

**‘YOU CANNOT BE RAPED WHEN YOU ARE A SEX WORKER’:
SEXUAL VIOLENCE AMONG SUBSTANCE ABUSING SEX
WORKERS IN MUSINA, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

Svinurai Anesu, Makhubele Jabulani Calvin, Ananias Janetta Agnes, Freeman Rachel Johanna, Mafa Prudence, Matlakala Frans Koketso, Chilwalo Beatrice Namongo, Rapholo Selelo Frank, Hamuse Tiberia Ndanyakuwa Ilonga and Hasheela Miriam Winnie

ABSTRACT

This paper explored the sexual violence experiences of substance abusing sex workers in Musina Border Town of Limpopo Province in South Africa. Substance abuse behaviours is a common phenomenon among sex workers the world over, with this behaviour exposing sex workers to different violations. This paper sought to explore sexual violence among substance abusing sex workers and appraise its potential effect. The study used a qualitative approach and multiple case study design, exploring experiences from ten participants through in-depth interviews. The paper noted that there is high prevalence of sexual assaults amongst substance abusing sex workers. However, these assaults are generally regarded by both the victims and perpetrators as normal, unavoidable occupational hazards of the sex work profession. The sexual violations are perpetrated by clients, potential clients and in some instances, state security agents who are expected to be sanctuaries of protection. The sex work profession is so delicate such that the line between consented sex and sexual assault is easily crossed, and this breach of contract is regarded normal phenomenon in this line of work. Substances are sometimes regarded by clients as payment of sexual services, which creates conflict as sex workers regard substances as facilitators of the sexual relationship. Additionally, sex workers report that they are constantly sexually violated by state security agents like the South African Police Officers, members of the defence forces, home affairs officials who arrests them and later demand for sex in exchange of their freedom. As a marginalized and criminalized group, sex workers’ ordeals are further compounded by their inability to seek protection from the country’s justice system.

Keywords: Rape, Sex Work, Substance Abuse, Sexual Violence, Musina

INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence against women is increasingly being acknowledged as a pervasive violation of the basic human rights of women. The International Network of People who Use Drugs (2015) argues that substance abusing sex workers are subjected to widespread defilements of their human rights. This is mainly due to the global prevalence of repressive and discriminatory laws, practices. Such repressive systems result in sexual assaults, with many sex workers being violated. The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (2013) notes that researches has shown that regardless of a person’s reasons for sex work, they are constantly entangled in a web of sexual violence.

Rangasami, Konstant and Manoek (2016) bemoans the extent general human rights abuse experienced by sex workers in South Africa, arguing that these abuses are sometimes fatal, and its prevalence is alarming, calling for immediate action against such inhuman treatment of sex workers. These violations are experienced at the hands of clients and the security agents, and in Musina Border Town, these state security agents are the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the Army. Many studies have shown that sex workers much of the abuses is at the hands of the police, with almost all sex workers reporting some kind of abuse and victimisation from police officers (Mac AIDS, 2015; Deering *et al.*, 2014; Sonke and partners, 2014; Scorgie, 2013a). These violations mainly happen among substance abusing sex workers.

Rangasami *et al.*, (2016) laments that despite the high prevalence of sexual violation amongst sex workers, unsurprisingly, sex workers are reluctant to approach the police and report crime they experience. The International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD, 2015) concurs and argues that the sad part for sexual violations against sex workers, most of their crimes go totally unchallenged. It is thus common that sex workers no view the police as a mechanism for protection or redress, but rather as perpetrators and abusers (Rangasami *et al.*, 2016). The combined stigma and criminalization of sex work compounded with substance abuse increases the incidences of sexual abuse, with sex workers and perpetrators of abuse seemingly regarding rape on sex workers normal and legal.

The Prevalence of Sex Work and Substance Abuse

It is difficult to provide for precise numbers of sex workers, but different researchers estimates that there are over forty (40) million sex workers in the country (Vandepitte, 2006). In sub-Saharan Africa, the population of female sex workers in the capital cities ranges between 0.7% and 4.3% of the total population and 0.4% to 3.9% in other urban cities in 2010 (Fawole & Dagunduro, 2014).

A rapid estimation study of 2013 using the definition of persons who consciously identify themselves as sex workers (Konstant *et al.*, 2015; SANAC, 2013a) estimates that there are between 132 000 and 180 000 female, male and transgender sex workers in South Africa. These statistics has been however dismissed as an underrepresentation of the actual population of sex workers in South Africa. Moreover, a high proportion of the statistics of sex workers are international migrants (Scorgie, 2013a; Richter, 2013). These international sex workers faces protracted sexual violence as they also tend to experience difficulties in communication due to language barriers and are the general lack of legal documentation further makes them vulnerable to abuse by the SAPS (Rangasami *et al.*, 2016; Crago & Arnott, 2008).

The population of substance abusing sex workers are difficult to ascertain, but many researches have shown a significant numbers of substance abusing sex workers (UCSF, Anova Health Institute & WRHI, 2015; Wechsberg *et al.*, 2009; Ditmore, 2013; Gould & Fick, 2008). For example, UCSF *et al.*, (2015) study on hazardous drinkers Female Sex Workers (FSW) shows that there is an overwhelming majority of FSW in Johannesburg of 81.5% (N=764), a simple majority of FSW in Cape Town with 51.4% (N=650), (58.4%) while fewer FSW in Durban at 43% (N= 766) who were classified as hazardous alcohol drinkers. Substances consumed differs though across the three urban areas, with the most common used by FSW in Cape Town is methamphetamine (18.7%) followed by cannabis (18.4%), in Johannesburg 6.5% uses cannabis,

while ecstasy is most commonly used in Durban with 7.9% (UCSF *et al.*, 2015). The abuse of substances in sex workers further escalates sex workers' vulnerability to sexual violation as conflicts with clients ensues in buying each other substances, with sex workers also struggling to pay substance dealers (NADC, 2009, Fawole & Dagunduro, 2014).

Law and Sex Work in South Africa

Sex work has been practiced since time immemorial, but the profession still largely remains criminalized and illegal in many countries, globally. In democratic South Africa, sex work is a subject of considerable debate but still largely remains criminal, thus exposing sex workers to persecution and sexual violence (Mabuza-Makoko, 2005). The Sexual Offences Act of 1957 which prohibits the "*unlawful carnal intercourse or act of indecency with any other person for reward commits an offence*" continues to be applied under the current democratic South African constitution (Rasangani *et al.*, 2016). This apartheid oppressive censorship law superintends as a morality-based vehicle for the sexual victimisation of those socially branded as 'prostitutes' (Ibid). The lack of legal protection is a slap in the face of historic gains of freedom, and totally discards the supreme laws of the land which promotes and protects that freedom and also ignores international agreements the South African government is signatory to.

The South African Constitution guarantees dignity, equal protection under the law and non-discrimination on any grounds whatsoever, including sex work. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 ratified by the South African government protects people's rights to earn a living by work which is chosen and accepted and to work in conducive and just conditions. Additionally, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women of 1967 underlines the need for sex workers to have equal protection against rape and gender-based violence in the justice system (Rasangani *et al.*, 2016).

In spite of these crucial instruments of justice and protection, the law enforcement and community in general still clings to the Sexual Offences Act of 1957 (Mabuza-Makoko, 2005). Be that as it is, the criminalisation of the sex work act proves to be difficult and time consuming to enforce (Manoek, 2012). Thus, this has given rise to persecution of sex workers resulting in sexual violence by the SAPS.

Sexual violence against sex workers

The global prevalence of violence among sex workers is estimated at 50% (Deering *et al.*, 2014). Such high prevalence also results in early mortality rates being six times more than that of the general population, with HIV and STIs and murder being significant contributors (SWEAT, 2009; Gould and Fick, 2008; Scorgie, 2013a; Sonke and partners, 2014).

Sex workers experience violence at the hands of clients, substance dealers, intimate partners and the police (Ditmore, 2013, Sonke & Partners, 2014, Scorgie, 2011). A qualitative study in four countries, including South Africa, by Scorgie (2011) revealed that sex workers have at some point in their careers been gang raped by their clients or police. These findings also correspond with SWEAT (2013a) who notes that 50% of respondents in their survey with 1129 sex workers reported having experienced some form of violence including sexual violence. Mac AIDS (2015) also learnt that 38% of 410 sex workers in Port Elizabeth. Gould and Fick (2008)

notes that 12% of sex workers in their study reported being raped by the police and 28% were asked for sex in exchange for their release from custody.

The circumstances upon which these sex workers are violated reveals a clear societal misogyny and general stigma upon women in general and sex workers in particular. Okal, Chersich, Tsui, Sutherland, Temmerman and Luchters (2011) laments that the nature upon which these sexual violations occur clearly indicates that to men, sex workers cannot be raped. The entitlement for sex tells a horrifying picture and it is a double tragedy when such crimes are committed by the law enforcement agents. The Women's Legal Centre (2016) captures these experiences through excerpts of sexual violence victims as:

“You get abused by your client, you go to the police, even that police officer rapes and abuse you emotionally and physically, like one policeman said to me I must show him if my ingquza (pussy) was injured so that he can help me quick, when I showed him he started raping – ‘esgudeni’ – and I was forced to go to where we sleep and I have not told anyone as to what happened to me because I will be laughed at by my counterparts”
-Sex worker, KZN

“Police officer pretended to arrest me and then raped me. After being raped I went to lodge a complaint at the Police Station, the police just made as if they were taking a statement by pretending to write in a book, but nothing came of it”
-Sex worker, WC

Sex workers are now caught between two hard surfaces, as the double tragedy of being raped by their clients and also getting raped by the police upon reporting their ordeals is common occurrences. Okal *et al.*, (2011) also documents experiences of sex workers and argues that the societal stigmas to sex workers and people who can provide for sex to anyone seems to be the prejudice upon the indiscriminate sexual violations that sex workers endure.

These experiences are faced by sex workers the world over with the Bangladesh Ministry of Health, AIDS and STD Control Programme (2005) reporting that the national HIV surveillance (1999-2000) found that between 52% and 60% of street-based sex workers re-counted being sexually assaulted by the police and army and around 46% reporting being raped by criminals. George, Sabarwal and Martin (2011) also forwards that 77% of FSWs in Indian have encountered work related physical and sexual violence.

This frequent sexual violence of sex workers with impunity has reinforced and synchronised the notion that ‘you cannot be raped because you are a sex worker’. These views are harboured by perpetrators of sexual violence who continue to get away with their crimes and some has become serial sexual offenders. The acceptance of such misconceptions by the community alike and the complacency to prosecute by the justice system has also led to sex workers warming up to sexual crimes, and validating the view and perceptions that indeed, one cannot be raped when one is a sex worker as there seem to be neither societal condemnation nor justice against sexual violence on sex worker (Rychkrova, 2013; Crago *et al.*, 2008).

RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

The study was a qualitative nature and employed explorative research approach. Hancock *et al.*, (2007) posits that qualitative research is concerned with developing clarifications of social phenomena with the objective of understand the social world in which people live and why things are the way they are. In particular, multiple case study design. Multiple case study involves exploration of the context through detailed in-depth data collection involving multi sources of information (Creswell, 2007). This technique enabled the researchers to explore sexual violations amongst substance abusing sex workers.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in Musina, a boarder town between South Africa and Zimbabwe situated in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Musina is located eighteen (18) kilometers from the Beitbridge, Zimbabwe Boarder Town (Elford, 2009). This research setting was appropriate to the research as the area seduces sex workers from countries south of South Africa (Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique), making the town multicultural with an influx of migrants (IOM, 2014). Moreover, the economic activities as a Southern African Development Community busiest border post with shopping activities, transport businesses, smugglers, mining, border security makes this town a rich research setting in fields like sex work and substance abuse.

Sampling Design

Convenience and snow balling sampling techniques were used to locate participants. Convenience sampling contains participants who are readily available and consent to participate in a research (Frey, Carl, Botan & Kreps 2000). NGOs working with sex workers in the town were contacted and they later provided contact with participants. Snowball sampling technique, which, according to MacNealy (1999) is utilized “in those rare cases when the population of interest cannot be identified other than by someone who knows that a certain person has the necessary experience or characteristics to be included”, was also employed. In this case, conveniently interviewed participants then assisted in identifying other participants with the same research characteristics. Interviews were used to collect data. Interviews are an interchange of experiences and views between two people with mutual interests (Sekaran, 2003). Thematic content analysis was used in data analysis. Guest (2012) notes that thematic analysis is the mostly used data analysis method in qualitative studies and it involves pinpointing, examining and recording patterns or themes in data. Ruparanganda (2008) and Chikoko (2014) also uses thematic content analysis in their qualitative studies with sex workers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Ten (10) participants took part in the research. These participants were five (5) Zimbabweans, two (2) South Africans, a Malawian, Zambian and Mozambican. The diversified participants go to show the nature of population in Musina border town, as posited by Chinyakata *et al.*, (2018). The fact that participants are mainly international migrants validates Scorgie (2013a) assertion that a high proportion of sex are usually non South Africans.

Theme: Sexual Violence

Krug *et al.*, (2002 p.149) notes that sexual violence is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. This sexual violence can be referred to as rape which is the physical, involuntary or otherwise coerced penetration of the vulva or anus with a penis or any other body part or object (Ibid). These acts as learnt in the study are being committed by clients of sex workers, law enforcement agents, and random criminals.

Sub Theme: Sexual Violence from Gangs

Participants painted a dire working environment in Musina, infested by gang sexual violence. The risks of being sexually violated haunts sex workers as they report to have experienced sexual violence by gangs at least once in their working experiences in Musina. Stories of colleagues being sexually violated are the normal work place talk, and they now treat such experiences as normal daily occupational hazards that mean little to them. This is particularly prevalent amongst substance abusing sex workers as they usually work during odd hours in secluded places, making them more vulnerable to rape. A common practice in the border town among sex workers is that they plie the N1 road which connects South Africa and Zimbabwe marketing, and if done during the night, sex workers noted that it's more common to be raped than not to. Criminal gangs also operates in the border town, working as *amaguma guma*, *matlaishas* (syndicate crews involved in illegal smuggling of substances and other goods).

Substance abusing sex workers noted that unlike non substance abusing sex workers, the need for substances and the confidence they get after intoxication makes them work in high crime zones as these zones also has more business due to high traffic of people. One participant narrated her ordeals and noted:

I was working along the freeway when a taxi with 4 men stopped. They then instructed me to get inside. I tried to resist but they manhandled me. They took turns to rape me. They were saying I am a prostitute I can't be raped. That's my work after all. I blame marijuana and tik that made me go there.

Gang rapes in sex work is very common, with National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NADC, 2009) lamenting that substance abusing sex workers are the most victims to such violations. The inability to properly decode danger and stay far from potentially harmful places is the reason for high sexual violence for intoxicated sex workers. Vandepitte *et al.*, (2006) notes that people who sell sex while intoxicated are more likely to experience sexual violence than those who are not intoxicated, particularly in street-based and low-status settings (UNODC, 2012). NACD (2009) further propounds that street-based substance abusing sex workers are at a risk of being sexually abused by customers as they are usually unaccompanied on the streets at late nights. These risks are high prevalent in Musina, as the town harbours all forms of informal workers and low status settings.

Sub Theme: Sexual Violence by Clients/Potential Clients

Clients and potential clients are other perpetrators of sexual violence. The circumstances that usually leads to violence in this case are unspecified and ambiguous conditions of service between the sex worker and the client. These circumstances are prevalent in substance abusing sex workers who would have consumed substances brought by the client. This is a common phenomenon in sex work, with scholars like Ditmore (2013) arguing that sometimes substances are the central part of the interaction between sex worker and client, with some clients inviting sex workers to share their substances and provide ‘party services’. Such invitations are potential sources of conflicts, as clients would regard the supply of substances as payment for sexual services. To most sex workers in Musina, except those who uses ‘hard’ substances, substances are not in any way payment for sexual services.

Having supplied substances to a sex worker, it is common that a client would then expect sexual services as payment for providing substances. Conflict will ensue with the sex worker demanding monetary payment and arguing that they do not trade sex for substances and the client demanding reimbursement of the money he had used. This is noted by one sex worker who explained:

I met the guy at our local tavern there. He said he wanted me for the whole night and he started buying me all sorts of substances. When we went to his place and before we did anything I then told him that I charge R500 the whole night. He then started telling me that he was not going to pay since he had bought me beer and all. I told him that that’s not how I work. He took a knife and told me he was going to kill me if I don’t either give him the money he had used or have sex with him. I didn’t have the money so I had to let him do whatever he wanted. After all I am a prostitute.

Ditmore (2013) also noted that the risks of sexual violence is high, particularly when the client has provided substances to the sex worker and the sexual sessions are to happen at the client’s residency. Such inexplicit terms of relationships are usually experienced by young and inexperienced substance abusing sex workers who have not yet mastered the skills of the trade (Chikoko, 2014; Ditmore, 2013).

Moreover, circumstances that can be defined as rape is when sexual services are hired for a short-time. Sex workers in Musina mostly operates on the basis of either time that they are going

to spend with a client or sexual rounds (determined by orgasms that the client will have during sex). The time in this case are not numerically defined, but the sex worker determines the time frame. Participants refer to the time frames as ‘short-time’ or the ‘whole-night’.

The ambiguity in time frames are a huge source of conflicts as the discretion lies with the sex worker who determines when the ‘short-time’ has lapsed. Sex workers reported that they are victimised after providing short time sexual services as clients would then demand more time. This will be contrary to the terms of the initial contract and payment provided. Explaining this point, one participant lamented:

You know we agree that we will have short time and I then charge a client for that...but some clients would want more and more. I tell them noo it's enough now but they would threaten me or even beat me. I will have to just lie there and let him do whatever.

These sentiments go to show the delicate nature of the sex work profession, replete with sexual violation. Participants further observed that this usually happens when the client is providing accommodation usually unfamiliar to the sex work. Such situations are also noted by Ditmore (2013), NADC (2009) who argues that the risks of violence in sex work skyrockets when the client is providing accommodation.

Furthermore, sex workers noted that they are sometimes forced to perform sexual acts that they are not comfortable with. These sexual acts include oral and anal sex, which ordinarily the sex workers would not do. One participant re-counted:

Some clients will tell you that I want anal, or oral. I don't do that but they can start beating you. I end up doing it. After that some will just go without paying. It's hard.

Such incidents are common in sex work, with many sex workers being sexually abused by being made to perform acts not only against their will, but acts that also enhances their vulnerability to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Bridgett and Robinson (1999) documents similar sexual abuses in Australia, and argues that the sex industry faces double tragedies as victims of sexual abuse do not have access to legal recourse.

Sub Theme: Sexual Violence from State Security Agents

Sexual violation at the hands if state security agents, mostly members of the SAPS, the army officials is high prevalent in Musina town. Musina as a border town is home to a high number of police and army officials as they seek to provide security and protection and maintain law and order in the border town and border post. Being a border town, the town also hosts high numbers of immigrant population, some in transit whilst others have indefinitely settle in Musina (Chinyakate *et al.*, 2018).

Participants reported that they are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuses at the hands of SAPS and army due to their migration status and because of their substance abusing behaviours. Many migrants who have settled in Musina do not have documentations to be in South Africa (IOM, 2014). Such status makes undocumented sex workers vulnerable to sexual abuse by the police and army in (Rasangani *et al.*, 2016). Young, Boyd and Hubbel (2000) concurs and argues

that the risks of sexual abuse by the police skyrocket among illegal immigrant sex workers whose stay in the country is illegal and cannot find alternative employment and faces barriers to seeking justice.

Participants bemoaned that they face protracted risks of arbitrary arrests with the officials' aim being to sexually abuse them. The modus operandi of officials like the SAPS or army is to target sex work hotspots where they would apprehend sex workers after demanding identity documents from them. After being arrested, the officials would then demand for sex in exchange of freedom. One sex worker narrated:

The police or army are the one that mostly abuse us. They target our working areas, arrest us and threaten with deported. They would tell us that its either we have sex with them or they would send us to Mnangagwa (deport).

Chikoko (2014) argues that cases of sex workers being sexually abused by police officers are very common, with the police threatening sex workers into submission of having sex with them. Ditmore (2013) concurs and argues that cases of sexual abuse by law enforcement agents on substance abuses are rampant, as the police exploit their substance abusing and sex work vulnerability.

Moreover, sex workers noted that there are instances where they will be arrested for substance possession, public drinking or indecent exposure. Indecent exposure is when sex workers are arrested after being caught having sex in public places. Under all these crimes, participants noted that the police tendency will be to demand for sex for freedom. One participant narrated:

I got arrested when I coming from the tavern in the early morning. They searched me and found some substances and condoms in my handbag. That's when they realised that I am a sex worker. After that they said I have to have sex with them so they will let me go.

Scorgie (2013a) bemoans the prevalence of unlawful arrests among sex workers with the police's intentions to sexually abuse sex workers or even extortion. Literature in the Western World also shows similar cultures with Booth *et al.*, (2010) reporting that substance abusing sex workers in Russia and Ukraine are frequently picked up by the police, detained in private residences or bathhouses and subjected to sexual and physical abuses.

Sub Theme: Sexual violence by Substance Dealers

Additionally, substance abusing sex workers faces sexual abuse from substances dealers. Participants observed that the need to cope with sexual violence and other intrapersonal conflicts of sex work has resulted in the development of substance dependency syndromes. In order to sustain such behaviours, sometimes sex workers borrow substances from dealers. In the event that the sex workers has failed to pay for the substances, the dealers would use unorthodox ways of getting their money, including rape.

Participants noted that with some substance dealers this sexual abuse will not be payment for the substances they would have borrow, but a way of making them pay (in monetary) for the

substances consumed. The arguments provided were that if substance dealers could just have sex with sex workers, it will not mean anything as these substance abusers are already sex workers, so sex itself cannot be used as payment. One participant explained:

With those guys who sell us tik and bronco, when you don't pay they will rape you. The rape will be a way for you to quickly look for their money coz you will end up being raped over and over again.

Sexual violence from substances dealers is also documented by NADC (2009); Young *et al.*, (2000); Ditmore (2013); Chikoko (2014) as they argue that sexual violence amongst substance abusing sex workers is high prevalent, with substance dealers being perpetrators of such crimes as well. Substance dependency in sex work is very common, with sex workers caught in an unescapable web of substance abuse and sex work.

Theme: Barriers to seeking justice

The unwillingness of victims of sexual abuse seems to buttress and validate the perceptions that sex workers cannot be raped. The study thus tried to establish victims' reasons for their unwillingness to report sexual violation to the police. There was consensus in participants' opinions and experiences that reporting a sexual abuse case on a sex worker was a fruitless exercise, as no action would be taken if not the sex worker is even further victimised. Such lack of interest by the police is founded on stigma and discrimination and criminalization of the sex work industry (Rasangani *et al.*, 2016; Rychkrova, 2013; Crago *et al.*, 2008). Sex workers in Musina operate in a hostile environment such that they have become a closed society hesitant to seek any service, even health care.

There are circumstances upon which some participants reported these cases of sexual abuse by the police to the police but it later backfired on them, with the stigma of being a sex worker and an illegal immigrant taking precedence over the reported rape crime. Sex workers noted that the xenophobia treatment they receive is a huge challenge in their quest for justice is a huge impediment in reporting sexual violence perpetrated by both the police and their clients. Rasangani *et al.*, (2016) argues that the negative treatment sex workers receive at the hands of the police makes them believe that sex workers cannot be raped, and even if they are raped, nothing can be done to the perpetrators of such heinous crimes. Buttressing this point, one sex worker echoed:

I was raped by a police officer. I went to report the matter to the police station but when I got there, they started asking me about my papers. I didn't have any and they put me in jail. They started calling me names saying I came all the way from Zimbabwe to cause trouble. I was later deported.

Such stigmas and prejudices against migrant sex workers makes sexual violence a menace that Rasangani *et al.*, (2016) call for urgent action against discriminatory practice by the police.

CONCLUSION

Sex work continues to be a socially stigmatised and legally criminalised profession the world over, infesting it with violence and other discriminatory practises against those who sell sex. Sexual violence is rife especially amongst substance abusing sex workers, with the perception that *'you cannot be rapped when you are a sex worker'* being validated by both victims and perpetrators alike. The stigma and criminality of sex work makes both victim and perpetrator believe that sexual violence on a sex work is normal as the victim is already providing sexual services, thus it is part of their job. Sex workers on the other hand have internalised and accepted such abuses and would rather regard sexual abuse as normal *'occupational hazards'* that goes with the trade. The criminality nature of sex work in South Africa further worsen the plight of sex work who then cannot report the crime commit to them as they are a crime unto themselves. Reporting sexual abuse would require detailed circumstances upon which such crime was committed, a situation that sex workers are not prepared to undertake. This is further compounded by the fact that most sex workers in Musina are undocumented immigrants who would be arrested and deported if they ever come in contact with the police. The fact that the security agents like the SAPS and the army, constitutionally mandated officials to protect civilians are also perpetrators of rape makes sex workers despondent, despair and hopeless. Substances blurs client-sex worker relationship, with many clients regarding buying substances for a sex worker as payment for sexual services. Such acts would result in conflict, likely to end in rape. On the other hand, the police and army in the border town uses arbitrary arrest as their *modus operandi*, and would in turn demand sex for freedom.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

ANESU SVINURAI

University of Limpopo, Department of Social Work
anesvinu@gmail.com

JABULANI CALVIN MAKHUBELE

University of Limpopo, Department of Social Work
Jabulani.Makhubele@ul.ac.za

ANANIAS JANETTA AGNES

University of Namibia, Department of Social Work
jananias@unam.na

FREEMAN RACHEL JOHANNA

University of Namibia, Department of Social Work
rfreeman@unam.na

MAFA PRUDENCE

University of Limpopo, Department of Social Work
Prudence.Mafa@ul.ac.za

MATLAKALA FRANS KOKETSO

University of Limpopo, Department of Social Work
fransmatlakala@gmail.com

CHILWALO BEATRICE NAMOONGA

University of Namibia, Department of Social Work
namoongac97@gmail.com

RAPHOLO SELELO FRANK

University of Limpopo, Department of Social Work
Frank.Rapholo@ul.ac.za

HAMUSE TIBERIA NDANYAKUWA ILONGA

University of Namibia, Department of Social Work
tiberiamuse@gmail.com

HASHEELA MIRIAM WINNIE

University of Namibia, Department of Social Work
Mshidolo@gmail.com