

The Root Causes of the Girl Prostitution in Tanzania. A Case of Arusha Municipality

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Abstract

Abject Poverty has been an impetus of girl child prostitution in many urban cities of Tanzania, Arusha Municipality being among them. In a research conducted in Arusha Municipality between January and July 2011, with the aim of investigating the main causes of persistence of girl child prostitution, a sample of 200 respondents was selected, whereby 100 young girls were involved in an indepth interview while another sample of 100 respondents drawn from different stakeholders was included in focus group discussions and other research methods utilized in the study. From the research it was discovered that about 80% of the girls interviewed were forced into prostitution by either their poor family situation or by other reasons like peer pressure, culture, parent lack of responsibility reasons, lack of employment, growth of the city and globalization. However, the study found out that the girls in prostitution face a lot of social, physical, psychological and health problems which require more actions from all stakeholders despite the little efforts currently done. It is thus from this study that the research team recommends that all stakeholder should join forces in enforcing laws and by laws which protect these young girls from the hands of cruel customers, pedophiles and pimps. Apart from that the research team emphasizes on the importance of counseling and sex education to the girls who lack self esteem and are hopeless without any skills to help them out of that situation.

Key words: Abject poverty, education, drug abuse, violence, globalization

1.0 Introduction

Child Prostitution is being condemned as the horrendous form of child exploitation by the international community. This is been stipulated in the ILO Convention 182 article 3 (b) which among others insists that the worst forms of child labour comprises of the use, procuring or offering of child for prostitution, for production of pornography or for pornographic performances (ILO, 2000). This is also emphasized by the International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and UNICEF who exclaims the zero tolerance these organizations have on exploitation of children in prostitution (ILO, 2001).

Despite child prostitution being announced as a serious violation of children's rights, it is still practiced rampantly worldwide as different research reports its existence in Asia, South America, Sub Saharan Africa and even in the global north. In a report produced by UNICEF (2003) it is reported that approximately one million children around the world are forced into prostitution every year and the number was beyond 10 million by the year 2004.

In Tanzania the situation has never been of the exception as lack of data does not give a clear picture on how many children are exploited sexually, but in a study done by ILO (2001) it is estimated that around 1500 children in Arusha, Mwanza and Dar es Salaam cities are exploited sexually due to different reasons.

Arusha being among the earmarked cities in Tanzania with child prostitution has pronounced number of young girls prostitutes. Many reasons have been mentioned for this, but among others abject poverty and increased sex tourism has been mentioned as the core cause of increased exploitation of young girls into commercial prostitution.

2.0 Problem Statement

Inspite of a number of dangers involved in pre pubertal or early pubertal sex, the business continue expanding quickly and remains importunate in different cities and towns in Tanzania i.e In Arusha, Mwanza, Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar and Singida to mention the few. The government being aware of the situation has only taken few actions towards pedophiles and exploitation of these young girls. Among the actions taken by the Tanzanian government is providing an enabling environment in policy and practical terms for international funding and to different stakeholders support them in all efforts striving in reducing the problem. Apart from that the government has put in place different acts and laws which redresses the situation such as the Sexual Offences Special Provision Act (SOSPA) of 1998, which stipulates that the consent for sexual activity is eighteen (18) years of age and above and not below that age unless the women involved is the wife of the male partner and is of age of fifteen (15) or more according to the Law of Marriage Act number 4 of 1971.

Notwithstanding the above efforts by the government, young girls and boys in Arusha and especially the

Municipality continue being exploited sexually uncontrollably as the influx of young girls into prostitution from the rural to the municipality is high compared to other regions (URT, 2010). In establishing the main causes for this situation, the Community Development Training Institute (CDTI – Tengeru) research team decided to investigate the main causes of the persistence of child prostitution in Arusha Municipal.

3.0 Physical Features and Activities of the Study Area

The study was conducted in Arusha Municipality is located on the Southern slopes of mount Meru which lies between 1450 and 1160 meters above sea level. The City is composed of rivers and numerous small streams which have their headwater on the slope of mount Meru or on different slopes surrounding the city (Wikipedia, 2010). The main activity in the region is agriculture, followed by industrial activities. Apart from that tourism is also a major contributor to the economy in Arusha, being the second largest contributor of income in Tanzania as it is located near the most popular national parks and game reserves in Africa.

Arusha harbours offices of the East Africa Community, and plays host to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights, all of which contributes to the local economy (Wikipedia 2010, URT 2011).

3.2 Research design

Research design used is case study and cross section data collection which involved collection of empirical data from the girl prostitutes, Ward Executive Officers, Community Development staff, social welfare staff, Mkombozi project (NGO), KIWOHEDE (NGO) and FARAJA (NGO), School teachers and Faith based leaders and primary and secondary school students.

3.3 Sample and Sampling techniques

3.3.1 Sample size

The research team conducted focus group discussions and interviews with Mkombozi Project coordination and staff, Ward Executive Officers, Community development officers, social welfare officers, KIWOHEDE staff, and girls involved in prostitution business, faith based leaders and elders. The sample size of the research interviewees was 200 respondents as seen in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Sample size distribution of the population

S/N	CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT	POSITION	TOOL	FREQUENCY /(200)
1	Municipal Community development team	MCDO/ Staff	FGD	7
2	Mkombozi	Management & Staff	FGD	5
3	KIWOHEDE	Management & Staff	FGD	3
4	FARAJA	Management & Staff	INTERVIEW	3
5	Ward Executive Office	Ward staff (Kaloleni, Daraja 2, Baraa, Unga Limited, Levulosi)	2 FGD & INTERVIEW	13
6	Girl Child prostitutes	(Kaloleni & Daraja Mbili)	FGD & INTERVIEW	100
7	Faith Based Leaders	(Kaloleni & Daraja Mbili)	INTERVIEW	4
8	Street Leaders	(Kaloleni & Daraja Mbili)	FGD	19
9	Mayor and Councilors	Municipality Officers	FGD	6
10	Municipal Director		Interview	1
11	Secondary School	Staff	FGD	7
12	Primary School	Staff	FGD	13
13	Students		Interview	19
	Total			200

Source: Arusha Survey, 2011

3.3.2 Sampling techniques

The research team employed different sampling techniques to capture enough information whereby both probability and non probability sampling was employed in selecting respondents. Under probability sampling the researchers used simple random sampling techniques to ensure that all categories of affected parties are included in the study. On another hand in non probability sampling the purposive sampling technique was employed to select the staff from community development office and the other stakeholders.

3.4 Methods of data collection

Due to complexity of the study in question, the research used various methods including focus group discussions, interviews, observations, documentation and transect walks. The researchers considered different characteristics of the respondents before determining the proper method for data collection.

3.5 Data analysis

Data obtained from the field was quantified using descriptive statistics and the results obtained afterwards were entered into the statistical package for social science (SPSS) for further analysis.

4.0 PRESENTATION OF FIELD FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study was conducted in Arusha Municipality between January and July 2011 in different wards such as Kaloleni, Levulosi, Baraa, Unga Limited, Daraja Mbili and Sokoni One. From the research, it was generally found out that girl child prostitution is actually among the challenges facing the city authorities and the community as a whole, as many girls were found by the research involving themselves in prostitution. Specifically, this chapter will be presenting and discussing the finding from the field in accordance to research questions.

4.1 Respondents and Customers

4.1.1 Age distribution of girls in prostitution

From the research conducted, it was found out that, girls get involved in prostitution as early as they are eleven years of age as shown in the table below.

Table 4.1: Age distribution of girls interviewed

S/N	Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
1	10 -12	2(100)	2
2	12-14	14(100)	14
3	14-16	30(100)	30
4	16-18	52(100)	52
5	Above 18	2(100)	2
	TOTAL	100	100

Source: Field findings 2011

Referring to table 4.1 above, it is clear that the majority of girls in prostitution business are within the age group of 16 to 18 years of age currently though they claim to have started involving into sexual activities at a rather tender age of ten years or below.

4.1.2 Place of Origin

The results show that, girls in prostitution in Arusha municipality come from different parts of the country and even in neighboring countries like Kenya and Uganda. Table 4.2 below, shows that the majority of girls originate from neighboring regions of Singida, Manyara and Dodoma.

Table 4.2: Place of origin of girls

S/N	DISTRICT	PERCENTAGE
1	Singida	28
2	Babati	20
3	Kondoa	16
4	Mbulu	14
5	Karatu	6
6	Arusha Rural	6
7	Iringa	4
8	Rombo	2
9	Others	4
	Total	100

Source: Field Findings 2011

4.1.3 Level of education

Table 4.3 shows the level of education attained by 100 girl prostitutes interviewed during the research.

Table 4.3 Level of education of girls

S/N	LEVEL OF EDUCATION	PERCENTAGE
1	Never attended	8
2	Attended Primary education but did not complete	12
3	Completed Primary Education	62
4	Attended Secondary Education but did not complete	12
5	Completed Secondary Education	6
	TOTAL	100

Source: Field findings 2011

It is clear from table 4.3 that, the majority of the girls in the study have completed primary education but did not continue with secondary education due to various reasons such as pregnancies, early marriage, and poverty.

4.1.4 Type of customers

On the demand side, the type of buyers involves both local and foreign customers as itemized below.

Table 4.4: Customers

S/N	LOCAL CUSTOMERS	FOREIGN CUSTOMERS
	Bussiness man i.e shop owners, traders	Truck drivers
	Night club officials	Tourists
	Girl relatives	Expatriates i.e United Nation officials, East Africa
	Drivers (Taxi & Truck)	Community officials
	Police officers	Business men from neighboring countries i.e Uganda,
	Civil servants	Kenya, Rwanda
	Security guards/ watchmen	
	Miners	

Source: Field findings 2011

4.1.5 Location and Time

Prostitution is done during both the day and night time. The time only varies depending on the place the business takes place. From the research conducted it was clearly spoken that business during the day takes place in bars, local brew (*pombe*) shops, guest houses and brothels while during the night the business moves to night clubs, streets, disco and dance clubs even in public places and brothels. In Arusha Municipality, the following spots were identified as business places; Kaloleni streets close to *Mrina* Bar, Shivers night club, Picnic bar, *Mawingu* disco club, *Masai* Pub, Triple "A", Crystal club, *Via Via* club, Area close to the clock tower, *Daraja Mbili* and *Unga* limited streets and local *pombe* shops.

4.2 Characteristics and behavior of girls in prostitution

Table 4.5 below shows some of the characteristics and behavior of girls as mentioned by respondents during the research in Arusha municipality.

Table 4.5: Characteristics and behavior of girl prostitutes

S/N	Behaviour	Frequency	Percentage
1	Thieves	12(20)	60
2	Smokers	8(20)	40
3	Drug addicts	6(20)	30
4	Violent	13(20)	65
5	Suicidal	5(20)	25

Source: Field findings 2011

4.2.1 Thieves

In table 4.5 above, it is clearly shown that by many respondents (about 60%) that the girls in prostitution do steal. This was revealed during FGD and was later confirmed by the girls themselves. When interviewed the girls declared to have committed theft since most of their customers are harsh and do not pay willingly as promised so they have to steal from them.

4.2.2 Smoking and Drug abuse

Girls practicing prostitution admitted to be smokers of either normal cigarettes or marijuana (*Bangi*). When asked about the reasons for smoking cigarettes the girls said it was just a behavior their adopted when they arrived in town as it is an urban trend. When probed about smoking marijuana they also said it was an urban trend and further they explained that with marijuana the sensation was different as after smoking they did not feel shy to do anything coming their way.

With the use of drugs the only few girls admitted having used illicit drugs such as cocaine, heroin, *mirungi* and

other forms of drugs. When discussing with them it was noted that some girls started taking drugs in small amount given by fellow friends with the aim of reducing fear, shyness when meeting with their customers who are cruel and eventually they become addicted.

4.2.3 Violence

Apart from above unbecoming behaviors, the girls were also blamed for being violent. The respondents in FGDs claimed that these girls were very violent in all spheres of life. They were crew and did not have respect for neither their elders nor their age mates. When asked about this the girls hesitantly admitted being slightly violent to the community with special reason of protecting themselves from mature people who intimidate their activities and their characters and tend to undermine them.

4.3 Causes of girl child prostitution

Table 4.6 below clearly show the main causes of girl involving themselves in prostitution, as mentioned by twenty focus group discussions and the interviews conducted during the research.

Table 4.6 Causes of girl child prostitution

S/N	CAUSE	FGD		INTERVIEW
		FREQ.	%	FREQ.
1	Poverty	18 (20)	90	80
2	Peer Influence	12(20)	60	24
3	Orphanhood	8(20)	40	–
4	Parent	15(20)	75	37
5	Culture & Belief	7(20)	35	13
6	Globalization	13(20)	65	–
7	Presence of night clubs	5(20)	25	–
8	Unemployment	8(20)	40	64
9	Tourism	5(20)	25	–
10	Highway to East and Central	2(20)	10	–
11	Mining Sector	1(20)	5	–
12	Increased demand	16(20)	80	–

Source: Field Findings

4.3.1 Poverty

Rural poverty continues to irk development strategies in Tanzania, as different report has not shown any remarkable improvement in the situation (URT 2000, 2005, 2010). These being the case, rural communities face both food and non food poverty and thus they are forced to look for other alternatives to fulfill their daily requirements. One of the alternatives sought by rural households is to send their children in urban cities for search of jobs. From the research conducted in Arusha Municipality poverty was among the major reasons mentioned to contribute highly to girl prostitution since they are sent from rural areas without any particular activity to do in urban cities.

Table 4.6 above clearly shows that poverty is among the core causes of persistence of girl child prostitution in many households. As discussed by respondents it was outlined that most of girl prostitutes come from households which face abject poverty. As 80% of girls interviewed commended that they come from very poor families which sometimes are big to the extent that the parents fail to supply even the basic needs as food, school fees, uniforms and even shelter. To this, children at a very young age are considered to be an alternative for income as they are sent to cities to seek for jobs which will earn them a meager amount of money to send back home. In other situation the children themselves escape from their homes running away from misery and hardships caused by extreme poverty.

4.3.2 Growing demand

Arusha is among the fast growing urban cities in Tanzania with an estimated population growth of 4% per annum (tpsftz, 2010). This growth is being perpetuated by the city being a tourist attraction as it neighbors i.e Mount Kilimanjaro, Lake Manyara, Oldvai Gorge, Tarangire national park, Ngorongoro crater, to mention the few. Apart from that, the growth of the city is further accelerated by the city becoming the major international diplomatic hub as it is the host of regional and International offices such as East Africa Community, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, African Court on human and People rights and other United Nation offices. The city too, is the main market for Tanzanite, unique precious stones from Mererani Mines.

From the research conducted in Arusha Municipality it was mentioned by almost 80% of the respondents from the focus group discussions that, the growth of the city has increased the demand of child prostitutes by these sex tourists and expatriates. This is reported to be increasing in correlation to the growth of the city in comparison to neighboring towns like Babati. With this, the influx of girls from different districts and regions to Arusha

increases as they expect to earn more from the people in demand. The pedophiles also take this opportunity to exploit these young girls for their benefit as they earn more with young girls being prostitutes than full grown women.

4.3.3 Parents

From table 4.6 above, it is also observed that parents are also perpetrators of child prostitution due to their laxity to fulfill their obligation and responsibility to their children, in a way this also contributes to girls escaping rural hardship moving to town and ending up being prostitutes.

A big number of respondents (about 75% from FGD and 37% of interviewees), when asked about what they thought were the causes of girl prostitution, they did not hesitate to declare that the parents were among the reasons their children end up in this situation. The parents in different ways were mentioned to steer up the process knowingly or unknowingly. In some cases the respondents reported that parents in poverty stricken households knowingly push the girls in prostitution as an alternative source of income for the family. In other instances, girls become tired from poverty at their homes and they end up escaping from rural areas to urban cities.

Apart from this it was also mentioned that separations, divorces and other family conflicts pushed the girls away from home running away from abuse and humiliation from their male parents and as a result they end up into hands of pedophiles and prostitution.

Further, it was disclosed that parents who gave away their daughter for early marriage to much older men also contributed to the situation since the girls could escape from their marital home ending up in cities.

Concluding this, the respondents also did not hesitate to blame the parents for being agents of child prostitution since some of them accepts their daughter to become domestic helpers in cities not even knowing the working condition their daughter will end up in, as a result some children end up being abused sexually or physically.

4.3.4 Globalization

Globalization has been said to have both positive and negative impacts in the community. In the research conducted, it came out from different respondents that globalization on a larger scale has impacted the youth negatively. This was said in many focus group discussions (65% of the respondents).

Good as it is, globalization was linked with deterioration of cultural and social values of youths as they are exposed to foreign cultures and these act as a catalyst to change of their behavior. It was reported that with globalization both boys and girls at young age are exposed to television and internet (which broadcast adult materials) which end up being practiced by these teenagers.

In the municipal area, the survey identified local movie theaters known in Swahili as "*Vibandaumiza*" in certain areas as Daraja Mbili, Kaloleni, Unga Limited wards where adult movies are displayed to the audience regardless of their age. Young girls were also in these local movie theatres regardless of the reported danger they face from mature men.

4.3.5 Lack of Job Opportunities

The girls moving from rural to urban areas expected that they might be employed in any form as to earn a living to help themselves and the families back home. But this is not always the case as 40% of the girls interviewed revealed that they have never done any other job since their arrival so they had no alternative than prostitution.

4.3.6 Death of parent

Death of one or both parents was among the major causes of child prostitution. Single parents always married after the death of the spouse. Children living with step parents or guardians mostly faced some sort of abuse or harassment from them. Following this, the children run away from home ending up in streets as hawkers and prostitutes.

4.3.7 Culture and Beliefs.

With many Tanzanian cultures being strong against a girl child, more opportunities still are given to boys than girls in many cultures. A boy child is given more education opportunities compared to girls while girls are given out by parents to get married at a very young age. This was also deduced from the research done, as respondents claimed that girl children are prematurely prepared through initiation ceremonies to be good mothers and wives to much older men, while boys are prepared to study to his utmost goal. With this situation the girls escape even before getting married.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The magnitude and extent of girls involved in prostitution in Arusha Municipality is wide and deep, and if serious measures are not effected the situation could be rather intense and hard to control.

From a research done from January to July 2011, much has been learnt and it is of the fact that girl prostitution problem is much deep and it is much linked with poverty which correlates with family misery, disunity and limited family earnings. With this situation being rampant in many rural areas of Tanzania lead to children

migrating to urban areas where among other activities prostitution awaits them. Other causes were also identified as being a thrust to early prostitution by the girls like, lack of parent responsibility, peer influence, globalization, culture, and also unemployment in rural areas to mention the few.

The girls in this prostitution complained of facing a lot of challenges at this tender age. They grumble of different social, health, physical and psychological problems they encounter in their daily life. It is in line with these challenges that the study found out that different stakeholders are trying to curb these challenges but in reality much has to be done to make the situation more favorable for these girls.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Enforcement of law against customers, pimps and pedophiles

Tanzania laws and legal structures against child prostitution clearly stipulates that it is illegal for an adult male to get involved in any sexual activity with a children (of 15 if ones wife, or 18 years of age). The legal provision is also clear on criminality on any other form of sexual exploitation and trafficking of children. Much as the law is clear, child exploitation is rampantly being practiced by in the country without fear of the laws and children continue being exploited. It is thus from this juncture that the research stresses that the gap existing between the legal structures and enforcement practices be closed in reducing sexual exploitation of children

5.2.2 Counseling and sex education to girls in business

Girls involved in prostitution consider themselves as outcast and are always feel shame and quilt, since they have low esteem, it is from this that the research team urges different stakeholders to provide the girls with professional counseling services which will boost up their self esteem and build their being. Together with this it is also important for the girls to be reminded frequently the importance of practicing safe sex.

5.2.3 Enforcement of bylaws against owners of social clubs

Since the municipal council and ward councils has already erected bylaws which aims at protecting children from sexual exploitation which are only lightly enforced, it is high time the bylaws are enforced strictly against all owners of the social clubs who loosely allow child prostitution in their clubs. Complementing this action, local government should also take action against street prostitution of children.

5.2.4 Capacity building

Both governmental and non governmental organization should put more emphasis in providing capacity building tools to girls who voluntarily opt to forego prostitution for any other income earning activity or employment coming their way.

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