

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Towards deconstructing urban tourism within the framework of commercial sex work in Uganda**

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**There is great anxiety that present day urban authorities are not considering the amount of heterosexual activities that are neither among legitimately married couples nor casually relating friends. This anxiety has brought much pressure onto the civil society that aims to promote morality in society in addition to the religious bodies that aim to encourage positive morals among their congregates. Yet, the extent to which commercial sex work is capable of increasing the level of urban tourism in the 21st century is fascinating. Bearing in mind the different challenges and the proof of dearth of statistics on commercial sex work in Uganda, the emphasis of this paper is on how urban authorities can exploit the growing industry of commercial sexual activities to enhance urban tourism. Through an intensive review of available literature, this paper has established that commercial sexual activities are one of the central tourist attraction products in a number of urban areas in Uganda even though it lacks official documentation. Consequently, neither the urban authorities nor the tourism agency cares paying attention to the huge tourism potential hidden in the commercial sex industry. It is encouraged that urban authorities document the number of participants in commercial sex work so that they can be used to enhance urban tourism. This study is useful to urban authorities and other key stakeholders working with urban populations particularly at a time when nations are turning to domestic tourism.**

**Key words:** Urban tourism, commercial sex work(er), urban tourist, selling sex.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The extent to which Commercial Sex Work (CSW) is capable of enhancing the level of urban tourism in the ever changing 21<sup>st</sup> era is fascinating to a number of researchers and policy architects worldwide. A number of studies reveal the degree of stigma related to sex work; in some cases it is inescapable and deeply engrained especially in societies that have strong religious rigidities and beliefs. Scholars such as De Dieu Longo et al.

(2017) and Antebi-Grusizka et al. (2019) attest to this fact and reveal how sex work is often stigmatised and considered illegal, in much of Africa, with CSWs representing one of the marginalised sections. In their study, Fedorko et al. (2021) reveal that during the COVID-19 pandemic, sex workers were snubbed by a number of regimes, omitted from socioeconomic processes and simply left on their own.

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The above view is further supported by a similar study that was conducted in the United States (Tomko et al., 2021); it was indicated that besides being suppressed, stigma among CSWs is shaped within frameworks of societal ostracism and linked to a variety of ill-effects, together with emotional grief, and inferior proportions of healthcare-quest. These revelations reveal the inequity of the challenge facing CSWs virtually in almost every nation and society. In spite all the inequity suffered, CSW remains one of the fastest growing modern-day industries worlds over.

### **Etymology of CSW**

There is a certain degree of muddle over the concept of CSW. It is a term used in a range of contexts with a range of denotations, and if not careful, its meaning can lack clarity. For example, a number of researchers recognise selling and buying sex as CSW (Stenersen and Ovrebø, 2020; Lathan et al., 2021; Charek et al., 2021). Sexual contact includes touching specific parts of the woman's body (mainly in hetero-sexual contact), caressing, smooching, kissing, cradling and sexual intimacy, which are all or individually applicable in a range of contexts in CSW (Busby et al., 2020; Packheiser et al., 2020).

Sex workers are described as male, female and/or transgender adults aged 18 or more years who trade consensual sexual services in return for cash or payment in kind, and who may sell sex formally or informally, regularly or occasionally (UNAIDS, 2014; Jin Tan et al., 2021). A recent study shows a divergence in the way the term CSW is understood and presented with one side suggesting that the notion should be construed as rape since it is forced rather than based on mutual terms (De Dieu Longo et al., 2017). Another group suggests that CSW is a form of work that is conducted by females across the globe but often chastised by society on the basis of religion and other socio-traditional beliefs (Antebi-Grusizka et al., 2019). Yet, failure to recognise the existence of CSW injures a populace that is already vulnerable and undermines positive endeavours to provide helpful services such as knowledge on reproductive healthcare. In particular, when government authorities perceive those engaged in selling sex as offenders or preys and the industry as unlawful, less success is attained (Wolf, 2019). It is, as a consequence, very significant to appreciate the presence of CSWs in our populations in terms of their whereabouts, demographic proportion, areas of concentration and the various forms so that better targeted services can be availed to them in time (De Dieu Longo et al., 2017).

According to Watson and Vidal (2011), CSW is different from sexual contact for leisure since the latter may take place between colleagues, friends and/ or strangers who get caught-up in compromising situations devoid of personal control from one side or both. In this case, there

is monetary exchange but sexual satisfaction with no future sexual attachment between the two individuals is the key driver. This condition happens in cases such as rescue missions, situations of abandonment, to mention a few. As a consequence, CSW means more than just sexual contact between two adults of the opposite sex. However, a number of researchers (such as Sawicki et al., 2019; Antebi-Grizka et al., 2019) have described CSW from a more universal view, and yet in diverse frameworks. They appear to designate CSWs and sex workers synonymously. In their study, Sawicki et al. (2019) describe sex workers as persons who barter sexual services for a reward, for example, monetary, properties or other benefits. In Canada, CSW is described as sex work (Bungay et al., 2021). In much of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), CSW encapsulates a number of issues. In Zimbabwe, they label CSWs as ladies of the night (Makondo and Makondo, 2014). Thus, CSW appears to be designated as adult consensual exchange of sexual services for monetary gain (Bungay et al., 2021).

While several studies appear to concentrate more on targeted socioeconomic interventions in terms of prevention of sexually transmitted infections (such as HIV and AIDS (McMahon et al., 2021) as well as their relationships with particular clients especially those that turn out to be violent, it is significant that the authors take a positivist thinking at this stage. Of particular significance is the study conducted by Watson and Vidal (2011) among men who visit CSWs; it was established that buying sex "allows men to engage in sexual activities that they cannot or feel unable to engage in with non-paying sexual encounters". Also, "in some circumstances, this has included certain types of sexual activity such as oral or anal sex and also sexual activity involving sadomasochistic role-plays". Their study also established that "attraction for some men buying sex is that it appears to represent to them a psychologically safer environment in which to express sexuality". And that "the financial component allows some men to experience sex as more of a transaction, reducing their sense of personal exposure and fears of rejection". It was also found that "buying sex is interconnected with other parts of men's lives, often their careers and/or intimate relationships". And further "buying sex is related to the degree of satisfaction or frustration with one's regular relationship". In short, the notion of selling sex and/or buying sex appears to be deconstructed within different socio-economic-psychological contexts.

The notion of CSW can, likewise, be understood within the framework of positivism, which describes a way of describing the social order that depends on particular systematic proof generated through investigation and measurements so as to expose a factual nature of how the social order functions (Cull, 2021). Positivism is significant in creating ideas that can be verified with the eventual objective of enlightening our realm as soon as these ideas are plainly set out (Edlin, 2021). It is not a

monopoly of natural sciences such as physics and chemistry, as a number of people want us to believe, but positivism can reveal comparable rules functioning on the societal level of humanity such as CSW.

### Statement of the problem

The key attention of this paper is the present state of urban tourism in Uganda, which is one of the main factors contributing to youth employment in the country. There are pointers that the challenge of unemployment is organisational by its nature, which is, a number of youths are either unemployed or underemployed for dearth of opportunities as well as due to the impact COVID-19 has had on economies. This is a big challenge for the growing urban population, seeing that it is dominated by young people, thus, calling for instantaneous attention. It is possible that the challenge of unemployment is partly responsible for CSW as a fall-back position for a number of young people and yet scanty research has been done on this aspect. CSW is real and trendy in a number of countries whether in public or in seclusion; and provides a social and financial support to locals, travelers, and tourists. A study conducted by Ditmore and Melissa (2020) suggests that there were tens of thousands of women from Eastern Europe and Asia working as CSWs in Dubai where a large proportion of their buyers were men from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates; and the world-wide male business community. In Uganda, CSW is becoming fashionable in a number of urban centers and involves young and middle-aged ladies who sell sex exclusively to prospective males particularly in non-Christian Guest Houses across the country. Despite listing several factors favorable for the booming urban tourism sector, CSW has not been acknowledged as a potential pull factor for the sector, in a number of Ugandan urban centers. While a number of countries (such as Uganda under the Penal Code Act (ACP, 120) have outlawed the practice rendering it illegal and prohibited, several tourists, upon arrival at tourism sites, start searching for sex sellers.

### Objective of the paper

The main objective of this study is to deconstruct the notion of urban tourism within the framework of CSW in Uganda. In achieving this objective, the following research questions, will be answered: (a) what are the key categories of CSW? (b) What connection can be traced between the new technological dynamics and CSW? (c) What are the major triggers of CSW? And (d) what is the influence of CSW in the potential tourist locations in the country?

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The central approach for this study was a desk review of accessible

literature on commercial sex work-[ers] in Uganda accompanied by other parts of Africa and beyond. Desk research involves a critical and comprehensive analysis of existing studies on a particular theme focussing on obtainable materials, e.g., academic journals, the internet, bulletins and statistical publications. Given that this phase precedes cross-referencing and the organisation of information, authors meticulously report on existing research through summarising and analysing, comparing, identifying common themes and gaps in the knowledge base, and providing directions for future research. Consequently, this approach has demonstrated high levels of efficacy in terms of offering a dependable overview of major literatures on a selected topic.

## OUTCOMES AND DISCUSSION

### The key categories of CSW

Recent studies have grouped the different categories of CSWs into three, viz.; official professional CSWs, non-professional CSWs, and circumstantial CSWs:

- a) Official professionals (also known as full-service sex workers) either have sex with high class (or wealthy) clients or work in underprivileged vicinities (Du Bois et al., 2021). They are often known as corporate CSWs.
- b) Non-professionals include market and street vendors (such as mobile women who vend salads on streets, students who are involved in occasional transactional sex particularly during holidays and/or weekends (Rosebloom and Fetner, 2001; Sagar et al., 2015; Stewart, 2021), house wives (especially during lunch time or whenever they sneak out for grocery shopping, visitation, partying or funerals (Adhikari, 2014) and unskilled civil servants (those commonly baptized as support staff such as office attendants, cleaners and office gardeners).
- c) Circumstantial sex workers embrace those that frequently feel locked in the business seeing that they lack the capacity to find equivalent engagement as a result of their vulnerability resulting from several situational conditions. Such conditions may include serious life trials, requisite for financial motion as well as the individual achievement by their work (Curtis et al., 2021).

The above three categories of CSWs appear to be intertwined in a number of cases seeing that one is likely to navigate between the categories due to improved financial status or remain stagnant.

### The connection between the new technological dynamics and CSW

There have been numerous dynamics in the CSW over the past decades as a result of increased scientific technologies and many socio-economic factors. These dynamics are informed by the fact that fewer people are in our time working on the streets and there has been a great reduction in the number of visible forms of CSWs as a result of progresses in scientific technologies

(Sanders et al., 2021).

To begin with, much of CSWs nowadays is negotiated with clients and they are facilitated through online spaces. These are known as off-street sex workers (Reynolds, 2021; Giommoni et al., 2021; Vlase and Preoteasa, 2021; Mergenthaler and Yasseri, 2021; Wang et al., 2022; Almond and Mallette, 2022). In addition, adult entertainment platforms have become very convenient to both the sex sellers and their clientele in a number of countries, including Uganda (Hill and Lee, 2021). To sum it, dating sites (such as eharmony, elite singles, okcupid, adult friend finder, tinder, silver singles, etc.) are now very common and accessible using the online dating profiles, which a number of CSWs are now making use of to successfully reach out to the wider community of clients (Sharabi, 2021).

While these dating sites are accessible to CSWs, particularly those that are computer literate, they are not the only ones using them. In South Africa, for example, dating sites are handy to the divorced or separated, busy professionals, LGBT community and senior people as well.

In each of the above circumstances, the legality of sex work remains unclear even if a number of countries have permissive legislations. For example, while the UK quasi-criminalisation background presents trading in sex between submissive grown-ups as legal, the dealings and circumstances adjacent to it remain unlawful (Sanders et al., 2021).

While in a number of European countries, selling sex is not forbidden, for countries in central and eastern Europe as well as central Asia (together with Croatia), selling sex remains criminalised to date on the pretext of public order and peace. According to Radačić and Antić (2022), non-criminalisation of trading in sex among much of Europe is particularly strengthened by both the legalisation model and the client criminalisation model in which none of the two renders sex workers criminal. A similar trend was undertaken by the post-apartheid government of South Africa, which decriminalised sex work through a resolution in 2017 (Punt, 2021). In all these, CSW appears to flourish with the growth of scientific technologies and it is expected to grow bottomless in the coming decades.

### **The triggers of CSW in contemporary Uganda**

The concern of CSWs appears to be informed by a number of issues including, but not limited to; technology change, new public management principles, cost of formal education, degree of facilitation in public schools, quality of development programs, corruption and the rise of Mafia groups.

The first is that it is apparently clear that youth unemployment has hit the highest record since time immemorial and the situation is expected to worsen in the

coming decades as a result of dynamic scientific technologies and a fast growing human population (Mkombe et al., 2021; Webb, 2021). From the scientific technological perspective, every nation is struggling to improve their level of technology but they do not appear to appreciate one key challenge that comes with such technologies (Chao and Lenox, 2017). That is, with high technology, a job that was hitherto done by fifty people can now be done faster and better by no more than two people using advanced scientific technologies. The question this brings is that by so doing, we live a balance of about forty-eight people unemployed and such group may never be employed anywhere given that every company is resorting to the same development. Also, the world population is growing at a speed never imagined before in history to the extent that in about twenty years that is, before the year 2050, the global population may have hit a record 10 billion. This number, coupled with the ever advancing technologies, is likely to see hundreds of millions of young people unemployed.

The second is that new public management has come with lots of options through which costs can be cut in a number of public organisations (Brown, 2021). One way to achieving this is through multi-tasking where a manager, be they in the public sector or private sector, is expected to do secretarial work on his or her own and drive his/her car to and fro work as well as other off-site organisational activities. This directly implies that for every multitasking manager (Wu et al., 2021), two employees (a secretary and a driver) are rendered unemployed, which is a huge number in real terms. For instance, if there are fifty million managers, this action presupposes that a total of one hundred million youths have been rendered unemployed as a result of new public management principles and there is dearth of dependable safety nets for the affected category to have tangible benefits through the much preached trickle-down effect.

The third aspect appears to be the cost of formal education which has skyrocketed to the effect that education is slowly becoming a luxury of the wealthy given that the poor cannot afford paying the exorbitant fees (Blanton et al., 2021). For example, a parent in Uganda, taking their child to a private University for a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of surgery (as it is called) requires six million (using the exchange rate of UGX3700 for USD1, this is approximately USD2000) for tuition fees alone. When other requirements, such as accommodation, meals, healthcare, to mention just a few, this figure may well reach up to twelve million (approximately USD 4000) per semester. Yet, this student is expected to study for no less than twelve semesters; the simple arithmetic here brings the total figure to UGX132 million (approximately 44000USD). And a poorly paid primary school teacher who earns about UGX600,000 (approximately USD160), their child will never dream of taking a private medical program at University

(Zikanga et al., 2021). In the end, the child of the poor will only take academic programs that are less-relevant in the world of work thereby increasing the scale of youth unemployment directly.

The fourth issue is closely related to issue three above in that even the poor parent that takes their child to a government-aided school, because of dearth of infrastructure, equipment and human resources, the child studies 'by rumours' due to both high numbers in the classroom (over fifty for every teacher) and dearth of equipment for delivering meaningful scientific knowledge (Okia et al., 2021). For instance, a child in such a school will take on a science combination but will never have access to any laboratory equipment, which leaves that child concentrating on imaginary scientific knowledge and skills. To illuminate this issue; a number of students know that a combination of hydrogen and oxygen yields water but how these atoms are combined remains mystery (Gusango et al., 2021). Are these not the many low cadre healthcare providers hovering the country and beyond, and can anyone insist that we are teaching more sciences (it is now compulsory at lower secondary schools in Uganda) than humanities that our leaders continually scold in virtually any speech? A child from the wealthy parent will enrol in an international school where the ratio of teacher to students is very low (approximately 1 to 25 per class). This, coupled with a well-stocked laboratory, a child is able to meaningfully visualise, actively participate and analyse scientific knowledge with confidence. No wonder, such graduates will never understand the meaning of unemployment even when he/she becomes a member of the Legislative Assembly or a Cabinet Minister at that. Moreover, they are the most dominant due to the financial muscle they can apply to arm-twist the voter and the voting process to their favour (Cheeseman et al., 2021). What kind of legislation or policy will ever come out of such a cohort? Consequently, even if the youths graduate from colleges, they will remain unemployable and/or unemployed due to the divide created by wealth and lack of it in the education system.

The fifth issue appears as a rejoinder of issue four, that is, the quality of development frameworks adopted in a number of less-developing nations have little relevance in terms of curtailing youth unemployment (Solberg et al., 2021).

In the case of Uganda, majority of the poverty reduction programs have, since the year 2000, been censured for failing to translate into the presidential dream of increased prosperity among the poor including the growing number of young people. These programs include Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA), the famous National agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), Prosperity-For-All (PFA), Operation Wealth Creation (OWC), Youth Livelihood Program (YLP), Women Entrepreneurship Program (WEP), Emyooga and currently, the Parish Development Model (PDM) to

mention just a few (Agole et al., 2021; Galukande-Kiganda and Nalumansi, 2021). The reason behind the persistent failure is straightforward; the technocrats involved in formulating and implementing the programs do not analyse the situation on ground since they have never been there. They fail to appreciate what it means to be poor; they only believe that giving out money to youth groups, women groups or other formations will automatically translate into poverty reduction. They do not reflect on how the target group can invest the money in business when the same people have no food in the house or when their child is sick or when their child cannot go to school due to dearth of school fees. As a consequence, the technocrats have failed to convince the *Wanainchi* (local population) about the feasibility of such programs that are otherwise meant to enhance youth empowerment or youth self-employment.

The sixth concern is that Uganda is one of the countries better known for high levels of corruption almost at every stage of the policy and in every sector. Obtainable studies suggest that corruption in Uganda has become so entrenched that the government agencies often entrusted with fighting corruption end up being caught in the very mess (Mwesigwa, 2021). Cases of the untouchables are very dominant in curtailing efforts against corruption and, in the end; the President has resorted to preaching good morals, threatening to deal with the thieves and being an active participant in anti-corruption walks. To begin with, preaching good morals is a good thing because that is what everyone envisages but when those involved in real preaching (the religious) are not devoid of corruption then preaching loses significance. As a result, a number of religious men and women have failed to provide accountability for the resources entrusted under their care. Adding to this, threatening to deal with the thieves without taking action is as good as not saying anything at all as reports continue to implicate several big shots in government. The only significance is that the *small fish*, as they are commonly labelled, get arrested, sometimes when they are innocent but since a lamb has to be sacrificed, someone somewhere gets arrested as a display that something is being done on corruption. Also, antic-corruption crusades and/or walks are good in awakening the population towards something; this is an effort known among the powerless especially by civil society organisations. There is nowhere in the history of humankind that corruption has been fought through anti-corruption walks and it is not about to happen in Uganda.

The seventh apprehension focuses on the rise of the so called Mafia groups, which have dominated every aspect of life in Uganda and possibly elsewhere albeit at varying degrees (Sidorova and Lyubenova, 2021). These *Mafias* cannot allow any program meant to reduce poverty to succeed because that is where they benefit from. For instance, having high number of street kids roaming the streets of Kampala city and beyond is their pride; having

universal primary education and universal secondary education schools failing to compete with the poorly resourced private schools is their pride; having public hospitals continually running out drugs when huge amounts of drugs are expensively disposed of every year is their pride; having every poverty reduction program fail to create impact on the target group is their pride; having urban insecurity causing mayhem is their pride; having much of the national forests cut down at imaginable pace is their pride; having so many unemployed youths in the country is their pride; having fuel shortages hit the economy for weeks as fuel trucks are stuck in a 'seventy Kilometre traffic jam' at the Kenya- Uganda board in Malaba is their pride; having shortages in sugar when the per capita sugar production is higher than ever before is their pride; having more teenage girls become pregnant is their pride; and the list is endless (Bunyan, 2021; Shukar et al., 2021).

The Mafia groups, in Uganda, have become so sophisticated and dominant that the plight of citizens is their pride since they (the Mafias) accumulate much and often abnormal wealth as the status remains absurd for many a poor. That is why they continually organise groups of vulnerable sections, which are maintained in that status by the Mafia-dominated policy frameworks, to take to the President so he can give them hand-outs for short time endurance.

Descending from the above issues, the idea of CSW, which appears to be streaming from unemployment, is a big challenge, and seems to have persisted for generations, and so attracting serious questions about the relevance of urban authorities. Customarily, it is the prospect of every parent to see their daughter or son maturing into a normal citizen (as seen from the perspective of moral standards rather than modern-day crusading), finds a family and live happily thereafter. According to the Holly Bible (Proverbs 31: 10-31), the notion of a virtuous woman and the complications involved in finding one are catalogued. With the prevailing challenge where dearth virtuous women contributes to singlehood (plus the attendant price, such as CSW), this prospect is a mere artifice to many parents and society as a whole.

In view of the rising urban tourism in Uganda, partly attributable to high youth unemployment, this paper proposes means of deconstructing CSW as one of the urban tourism potentials to be harnessed by urban authorities. While efforts have been put forth by academics such as Rogerson and Rogerson (2021) to investigate the impetus of CSW in the framework of their individual countries' situation, not any of these studies appear appropriate for Uganda where the situation of CSW is to a certain extent blurred. Obtainable studies (for example Logie et al., 2021; Nabunya et al., 2021) on CSW are scarce, and they typically enumerate challenges encountered in the industry, rehabilitation of the actors and offer the way forward. They miscarry in

deliberating on additional topics of CSW and means by which it can be settled as one of the possible potentials for urban tourism, hence this study.

### **The influence of CSW in the potential tourist Locations in Uganda**

Tourists have a wide range of budgets and tastes and, as a consequence, a variety of resorts and hotels have developed across the globe to cater for their needs (Lew, 2021). E.g., majority of the urban tourists prefer simple beach vacations, while others want more specialized holidays, quieter resorts, family-oriented holidays, or niche market-targeted destination hotels. In Uganda, the data from the Uganda Tourism Board (2021) suggests that 98.1% of the tourists spend the entire duration of their stay in paid accommodations. This leaves a paltry 1.9% of tourists having to spend their time with friends and relatives outside the paid accommodations. The statistics further indicate that between 2015 and 2019, approximately 6.3% of tourists were couples who stayed together in the country suggesting that majority of them (93.7%) were not accompanied by their spouses. As such, the act of CSW appears to be practiced at a client's residence or hotel, often referred to as out-call, or at the seller's residence or hotel room rented for the occasion (Lepp, 2002).

It ought to be noted that CSW is a subset of urban tourism, and the growth of CSW can translate into urban tourism. Likewise, for majority, urban tourism involving travelling to an urban area due to [a] certain attraction[s]. As such, urban tourism is not necessarily about certain features or activities, but a wide range of expectations, which an individual envisions when he/she visits a particular area. Uganda has a number of natural and man-made attractions that are important urban tourism sites. These include bird viewing, boat cruising and water sports, hiking and mountain climbing, religious tourism [especially at the Uganda Martyrs shrines in Namugongo] and a number of cultural sites.

Thus, urban tourism is an activity which involves people traveling to and staying in urban centers outside their usual environment for a considerable period primarily for leisure, and not for business and other purposes. This dismisses the common perception of urban tourism as being limited to holiday activity (Andreva, 2007).

Given that one of the world's oldest professions in the English-speaking world, is the business of engaging in sexual activity in exchange for payment. CSW is described as sexual services, commercial sex and a person who works in this field is called a prostitute or a sex worker. It is one of the branches of the sex industry, along with pornography, stripping and erotic dancing (Weitzer, 2005). CSW occurs in a variety of forms, and its legal status varies from country to country, ranging from being an enforced or unenforced crime, to being

unregulated, and to a regulated profession. Lew concurs that international tourism receipts grew to US\$1.23 trillion in 2019, with the tourist arrivals surpassing the milestone of one billion tourists globally for the first time although the United Nations World Trade Organization had estimated that international tourist arrivals would decrease by 58% to 78% in 2020, leading to a potential loss of US\$0.9–1.2 trillion in international tourist receipts.

The Manila Declaration on World Tourism of 1980 recognizes the prominence of CSW as "an activity essential to the life of nations because of its direct effects on the social, cultural, educational, and economic sectors of national societies, and on their international relations". Tourism brings large amounts of income into a local economy in the form of payment for goods and services needed by tourists; and it also generates opportunities for employment in the service sector associated with tourism. It is claimed that travelling broadens the mind of a traveler. Several factors that include a combination of tangible and intangible elements, such as natural, cultural and man-made resources, attractions, facilities, services and activities around a specific center of interest represent the core of the destination marketing mix and create an overall visitor experience including emotional aspects for the potential customers.

In the host destinations, urban tourists are convincingly contented with services that include accommodation facilities that range from low cost home-stays to five star hotels; hospitality, including food and beverage serving centers; health care services like massage parlours; all modes of transport, travel agencies, guided tours and urban tourist guides; cultural services such as religious monuments, museums, and historical places; and shopping. CSW may be considered a form of exploitation. For instance, in Sweden, Norway, and Iceland, CSW is illegal to buy sexual services, but not to sell them, suggesting that the client commits a crime, but not the prostitute or the sex worker. In the Netherlands and Germany, CSW is a legitimate occupation and it is regulated as a profession; yet the act is a crime especially in many Muslim countries, where the prostitutes face severe penalties (Mortimer, 2012).

Just like the medieval residents accepted CSW as a necessary part of their life, CSW continues to play a significant role in society. Mortimer (2012) notes that prostitutes subverted the sexual tendencies of male and active youths, by learning to exist with the establishment of CSW; men were less likely to collectively rape honest women of marriageable and re-marriageable age. To reinforce this argument, Lew (2021) refers to the position highlighted by St. Augustine's claim that "the removal of an institution would bring lust into all aspects of the world." Meaning that without prostitutes to subvert male tendencies, men would go after innocent women instead, thus the prostitutes were doing society a favor. In Uganda, the Penal Code Act (CAP, 120) stipulates that rape, defilement and many other sexual offences are highly punishable and the availability of sex workers is a

big leap in the protection of urban tourists from getting into the *jaws* of such offences. The availability of willing ladies to offer sex to tourists is enough to avert the evil and ill-motives that would have lured urban tourists into problems. Critical looks at the many Annual Uganda Police Crime Reports, major sexual offences that involve tourists have not been recorded. Every year, the Police Crime Reports are full of 'extortion, conning, and defrauding' urban tourists by CSWs.

The role of CSWs can be two-way: positively key to the sex seller in terms of financial or other gains; and to the buyer in terms of the social comfort. A number of CSWs have a list of issues to be met and have resorted to this work to have these ends met. The urban tourists develop such social and sexual desires for CSWs to satisfy their social and sexual desires without committing crimes at different urban tourism sites in Uganda. Accordingly, the Lady Mermaid Bureau which is an association of urban sex sellers with more than 800 members mainly in Kampala city, several urban tourists hire them for 'escort services' rendered during the visitors' period in the country. In return, huge sums of money are paid. This company-making appears to be a strong benefit in the development of urban tourism sector in Uganda.

A number of urban tourist sites in Uganda have ladies whose presence renders such locations most hospitable. In such locations, CSW is not typically a lifetime career choice for the sex sellers. Women usually alternate their career of CSW with petty businesses such as bar attendant services and hawking. Approximately 44% of CSWs in posh hotels, motels and suites seldom turn to CSW in times of financial crises (Zeyno, 2011).

## Conclusion

In this paper, the authors have examined the dual issues, namely commercial sex work(er)s and urban tourism indicating the symbiotic relationship between the two. The various avenues through which CSW has led, leads and will continue to lead to urban tourism in Uganda, and in a number of nations across the world, have been discussed. Whilst we are cognisant of the fact that in a number of countries, CSW is still considered as an illegal and prohibited industry, its existence has not been curtailed. The expansion of scientific technologies through the different social media have deepened the industry and made it safer for both the sex sellers and the sex buyers. This has created an opportunity in which public authorities have less direct interference with the industry, instead treat it as avenue for an urban tourism opportunity. It is settled that CSW is one of the plausible contributors to urban tourism in Uganda.

## Research limitations

Two limitations emerge from this study, namely: first, this

study was entirely based on desk review of available literature and not on primary data, thus, results are likely to vary if a field-based study is conducted. Also, a number of valuable resources could not reach due to limited institutional access as a consequence of selective subscription.

### Research contributions

This study is likely to be useful to urban authorities and other stakeholders working with urban populations particularly at a time when nations are turning to domestic tourism.

### Research implications

This paper suggests that behind CSW is a positive element which authorities can tap into rather than continually rebuking the industry as evil.

### Areas of future research

The study could not exhaust every element on CSW; therefore, future research can be conducted on:

- a) Strategies for harmonising the relationship between the sex-seller and sex-buyer so as to mitigate exploitation and violence;
- b) Practices and challenges faced by social workers offering psycho-social support to CSWs in out-of-the-way urban centres.

### CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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