
- [27]. Melissa, Farley and Vanessa, Kelly. (2000). "Prostitution: A Critical Review of the Medical and Social Sciences." *Women and Criminal Justice*, 11(4):1-45.
- [28]. Pratima, Poudel and Jenny, Carryer. (2000). "Girl Trafficking, HIV/AIDS, and the position of Women in Nepal." *Gender and Development*, 8(2), 74-79.
- [29]. Printah, P.Nkala. (2014). "Factors That Influenced the Increase of Prostitution in Bulawayo's Business Centre." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19(6), Ver IV, 65-74.
- [30]. Shahid, Qayyum et al. (2013). "Causes and Decision of Women's Involvement into Prostitution and its Consequences in Punjab, Pakistan." *Academic Research International*, 4(5), 398-411.
- [31]. Wahab, Stehanie. (2002). "For Their Own Good": Sex, Work, Social Control and Social Workers, a Historical Perspective. *The Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 29(4). 39-57.

Thesis/Dissertations

- [32]. Asuagbor, D. (2004). "The commercial sex Industry in Douala, Cameroon: A Qualitative Investigation. Doctorate Thesis, University of New Jersey USA.
- [33]. Besong, S. A. (2018). "Social and Economic activities of Bamenda Central Prison Inmates, 1924-2013. Masters dissertation in History, the University of Bamenda.
- [34]. Fombe, F. L.(1983). "The Bamenda Urban Space: Evolution and Organisation" a memoir for a post graduate Diploma DIPES II in Geography, University of Yaounde.
- [35]. Judith, Still. (2014). "Identifying Effective Social Work Practices in Response to Prostitution". Masters Thesis in Gender Studies, Land University.
- [36]. Takor, K. Nixon. (2011). "The Bamenda Grasslands in Long Distance Trade C. 1850-1981: Evolutionary Dynamics, socio-Economic and political Transmutation". Doctorate Thesis in History, University of Yaounde I.

Interviews

- [37]. Agarth, A. 70 years retired Post and Telecommunication worker interviewed in Bamenda, 04/01/2019.
- [38]. Anwi, 34 years (at the time of interview) prostitute interviewed in Bamenda, 20/01/2015.
- [39]. Atem, Monica, 40 years, prostitute in Bamenda interviewed in Bamenda, 05/12/2019.
- [40]. Charline 30years prostitute interviewed in Bamenda 10/01/2019.
- [41]. Eboteta, M. 58 years trader interviewed in Mamfe, 22/01/2019.
- [42]. Florence 38 years (at the time of interview) prostitute interviewed in Bamenda, 11/11/2015.
- [43]. Gillian, A. 36 years sex worker interviewed in Bamenda, 04/01/2019.
- [44]. Grace, N. 60 years, retired journalist interviewed at Ntamulung, 5/07/2019.
- [45]. Juliet, M. 40 years, prostitute Bamenda, interviewed in Bamenda, 05/12/2019.
- [46]. Kumase, P. A. 77 years, retired warder, interviewed at Ndamukong Street Bamenda, 25/02/2019.
- [47]. Mimi 34 years prostitute interviewed in Bamenda, 10/01/2015.
- [48]. Mofor, Rose. 84 years one of the first inhabitants of Old Town interviewed at Old Town Bamenda 21/03/2019.
- [49]. Ngo, Bakang M. 63 years retired civil servant interviewed in Bamenda, 01/04/2020.
- [50]. Patience, 50 years retired prostitute, interviewed in Bamenda, 1/04/2020.
- [51]. Rachel 42 years prostitute interviewed in Yaounde, 19/05/2018.
- [52]. Remy O., 50 years, business man an inhabitant of Old Town, interviewed in Bamenda 28/01/2019.
- [53]. Rosa 30 years prostitute interviewed in Bamenda, 12/04/2020.
- [54]. Tarh, Ambois. 70 years retired Bank manager and traditional bone healing specialist, interviewed in Bamenda, 02/11/2018.
- [55]. Vincent, N. 76 years a retired driver and customer to prostitutes at old town, interviewed at old town Bamenda, 17/05/2020.
- [56]. Yah, S. 30years sex trader interviewed in Nkwen Bamenda, 27/03/2019.

Electronic source

- [57]. Esong, Etaka Liengu.(2019, August 20). “New Niche: online Prostitution Gets Higher” <https://www.cameroon-tribune.cm> accessed 20/08/2019.

Laws

- [58]. Cameroon Penal Code Law No 2016/007 of 12 July 2016.

Report

- [59]. Erika, Schulze et al.,(2014). “Sexual Exploitation and Prostitution and its Impact on Gender Equality” A Report to the Directorate General for Internal Policies, Policy Department C: Citizens Rights and Constitutional Affairs.