



Reasons for the Street Girl's Entry into Commercial Sex Work: A Case Study of the Harare Central Business District, Zimbabwe (RSGECSWH)

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ABSTRACT The paper problematises the reasons why the street girls of the Harare Central Business District enter or engage in transactional or commercial sex work. Drawing from a child agency theory, street girls demonstrated their agency through trading in commercial sex work. The entry of street girls into commercial sex work also constitutes ambiguity of agency. The behaviours of these street girls also illustrate self-destructive agency. On the other hand, the entry of street girls into commercial sex work also highlighted huge child rights violations prevalent on the streets of the Harare Central Business District. The research findings suggest that the reasons why the street girls of the Harare Central Business District enter into commercial sex work are multiple and varied. The qualitative research methodology involving the street ethnography was used in this study. The paper also recommends full implementation of child rights laws, policies and programmes so as to arrest commercial sex work among street girls.

INTRODUCTION

The involvement of the street girls in transactional sex work is a global problem (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014). The authors observed that, street girls in Latin American countries such as Brazil supplement their daily needs through commercial sex work. In Asian countries, street girls also engage in transactional sex to eke a living (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014). Kruger and Ritcher (2003) observed that street girls in Johannesburg traded in commercial sex work for survival. However very limited studies have been conducted to explore the aetiology of commercial sex work among the street girls of the Harare Central Business District. The paper interrogates the reasons why street girls of the Harare Central Business District entered into commercial sex work. Previous studies by Bourdillon (1991, 1994a, b, 2000) have failed to articulate reasons

why street girls engaged in commercial sex work. In addition, studies by Dube (1997, 1999) focused more on livelihoods opportunities of street boys without considering survival strategies of the street girls. However, previous studies by Chikoko (2014, 2017), Dube et al. (1996), Rurevo and Bourdillon (2003a, b), Mella (2012), Mhizha (2010, 2014, 2015, 2016), Ruparanganda (2008), Wakatama (2007), Chirwa (2007), Chirwa and Wakatama (2000) and others, have failed to interrogate the reasons for the entry of the street girls into commercial sex work.

Study Objectives

1. The paper provides an updated literature on the reasons why street girls of the Harare Central Business District were engaged in trading in or selling sex or survival sex or transactional sex.
2. The study will also inform key stakeholders such as Government and nongovernmental organisations on how to provide support to street girls who are involved in transactional sex work.

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Conceptual Framework

The study is based on two perspectives which are going to be discussed below:

The Child Agency

Holloway (2014), observed that the new studies of social studies emerged from sociology and anthropology. However, the author added that the paradigm later on became interdisciplinary.

Chuta (2014: 02), has defined agency as 'understood as an individual's own capabilities, competences and activities through which they navigate the contexts and positions of their life worlds fulfilling many economic, social and cultural expectations.' Ennew and Swart-Kruger (2003) observed that, the child agency theory recognises children as social agents that construct their social realities. The authors also added that street children as social actors have capabilities to influence their own lives create relationships and manage their environments.

Eriksen and Mulugeta (2015) observed that the working children demonstrated their agency in a number of social networks. The authors added that some of the networks included, networks of peers, networks of siblings, networks of neighbours and relatives and networks associated with institutions, among others.

Bordonaro (2012) and Bordonaro and Payne (2012) have criticised that not all agency is positive. The authors noted that some of the agency could be considered as ambiguous as it clashes with societal value system. Gigengack (2006, 2008) has also referred to 'self-destructive agency.' The involvement of adolescent street girls of the Harare Central Business District in transactional sex demonstrates ambiguity of agency.

The Child Rights Perspective

The UNCRC (1989) has defined child rights based on four principles which are; the best interest of the child, the right of a child to participation, non-discrimination and the right of a child to survival and development.

Gabel (2014) and Jones and Jemmott (2014) observed that the UNCRC is the most ratified human rights instrument that promotes the rights of children. The authors also noted that, the

UNCRC recognises the Governments as the primary duty bearers in promoting the rights of children. However, Gabel also recognises the role of parents and other key stakeholders in the rearing of children.

Bourdillon (2009) has criticised the child rights discourse insisting that it fails to acknowledge the socio-cultural contexts of childhood from developing countries. The author added that child rights are viewed as 'romanticising of childhood' by western societies. Nhenga (2008) observed that the Western world's idea of childhood is problematic when applied to other socio-economic contexts that are non-Western like the example of developing countries.

Drawing from a child rights concept, the entry of street girls into the Harare Central Business District for commercial sex work highlights child right violations. The behaviours such as commercial sex work among street girls are inconsistent with international, regional and local child rights laws, policies and programmes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

An exploratory qualitative research design that included street ethnography was adopted in generating data for this study. The street ethnography spanned around thirteen months interacting with the street girls in their natural environments such as their 'bases.'

Sample

This study used convenience sampling. Through convenience sampling, a total of twelve adolescent street girls of the Harare Central Business District were identified for the study. Babbie and Mouton (2012) observed that convenience sampling is easy to use when identifying research participants such as street children and sex workers, among others.

Research Instruments

The qualitative data collection tools such as; informal conversations, in depth interviews, life histories, key informant interviews and participant observations and others were used in this

study. Okoli (2015) used street ethnographic data collection tools that include semi-participant observation and interviews.

Data Analysis

The thematic content analysis was adopted in this study. Some of the themes and sub themes that emerged in this study included poverty, sexual behaviours, sexual abuse, peer pressure, autonomy, and failed marriages and others. Drescher-Burke (2014) used thematic content analysis. The author observed that the thematic content analysis focused on issues such as, birth control, partner issues, trading sex issues and others.

Ethical Considerations

Neuman (1997) defines ethical considerations as what is or not legitimate to do or what is 'moral' when conducting a research. The following ethical considerations were observed when conducting this research; informed consent, confidentiality, benevolence among others. In the case of the street children of the Harare Central Business District, the researcher obtained verbal informed consent. The researcher also ensured confidentiality by using alphabetical letters instead of writing the names of the street children on data gathering tools.

FINDINGS

This section presents research findings. The research findings are based on specific themes. The specific themes included; poverty, sexual abuse, violence and exploitation, peer pressure, autonomy or freedom through sex work, failed marriages, obstacles to education, lack of employment opportunities among others.

Poverty

It was evident that the street girls of the Harare Central Business District entered into commercial sex work as a result of increased levels of feminization of poverty. During the informal conversations, the majority of the street girls revealed that, they joined the band wagon of selling sex as a result of poverty.

During the informal conversations Shedia (not real name) a street girl had this to say:

I started trading sex on the streets after the death of my parents. None of my relatives were interested to care for me and my younger brother. Through survival sex I am able to raise money for the up keep of my twins aged 3 years. This includes money for food, clothes and school fees for my brother who is still in school.

During weekends and holidays, the Drop in centre is closed, so there is nowhere where we can get food. Sometimes we do not have money for soap. So as girls were see that it is better to get involved in sex work in order to raise money for those things for survival.

During the informal conversations, one of the street girls revealed that poverty was a key factor in influencing her to venture into the trade. She had the following to say:

Elder, I started selling sex in order to raise money for food, clothes for myself and my younger sister. My younger sister called Rumbie is still in school in Epworth and I have to be involved in this trade to raise money for her school fees.

I am involved in dancing and stripping at Super Label night club. I also have sessions for short time sex at the Fife Avenue base. However, an oral sex session pays better than some of these sexual encounters. I normally charge around fifteen dollars for an oral sex session as compared to two dollars for the short time sex session.

During the key informant interviews, it was also confirmed that the street girls were involved in commercial sex work so as to sustain their lives. The officer of one of the local organisations that provide services to street children revealed that sometimes the street girls get into survival sex in order to raise money to buy food and clothes.

Sexual Abuse, Violence and Exploitation

The study noted that some of the street girls of the Harare Central Business District first entered into commercial sex work as a result of sexual abuse, violence and exploitation. The majority of the girls that were involved in sex trading had been victims of sexual abuse and violence during their childhood. The case stud-

ies below highlight how sexual abuse or violence triggered some of the girls into trading in commercial sex work.

One of the street girls started staying and selling sex on the streets of the Harare Central Business District as a result of sexual abuse by a step father. During the in depth interviews, she had to say the following:

I grew up staying with my mother and a step father in Glen Norah B high density in Harare. My mother was a cross border trader. She used to ply to Johannesburg very often. One of the days when she had gone for her routine trips to Johannesburg for a week, the step father came home drunk and raped me. He told me that if I revealed the ordeal to any one, he would chop off my head. The experience was traumatic. The abuse went for a while until one day I thought of leaving the home and started staying on the streets of the Harare Central Business District.

As a result of the abuse, I think I am a useless person. Whoever wants to have sex with me is welcome. I do not care. Even if I am to have sex with a dog or an animal, I do not care. Life has never been fair with me, elder (sobbing).

During the in depth interviews, Melo (not real name), a street girl revealed that she was first initiated in commercial sex work after she was gang raped by a group of notorious street boys called *Boko haram*. She had this to say:

Elder, I started selling sex at the Fife avenue base after I was gang raped by the Boko haram group. The traumatic ordeal or experience I went through that day affects me until this day. I do not think I am worth living. I do not mind having sex with anybody.

During the key informant interviews, one of the street boys also confirmed that some of the street girls were oriented in commercial sex work as a result of sexual abuse, violence or exploitation. The boy added that some of the sexual abuse could have been perpetrated on the innocent girls during childhood and sometimes by close relatives like step parents or cases of incest.

Peer Pressure

It was also evident that peer pressure is one of the factors influencing the street girls of the Harare Central Business District to enter into commercial sex work. During the informal con-

versations, participant 2.0, a street girl had this to say:

I was initiated into trading sex when I saw my friend Pretty earning a survival through sex. Pretty could make a lot of money to the extent that she was even responsible for meeting my daily needs such as food, clothes etc.

So one Friday night she convinced me to join her in the bandwagon of commercial sex work. We went to Super Label night club and met mhenes. We went to the mhenes apartment near the Avondale shopping centre.

When we were at the mhenes's place we had a fuck and we also took a lot of intoxicating substances. The following day, the mhenes paid me twenty dollars. I was excited because I had managed to earn money for food for that day.

As from that day, apart from plying night clubs such as Super Label, I also traded in short time at Njanji area. Some of my clients are well to do people. However, some of our clients refuse to practice safe sex. For example, one day, I encountered a certain man who claimed to be a soldier. When I refused to have unprotected sex, he threatened to beat me up.

Autonomy/Freedom through Sex Work

The study also noted that autonomy or freedom through sex work was also another reason why the street girls of the Harare Central Business District entered into commercial sex work. During the in depth interviews, the majority of the street girls revealed that, they entered into commercial sex work when they considered that the trade brought some benefits such as autonomy or freedom. The participant 3.0 had this to say:

Elder, commercial sex work has its own challenges as well as benefits. I ventured into selling sex after I saw the benefits like autonomy or freedom. Through commercial sex work, I get a quick buck and the trade is less laborious.

If I get some money, I am able to meet my daily needs such as clothes, food etc. Elder, in addition, commercial sex work gives me lots of money, a situation better than that of begging or vending in town.

I make sums of money through stripping and dancing in night clubs, zvigwishu at Njanji area, and sometimes through the take aways better

known as pungwe I make a lot of money in Harare, elder.

During informal conversations, Thomas (not real name), a street boy also confirmed that commercial sex work or transactional sex among street girls had a number of benefits. Some of the benefits he highlighted included that of autonomy or freedom. He added that due to commercial sex work, some of the street girls of the Harare Central Business District had autonomy and freedom as they earned their own money.

Failed Child Marriages

It was also evident that the street girls of the Harare Central Business District entered into commercial sex work as a result of failed child marriages. The nature of marriages was more of cohabitation not civil or customary partnership. During the informal conversations, the majority of the girls revealed that they had been married before they ventured into prostitution. The girl 4.0, had this to say:

As for me, elder, I was married to a certain useless man at Jacha area in Epworth informal settlement. The husband was very useless as he would spend all his earnings on substance abuse and women. As a result of his unbecoming behaviour, it was difficult for me to look for food for my baby girl. Apart from that he would also beat me up very often.

I then decided that I should join the bandwagon of commercial sex work on the streets. If I had been married with a good husband, I would not be selling sex on the streets. I do not like this kind of work. it is very risky because we sometimes meet very inconsiderate male clients. One of my friends was thrown out of a moving vehicle. She sustained some head injuries.

During the informal conversations, Mango (not real name) had this to say:

Elder, I sell sex at the Njanji base. I stay with my husband at Chizhanje area in Mabvuku high density suburb. We have a one-year-old baby boy. My husband is involved in criminal related work such as selling marijuana and mugging people in town.

My husband or boyfriend is aware that I sell sex at Njanji but he does not care because before we started staying together, he had known about that. Apart from that, he has not paid lobola to my relatives.

I also know that he has several girlfriends but I do not care about that. That is his life. I have mine.

During the key informant interviews, one of the former outreach officers of Streets Ahead also confirmed that some of the street girls joined the bandwagon of street based prostitution after failed marriages. She also added that the majority of the girls that are involved in street based prostitution had been married before and had babies to take care of.

Obstacles to Education

It was also evident that obstacles to education among the street girls of the Harare Central Business District influenced them into joining the transactional sex work. During the informal conversations, the majority of the street girls of the Harare Central Business District revealed that they had not progressed well with their studies. Some of the cited reasons included orphanhood, lack of school fees and some delinquent behaviour such as truancy. As they were not educated, they decided to eke a living from selling sex. One of them had this to say:

As for me, elder, I am not educated. I dropped out of school. After the death of my parents, none of my relatives could pay my school fees. I once stayed with my aunt around Mukarakate area in Murehwa District. Apart from lack of school fees, I was also not very bright in school work. The teachers would beat me up for being dull in school and that also caused me to abscond school.

Now that I am not educated, I cannot find any other form of employment besides selling sex on the streets of the Harare Central Business District. Selling sex is the only option I have to survive.

George (not real name), the street boy also confirmed that the majority of the street girls of the Harare Central Business District were not educated and they could not get any form of gainful employment. He added that some of the girls would end up selling sex on the streets to earn a living.

Lack of Employment Opportunities

The study noted that lack of employment opportunities is one of the key reasons why the

street girls' entered into commercial sex work in the Harare Central Business District. During the informal conversations, participant 5.0, had this to say:

Some of us we are not schooled. I never went to school. In addition, there are no jobs in this country. The situation is desperate, elder. Everyone else is a vendor. I am a thigh vendor (laughing).

I decided to earn a living through selling sex because there were no employment opportunities for some of us.

I once worked as a house maid in Glen Norah B high density area. The work was tedious. I would rise at 04:00 and sleep at 22:00 every day with no off days. The madam was very difficult and very inconsiderate as well.

One of the key informants, an employee of OASIS indicated that, besides supplementing their income through vending, some of the girls were involved in trading sex as a result of limited employment opportunities.

DISCUSSION

The paper examines or interrogates the reasons why the street girls of the Harare Central Business District engage in transactional or commercial sex work. As highlighted above, some of the reasons include, poverty, sexual abuse and violence, lack of employment opportunities, failed marriages, obstacles to education, freedom/autonomy, and peer pressure, among others. Utilising child agency theory these reasons show that the street girls are social actors. They were able to survive through engaging in transactional sex work. However, commercial sex work involving street girl illustrates ambiguity of agency. Bordonaro (2012) and Bordonaro and Payne (2012) noted that the agency is considered as ambiguous when it is inconsistent with the societal value system. The authors also added that ambiguity of agency is explained in a context when the behaviours affect the well-being of the children. For example, commercial sex work among the street girls of the Harare Central Business District affects the well-being of these children. Through commercial sex work, the street girls are exposed to abuse and violence, among other issues. The involvement of the street girls of the Harare Central Business District in com-

mercial sex work could also be explained in the context of thin agency. Tisdall and Punch (2012) observed that the concept of agency is when there are very limited survival opportunities for the street children. Commercial sex work could have been the very few available options of these girls in a context with multiple constraints. Therefore, the street girls of the Harare Central Business District were able to survive through transactional sex work in a very restrictive agency (Giddens 1984). Gigengack (2006) also referred to such agency as self-destructive. Commercial sex work involving street girls poses a number of risks such as contracting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS and others.

The various reasons that account for street girls entering commercial sex work also illustrate huge child rights violations prevalent on the streets of the Harare Central Business District. The behaviour of selling or trading sex among street girls is perceived as being inconsistent with the provisions of the UNCRC, (1989); the ACRWC, (1999) and some of the national child rights laws, policies and programmes. The International Labour Organization Convention 182, (1999) considers commercial sex work among street girls as part of the 'worst forms of child labour.' The Children's Act (5:06) also referred to street girls who engage in commercial sex work as 'in need of care.' They are in need of care because of the level and the extent of vulnerabilities of these children as a result of staying on the streets and also engaged in transactional sex work. The children are vulnerable to abuse, violence and exploitation, among other ills. The Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act (9:23) also regards the street girls who engage in commercial sex work as 'in conflict with the law.' The law suggests that what the children are doing is criminal. Commercial sex work is criminalized by Zimbabwean laws.

The findings of the research suggest that some of the street girls of the Harare Central Business District get involved in transactional sex work as a result of poverty. As highlighted above, some of the street girls were able to survive through commercial sex work. Similarly, Hasson (2003) observed that female street children were involved in selling sex so as to generate income for survival. Kruger and Richter (2003) noted that the street children were involved in

survival sex. The authors added that during survival sex, some of the girls' clients preferred unprotected sex. The researchers also observed that as a result of inconsistent uses of condoms, some of the girls were exposed to sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancies.

Rurevo and Bourdillon (2003), Mhizha (2010) and Ruparanganda (2008) seem to agree that, childhood poverty was a key factor in driving the street girls of Harare to enter into commercial sex work. Moreover, Mhizha noted that, the street girls perceived commercial sex work as a survival strategy which had better returns as compared to begging and vending. The author noted that the girls that were involved in prostitution were known to be *poto dzemarasta* (which meant that they were shared frequently by who ever had the money that day).

Oduro (2012) observed that street girls ventured into commercial sex work in order to raise money for survival. The author also noted that the street girls seem to be concerned with immediate needs and not long term health consequences of trading in sex. Oduro added that the street girls that were involved in commercial sex work perceived their bodies as economic assets, useful in fighting poverty in their lives. The author cited a sixteen-year-old girl who highlighted that she joined prostitution so as to have money for food and clothes.

As victims of sexual abuse and violence, some of the street girls of the Harare Central Business District were involved in commercial sex work. Some of the girls ended up being involved in commercial sex work when they had been subject to sex abuse and violence. The different forms of sexual abuse and violence made them to engage in commercial sex work. The abuse or violence made them to have strong interest in sex and subsequently engage in transactional sex work. Some of the girls were sexually abused by close relatives and others. After they were subjected to sexual abuse and violence, they were not adequately provided with support services to the extent that they ended up not seeing value in normal life. They end up engaged in commercial sex work because they place less value on their lives.

Research findings collaborate observations made by Rurevo and Bourdillon (2003), Mhizha (2010), Chikoko (2014, 2017) and Ruparanganda

(2008), who seem to agree that the majority of the street girls of the Harare Central Business District were subjected or were victims of different forms of sexual abuse and violence, among others. The authors also noted that as a result of the traumatic experiences associated with sexual abuse or violence, some of them resorted to commercial sex work on the streets.

Kotb (2015), observed that some of the street girls in Egypt were initiated into commercial sex work as a result of sexual abuse. The author cited cases where some of the girls were victims of step parent's abuse. Kotb (2015) cited an example one of the street girls who was initiated into prostitution after the step father sexually molested her. The author also gave an example of a girl who entered into prostitution as a result of the step mother who forced her into the trade. Kotb (2015), noted that the step mother of the particular girl was involved in commercial sex work and substance trafficking networks.

The study established that peer pressure is one of the reasons why street girls of the Harare Central Business District engage in commercial sex work. As a result of peer pressure, one of the street girls ended up venturing into commercial sex work. Therefore, peer pressure is a key factor in terms of influencing the street girls into engaging in deviant behaviours such as commercial sex work and substance abuse, among others (Chikoko 2014, 2017).

The findings also corroborate previous researching findings by Aderinto and Samuel (2008), who observed that female adolescents in Ibadan Nigeria were involved in sex trading as a result of peer pressure. The authors cited a case of one of the girls who was initiated into a sex trade by a friend. The researchers noted that the adolescent girl was duped by her friend who had promised her that there were jobs in town. The authors added that when she arrived from the village, the girl was shocked to be initiated into sex trading as there were no jobs that she had been promised.

Browne et al. (2014) observed that young women were initiated into risky behaviours such as substance abuse and sex trading as a result of peer pressure. The authors added that the female adolescents were initiated into smoking marijuana by their friends, including boyfriends.

The study also established that autonomy was one of the key drivers behind the street

girls of the Harare Central Business District who got involved in commercial sex work. As discussed above, commercial sex work gave the girls a measure of autonomy or freedom. The girls were able to live their lives independent of their parents or any other relatives.

Ruparanganda (2008) and Mhizha (2010) seem to agree that some of the street girls of the Harare who were involved in commercial sex work, had autonomy and freedom derived from the trade. The authors observed that, some of the girls that were engaged in transactional sex had wide choices of food and clothes. Mhizha noted that some of the girls even boasted or bragged that commercial sex work was a well-paying trade as compared to vending, begging and other livelihoods options.

Contrary to the above, Miller and Nichols (2012) observed that, transgender were involved in commercial sex because of a combination of factors. The authors noted that some of the factors included sexual desire, early sexual experiences, economic needs and family hardship. For example, Miller and Nichols cited a case of one of the transgender girl who was involved in selling sex largely because of sexual desire besides meeting economic needs.

The failed marriages were also identified as one of the reasons why the street girls of the Harare Central Business District got involved in commercial sex work. As a result of the failed marriages some of the street girls did not have any other options besides engaging in commercial sex work. In cases of failed marriages, the street girls were able to survive through commercial sex work.

Rurevo and Bourdillon (2003) observed that some of street girls of the Harare that were involved in sex trading had failed marriages. The authors cited a case study of one of the girls who resorted to staying on the streets after a failed marriage. Rurevo and Bourdillon also added that when the girl was staying on the streets she eventually engaged in commercial sex work for survival.

The study also established that some of the street girls of the Harare Central Business District that engaged in commercial sex work had dropped out of school. Obstacles to pursue educational opportunities are a very key factor that influences the street girls to engage in commercial sex work. As a result of limited opportunities

to go to school some of them ended up involved in commercial sex work.

The findings also corroborate previous research findings by Browne et al. (2014) observed that some of the female young children dropped out of school when they became pregnant. The authors added that the girls ended up trading in sex work and abuse of substances so as to cope with the demands of having one or more babies.

Lack of employment opportunities was also cited as one of the reasons why the street girls of the Harare Central Business District engage in commercial sex work. Given that the majority of the street children were not educated with no or very little skills at their disposal, they end up engaged in commercial sex work to eke a living. As discussed above, some of the street girls supplemented their income through commercial sex work, in a context with very few survival options.

The findings also corroborate previous research findings by Aderinto and Samuel (2008) who observed that adolescent girls in Nigeria were involved in sex trading as a result of lack or limited employment opportunities. The authors added that, the adolescent girls opted to selling sex as there were no employment opportunities that were compounded by poor educational backgrounds, low wages, and weak economy, among other factors.

Chariyeva et al. (2011) observed that some young girls resorted to sex trading as a result of lack of employment opportunities. The authors added that the young girls were involved in transactional sex as it was a survival strategy in a context with extreme poverty and limited job opportunities. Chareiyeva et al. (2011), also observed that the girls did not have a choice as they had babies, and they also wanted to take care of their mothers.

Browne et al. (2014), observed that young some females were involved in sex trading due to limited job opportunities. The authors also added that the young women could not access employment opportunities as the majority of them had not done well in their high school education.

CONCLUSION

As discussed above, there are various reasons why the street girls of the Harare Central Business District engage in commercial sex work.

Some of the reasons include poverty, peer pressure, autonomy or freedom, failed marriages and lack of employment opportunities, among other factors. Drawing from a child agency theory, the entry of the street girls into commercial sex work demonstrated agency of these children. However, the behaviours could be queried and regarded as ambiguous as they are inconsistent with societal values. Commercial sex work involving street girls is also considered as thin agency. The behaviours associated with commercial sex work among street girls are explained as self-destructive agency. The entry of street girls into commercial sex work also highlights huge child rights violations prevalent on the streets of the Harare Central Business District. In addition, the entry into commercial sex work by the street girls contravenes the provisions of the international, regional and national child rights laws, policies and programmes. The commercial sex work among the street girls also highlights that the duty bearer in the name of the Government of Zimbabwe is not providing adequate protection services to these children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study proffered a number of recommendations which included the following;

- ♦ Key stakeholders should initiate programmes for socio-economic empowerment of street girls through social protection initiatives. The social protection programmes could be used to fight child hood poverty issues. Some of the recommended programmes could be micro finance ones. This could significantly reduce street girls from child hood vulnerabilities as they engage in transactional sex work. Another dimension of the social protection programmes could be providing street girls with accessible and affordable sexual and reproductive health services. This could also reduce risks associated with transactional sex work.
- ♦ There is need to align the local child rights laws and policies to the regional and international ones. This will reduce opportunities that are taken by perpetrators to abuse these girls. For example, the Children's Act (5:06) has some of its sections not aligned

to the ACRWC (1999) and UNCRC (1989) among others. The alignment will also facilitate arresting or apprehension of the allegedly perpetrators of the child sexual abuse and

- ♦ More awareness raising on the rights of street girls should be initiated and implemented on the streets of the Harare Central Business District. The child rights awareness raising will empower street girls and communities with information and skills with a view to reduce child rights violations on the streets of the Harare Central Business District.

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