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ANATOMY OF PROSTITUTES AND PROSTITUTION  
IN KENYA

by

J. Mugo Gachuhi

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ANATOMY OF PROSTITUTES AND PROSTITUTION  
IN KENYA

Introduction:

Kenya is in process of rapid social change. Under the pressures, stresses and strains of rapid change, values and attitudes towards certain things are always shifting. Because they are shifting fast, they are too often conflicting, confused or confusing. The very fact that we talk of social change is itself an important indication that certain cultural, political and economic changes are taking place. Under the pressures of urbanization, new relationships have to emerge and be adopted. Under the desire to be efficient on the farm through modernization, some members of the farming community are replaced by machines while others continue to use their traditional implements. Under the pressure to enter and participate in the modernized sector of the economy, marriages are delayed and for those who are in school, years of formal education are added each year. In short, because of our peoples' desire of not just to survive but also to increase their survival chances in this modernizing world, new adventures in all human activities, especially social, occur and will continue to occur.

As more and more people migrate to towns and cities from rural areas or from rural to rural areas in search of better living conditions; as some members of our society continue to display wealth which apparently is earned through the modern sector, so, will the desire and determination of other members of society, who have less, increase. As new towns go up and existing ones expand throughout the country, so will the number of people wanting to live in them increase. In our country, there is unprecedented movement of people from rural to urban areas. Within rural areas, there are movements from one region to another just as there are movements from one urban area and center to another. We suspect that at this rate of population shifts, the majority of our people will be living in cities and towns and only a small percentage will be left on the farms to man and make the land produce. Furthermore, even in the rural areas, only a few people will be living in places of their birth throughout their lives. In how many years this situation will be reached here in Kenya is a matter of conjecture at this time.

One thing is clear. All these changes imply socio-cultural lag. These changes by definition imply adopting and re-learning new values. They also imply that pressures to adopt and relearn will create new types of stresses and strains whose solutions will not always be easy. Because of this state of shifting norms we can expect some social-psychological problems to emerge - some of which are already here. One of such problem which has become a national concern is prostitution and its accompanying sub-problems. This paper therefore is an attempt to analyse and describe prostitution and prostitutes in our society.

In our country, as indeed as throughout the world, prostitution - one of the oldest institutions of men - is of major societal concern and prostitution is treated as a crime by some societies. Law and statutes are enacted to deal with this type of social deviance, which falls within the general term of social problem and as such, "originate basically from crises which jolt the society out of the even tenor of its ways and cause grave concern".<sup>1</sup> Because social problems cause grave concern in society this concern in turn "leads to social action and to solutions, most of which are temporary solutions. The grave solution is a perception developed sometimes by leaders of society and sometimes by the masses of the people. Widespread concern plus subsequent social action plus pressure for a solution, are the fundamental compliments of social problem."<sup>2</sup>

Before a solution to a problem can be found, the nature and causes of that problem must be understood. Only after doing so can then the necessary corrective measures be undertaken. It is hoped that this paper will address itself to some of these issues.

#### Prostitute and Prostitution:

For our purposes, a prostitute is any person, male or female who exchanges his body sexually mainly but not exclusively for monetary or material gain. Traditionally a prostitute has always been considered to be a woman. In our analysis, we include the male who is sexually involved for monetary and or material gain as also being a prostitute.

<sup>1</sup> Walter Reckless The Crime Problem, N.Y. Appleton Century Crofts. 1967. p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Further in our definition a prostitute must be sexually involved with more than one person for reasons of gain and with or without emotional involvement. A male or female who sells or buys sexual pleasures, for our purposes is considered a prostitute.

Prostitution is here defined as the act of selling or exchanging sexual favours for money or gifts.

Methodology:

Perhaps one of the most difficult areas of social research is in that area where the parameters of study are not known or easily definable; where the variables to be studied are not easily discernable. Thus, in the area of prostitution which, besides being legally prohibited is also morally condemned, it is difficult to identify a prostitute and even more difficult to interview one once such a person has been identified. This is especially so because there are few men and women who would agree that their main occupation is prostitution. Subsequently, the research design for the present study is unconventional.

The main source of information reported here-in is observation from the bars, night clubs and other public places; extensive interviews with social workers, religious leaders, school teachers and other public officials whose day to day duties bring them into contact with prostitutes for one reason or the other. We have also had interviews with known but "friendly" women and men who are in the prostitution profession. For the categories of those other people who we have called prostitutes even though they are not professionals, we used extensive indirect interviews to arrive at some of our information. Our interviews were done throughout the country in both rural and urban areas.

The other major source of our information is from a study on venereal diseases and prostitution which has already been completed though not fully reported.<sup>1</sup> The methodology used in this latter study was one of questionnaire. Interviews were done personally by the author in the various special disease clinics mainly in Nairobi and Mombasa. We were also able to interview people in the provincial and district hospitals which offer treatment for venereal diseases. Findings of these studies will be forthcoming.

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<sup>1</sup> See J. Mugo Gachuhi "Venereal Disease and Society".  
Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi.  
Working Paper No. 95 1973.

Types of Prostitutes:

Professor F.J. Bennett of the Department of Preventive Medicine Makerere University, identifies twelve categories of prostitutes who are to be found in East Africa.<sup>1</sup>

- (1) Those prostitutes who work in recognized "red light" areas of the cities and who have more or less fixed prices paid in cash. These (prostitutes) work in the day and at night, wait for customers in their own rooms or houses . . . A subclass of these are the higher grade ones with their rent often paid by steady clients.
- (2) Girls who work in small bars. These are often linked with the trade of taximen and beer sellers.
- (3) Expensive hotels, Bar and Night Club girls. They are usually well-dressed, clients are those who can pay 60/- and up a night. These are the gold-digger girls - hard and fast and unapproachable by social workers.
- (4) Street corner girls - this is a mixed group who either work in their rooms or in cars or in cheap hotels.
- (5) Inexperienced girls often from the country who are seeking male support and who often act as short term concubines for food and shelter. Many of these are really looking for husbands and wish to marry.
- (6) The workers who supplement their income. Unfortunately many nurses and typist and office and factory girls fall into this class. The ones with higher education may be mistresses to older wealthy educated men who married uneducated wives who stay at home and rear the children.
- (7) Habitual short term lovers who form transient relationships which last as long as the gifts are adequate. Many of these are promiscuous and unable to form very deep emotional attachments to any single man.
- (8) Good time school-girls who are after the drinks and money and dances.
- (9) School-girls who cater for school boys.

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<sup>1</sup> F.J. Bennett. "Prostitution and Venereal Disease in East Africa".

(10) A small group of prostitutes might start their career in the country and ultimately gravitate to the town. These include widows, beerbrewers and sterile women who have been divorced.

(11) There is an even smaller group of European women who cater for African men.

(12) Male prostitutes who cater homosexual clients often European or Asian. Here again there are street or hotel and bar operators. Many of them immigrants. There is also a small group of secondary school boys who are seeking financial support for their schooling.<sup>1</sup>

Bennett goes on to say that "in East Africa the organized brothel is not an important feature of prostitution. Associated crime - robbery, violence, blackmail is starting, e.g. the prostitute who has a "badger" who comes as the outraged husband and beats up and robs the client, the homosexual team who lure a wealthy tourist to a public latrine and then rob him, the girl who is in league with the taxi robbers, the homosexual blackmailer, and the prostitute who goes through the client's pockets while he is asleep."<sup>2</sup>

In our investigation we have been able to identify the same number of categories even though we have not given our prostitutes the same descriptive titles. We understand that Asians are also involved but because of the difficulty of befriending any who could give us information, we are unable to discuss them here. We have not been able however, to come across cases of blackmailers even though these have been alluded to by our informants. As in Bennett's case, the type of prostitutes we shall discuss indicate some of the causative factors operating for the prostitute herself and for the clients. To some extent there is a relationship between supply and demand.

#### The Male Prostitute and the Pimp:

By male prostitute we mean the man who sells his body to either another man (homosexuality) or charges a woman some money or is paid by the woman for his services. There are few of these in Kenya as far as we can determine. These types of prostitutes are usually found in major cities of Nairobi and Mombasa with an occasional few in small towns - especially provincial towns.

<sup>1</sup> Bennett F.J. Op.cit p. 1-2

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. P. 2

One of the reasons why they have turned out to be prostitutes is apparently psychological as well as economic. For example some secondary school boys have practiced homosexuality so as "to get some money to pay school fees and other necessities". Others have turned this way because of frustration for failure to secure employment. These men will generally be found near big hotels where tourists stay or near the beach. Their number seem to be small at the present though on the increase.

The male prostitute's fees is difficult to determine but it is said to range anywhere from twenty to a hundred shillings depending on the client wishes and the experience of the male prostitute. Generally the homosexual goes for European stranger in town and he has no fixed abode. The male who sells his favours to the woman may charge anywhere from twenty to fifty shillings depending on the duration of the coitus. These types of male prostitutes are also few and they generally go for the unescorted females usually in the tour. Cases have been heard that sometimes the proposition is not a one way, e.g. male to female, but rather some men are also approached by the women who want to buy the man's favour.

#### The Pimp:

Pimps, while strictly speaking they cannot be considered as prostitutes unless they engage in selling their bodies, are usually males who engage in securing men for their female "friends". Pimps worldwide, do not procure men without a price. In many societies, individual pimps have a group of women for whom he secures men and gets a percentage of the profits. It may also be that the women in his group are his "employees" and receive a certain percentage from him. A pimp is a kind of general manager or sales and financial manager who keeps tight control of his women and especially the highly priced ones.

In Kenya, pimps do not often operate in open a manner as their counterparts in Western Society. Nevertheless, they are to be found mainly in our large urban areas. Some are sophisticated and speak one or two of the international languages. They get their messages across to a potential client without difficulty. In our urban areas some pimps are associated with the "private" taxis though some of them have their own personal vehicles. Pimps do not necessarily have sexual intercourse with their "business partner", viz a viz, the women they procure men for. Many of them will have their own personal girlfriends whom they do not introduce to the trade. The place of "business" is often in a guests' hotel room or maybe any other place agreed upon. The females in the pimps' "cooperation" sometimes have their own places of residence but too often they live in places rented on their behalf by their "business manager". Through his financial and residential control, the pimp manages to keep tight control of the women in his club.



Whenever any of the girl is in trouble with the law, it is the pimp who usually pays her bonds or pays the fines in court. The type of girls who become recruited by the pimps in the urban areas are generally those new to the town life, or those who have migrated from other towns; such girls are usually lonely and quite often they are in search of jobs. Recruitment of the girls into the trade is not done directly by the "business manager" but rather through an intermediary e.g., a senior girl in the trade persuades "another" friend to come and meet a friend. If she is desperate for money, clothings, food and other things, she may join immediately upon proposition. Rarely does the novice know that she is entering a job that might be difficult to get out of. During the first few introductory meetings the potential recruit is well entertained and she can even get herself some of the material things she may be in need of. Even if she decides not to join the group, once she has accepted gifts, she is obliged to pay and the only way she can do that is to sell her body since she has no other means of support.

#### The Kept Men:

The other type of male prostitute falls in the category we call "kept men". Even though it hurts the ego of many African men to say so, these are the men who for some reasons or other make an arrangement with certain enterprising, usually single women, whereby they perform some tasks in the houses or business and are rewarded for these services. Occassionally they get free sexual favours from these ladies. There are several of these men in our society. For some of these men, the responsibilities may involve recruiting customers for the lady or for the more enterprising and sophisticated ladies<sup>1</sup> responsibilities may involve companionship in public places. Such men do in some cases "live" within the lady's household without paying any rent. The difference is however, that they do not have any say in the house nor do they own any part of the lady's property. This class is not to be confused with the pimp class which we have described above.

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<sup>1</sup> This class of female will be discussed in more details elsewhere in this paper.

The credit-system men:

This class is sometimes confused with the "rental group" discussed below. The group is composed of men, usually working and almost always married, generally not highly paid, who make an arrangement with certain females (mainly established prostitutes), to have sexual privileges from time-to time - on account - a form of high purchase. The accumulated bill is payable at the end of the month when the customer has been paid. We have no way of estimating how many people are involved in this kind of business arrangements - enjoy now pay later - but rough estimates indicate that the practice might be extensive. This type of relationship implies that there is a degree of trust among the parties involved - hence the difficulty of estimating the number of people who might be involved. Within this group we have another class of men, some of them highly educated and highly paid. These men are the ones who practice, for lack of a better word, "illegal and informal polygamy". They are almost always married but they have some woman somewhere who may not necessarily be practicing prostitution. These women too often have children by these men and the men give them monthly maintenance allowances. These women are not to be confused with "Kept women" even though they come close to being that.

The "Rental group" males:

This group is closely related to the credit system group mentioned above. However in terms of economics, there is a major difference. The difference between the two groups is that, whereas the credit-system group pays at the end of the month and after having received the services, the rental group pays for services in advance. The estimated monthly fee is around forty shillings for services the man may get in the course of the month depending with the woman. We understand that this fee is not only for sexual favours but sometimes for bed-space. Whether a person sleeps in or not, or irregardless of the number of times he may sleep in, the fee must be paid in advance.

On further investigation of this type of arrangements it appears that the "rental group" are generally middle-aged men and women (40-50 years) who have been friends for many years. The rental fee then seems not so much a fee for sexual favours the men may get from such a woman but mainly a kind of "pension" that the lady receives from the man. In this case, we may also consider this arrangement as a "mistress-concubine" relationship.

The Female Prostitutes:

The usage of the term prostitute has always had the female in mind. Thus we are likely to find more categories among female prostitutes than among the males. Female prostitutes are also likely to be known by the more derogatory terms of "call girls" "Street walkers", "Courtesan" "trollup" "trumpet or trump" "harlot" "wench" or "whore". Most of these terms are descriptive of the kind of and place of "business" for the prostitute.

The Same Sex Female; The Lesbian

Sexual deviance is not restricted to any one society although we find that some types of sexual practices are more common to some societies than to others. Thus, female homosexual-lesbianism is not very common here in Kenya. There are unconfirmed reports however that this type of sexual practices is also to be found in our society. While male homosexuality and female lesbianism are not prostitution unless they involve exchange of money or material, we include it here because these forms of sexual behaviours are also known to be so.

These types of behaviour are likely to develop in situation where members of the same sex are confined for long periods of time without access to the opposite sex. Places such as prisons, seminaries, and single sex boarding schools, are likely to be the first places where these behaviours are first manifested. We have no way of estimating how many people are involved in this type of sexual play or how much if any, are the charges or obligations emanating from this type of activity. All that one can say at this stage is that homosexuality and lesbianism are manifestations of serious psychological problems which need psychiatric attention rather than condemnation.

The Formerly Married:

It would be wrong on any ones' part to assume that all those women who have been married and for reasons of divorce or separation (whether such divorce is legal or not and who do not become re-married are at sometime or other practicing prostitution. However, it is not presumptuous to assume that prostitution may have precipitated divorce or separation. In our investigations in rural and urban areas, there is evidence that nearly sixty percent of the women who do become prostitutions have at one time or other been formerly attached to a man. Marriage in this case implies

a legal tie between a woman and a man whether this tie is through civil or traditional marriage arrangement. Some of the prostitutes we talked to claimed to have had a Christian marriage though at the time we talked with them they were living alone and had not obtained an official divorce.

The formerly married usually work in bars, as shop assistants or as domestic helpers - both in rural and urban areas. They get limited wages for their labours and are highly mobile. Because of their mobility the labour turn-over is also high which explains the reasons for both low wages, high mobility and high labour turn-over. The majority of the formerly married found in urban areas come from rural villages. They claim that some of the reasons for running away from home is due to husband non-support. Others claim incompatibility; wife-husband wrongdoing e.g. adultery, husband ran away and "I had no one to support me" or "husband did not like me anymore and to show it he got another wife". A few of the women in this group that we talked with admitted that they were divorced by their husbands because they could not have any children while others accused their former husbands of "wife-beating".

These are all important reasons which can create marital disharmony at home and if not sorted out would eventually lead to divorce. Since the majority of the people in this class have very limited or no education and since as a result of their limited education they do not have professional skills, they therefore find themselves in compromising situations such as accepting low wages. To supplement their incomes, they engage themselves in sexual activities, usually with customers who frequent their neighborhood bars or with selected clients. Many of these women have children whom they have to look after. Those who have any children have an average number of between two and four. As far as we could find out, most of the children are born either after the women had "left" the husband or before she had "married". Their fee for sexual favours are anywhere from ten shillings to twenty shillings. Sometimes they will accept a small fee depending on the time of the month or on their need for money. Sometimes they will also accept alcoholic drinks in lieu of money.

The Never Married Girls:

Women falling in this category are generally those who have experienced disappointment of one kind or another. In some cases they are girls who become pregnant before marriage and have a child without the father - the so-called illegitimate mothers. In other cases we have the girls who have been promised marriage by certain men but who in the end have been turned down for one reason or other. Such women, after years of "devotion" to their boyfriends and then being told that they are not good enough, have done one of three things: Firstly, to revenge themselves, at least psychological revenge, they have turned out to prostitution, having payable intercourse with anyone who wants them and whenever possible. Initially they prefer to have sexual relations with the friends of the former boyfriends. In the beginning they do not charge but eventually they drift to the "business" category. Some of these women do get new boyfriends, but to some extent it depends on how long they were "engaged" and the nature of the promise for marriage. The longer the courting period, the more the likelihood that these women will refuse other men especially if it is on promise for future marriage. This also increases their chances of turning out for fulltime prostitution.

The behaviour of these girls who have been disappointed by men, especially as far as marriage is concerned, take a form which, while the resulting action can be considered as socially acceptable, are nevertheless drastic. Some of these girls are the ones who after such disappointment turn to religion and become "saved". The number of such girls is small in the country but depending on the districts, it is on the increase.<sup>1</sup> Other girls decide to save their money and buy as nice a car as they can afford. They are also known to buy expensive and beautiful pieces of furniture as well as well-stocked personal wardrobes. To them these things become their "husband". Their boyfriends' love and affection is shifted to other things and have very little time to think of men. The most important thing about all these girls is one. They basically hate and detest males. To some degree they have their greatest pleasure when they see men suffering - they become sadists of some sort. Many of these women, especially if they have professional careers, chose a life of spinsterhood to having any men promise them marriage. Depending on the level of their education, those that turn out to become prostitutes charge a high fee for any sexual favour they may give a man.

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<sup>1</sup> We caution here that not all "saved" girls have become so because of romantic disappointment.

The Jobseekers:

The other category who fall in the "never married" group is the one that is known to suffer many hardships and which as a result of these hardships turn to prostitution. This is the category we call the "jobseekers" and it is to be found throughout the country and in all urban areas. These girls most often travel from the rural areas to urban centers looking for employment. Many of them do not have influential friends in cities and towns who can get employment for them. On their arrival, often they are sometimes housed by relatives or "friends". After a period, the relatives get tired of providing them with food and housing and sometimes these relatives start demanding that the girl either contribute to the household or move out to live off another relative. Other times the girls decide to move out because of the heavy burden put on them by their relatives such as cooking, washing and taking care of children, or it may be for other reasons.

Whenever any of these things happen, sometimes the girl tries to put up with another girlfriend in a small rented room. Since she has no income and has to support herself, often she will start frequenting bars, dancing halls and other places where men can be found. At first the men will offer her a drink, (the novice usually start with soft drinks and only gradually moving to beers and liquor), which if she accepts, she is expected to reciprocate according to laws of the bar. She may not charge the first few times but eventually she will start charging a fee. By this time she will have met several other men and her contact will have become wide. The speed at which she will establish herself in this line will depend on her initial acquaintances. If they are experienced ladies, they will give her good start. Eventually she forgets that she was looking for employment and may engage in selling her favours fulltime.

Another way jobseekers become victims of prostitution is through what we shall call "unfulfilled" promises made by individuals to the girls with the pretense of securing such girls employment. As is very well known, this is not only a bad practice but a corrupt one. Girls are persuaded to meet individuals at certain places and hours so "they can speak the problem over". Under such circumstances innocent but otherwise ignorant girls are powerless to protest against the man's approaches mainly because they may not be aware of the man's intentions or because the need for a job is desperate.

The man gets his way and has sexual intercourse with the girl may be for only once, but sometimes for several days or weeks. He usually tells the unsuspecting girl that "the job should be available soon". During all this time, the man does not take any steps to protect the girl from possible pregnancy. Sooner or later many such girls become pregnant and are abandoned by the man. The only alternative they have is either to perform an illegal and dangerous abortion or carry their pregnancy to term. If they chose the former, chances are that they become damaged physically and psychologically. If they chose the latter they have to support themselves and their child. Without any skills, the only alternative is to use the only commodity they have - their bodies. Eventually they too become full-time prostitutes.

The Sophisticated Group:

High class prostitutes in up-country Kenya seem to have been of recent origins. Around Mombasa though, studies<sup>1</sup> that have been done indicate that this class of women has existed for sometime. The high class prostitute is basically to be found in large urban areas. She is either fairly well educated or has been in the business for sometime that she has managed to develop and maintain a special category of clientele. She is well and expensively dressed, usually has new and fairly expensive car. The more established professional high class prostitute will own property such as rental building, bars and shops. The clientele for this group of women is usually the wealthy people in the country, and have no ethnic, cultural or racial barriers. They generally have their own "trainees" in the business whom they recruit on the basis of looks, intelligence and temperament. Some of the trainees are sometimes their own relatives. They are respectable because of their living standards and their social contacts.

This group of women is the most expensive one and according to our investigation, the minimum charge per night or part thereof, is around one hundred shillings. With this type of fee, only among the highly paid in our society can afford to patronize such "businesses" and even at that not on continuous basis. They are not found in the streets as are the common prostitutes. Their contact places is at their own well furnished homes, and for some,

<sup>1</sup>. See W.K. Rutasitar Mombasa Bar-Girls "A study of Prostitution and Venereal Disease in a Kenya Sea Port's." Kampala, Makerere University Medical School. Unpublished DE.H Dissertation, 1970

it is through the telephone or special messengers. Whenever they venture outside for an evening, it is usually to the big and expensive hotels. Their purposes may or may not be to meet new clients though sometimes they are likely to do this. In these hotels, especially if they are by themselves, they are distinguishable by the type of drink they will be having.

These women are known to be self sufficient and put their children to better schools. They are also known to remit a substantial amount of money to their relatives back in the rural areas even though they visit their homes of origins very infrequently. We don't know how many of them there are in the country but each town has its own high class prostitutes. The larger the town, the more the number of such prostitutes.

#### Part-time Prostitutes:

According to our definition, a prostitute is any person who exchanges sexual favours for cash or kind. This definition would seem to cover nearly everyone and to this extent there are some girls who, while they are not fulltime prostitutes, nevertheless fall within the prostitutes' class. Since they sell their bodies only on occasion and are not sorely dependent on incomes accrued from prostitution, we shall call them here "Part-time prostitutes".

The part-time prostitutes, sometimes referred to as the beer-bar-dance-hall girls, are girls who generally have full employment and their jobs may or may not be very well paying. They are to be found in every profession - from Ayahs to nurses, secretaries and teachers etc. Some of these girls are usually well educated and well dressed. Basically there are two reasons why they are caught up in this business. The first reason is that they sell sexual favours to supplement their income. The second reason is that they are basically after good-time either because of loneliness or because they are after adventure. This group of girls is also known as the "good-time-girls".

Some of the part-time girls are women with a child, usually one but sometimes two even though they are not married. Only a few of those with children live with their own children in places of work, e.g. in towns. The fees for these occasional prostitutes is understood to range anywhere from twenty shillings to about forty or fifty shillings a night. They are said to be very discriminating in the sense that they do not give their sexual favours to everyone who may approach them. They do not consider themselves as prostitutes but rather "friends" who are in need.



In the rural areas this group of women is to be found there also, although it is not as sophisticated as the town and city group. Nevertheless the pattern is the same though the fees might be slightly different. We have no way of predicting whether some members of this group of women do eventually become fulltime prostitutes. It is known that many of them do become married and settle down with their husbands, but some also remain single for an extended period until they lose their "market" value.

The School Girls:

The school girls in both urban and rural setting present quite an interesting data. In a sense we should not refer them as prostitutes since they do not maintain themselves solely on incomes earned through sale of their bodies. However, since we have defined a prostitute as any person who exchanges sexual favours for cash or gift and would not otherwise be willing to do so if such tariffs were not present, then those school girls who fall in this category are treated as prostitutes without the consideration of frequency of sexual contact they have for monetary purposes.

The rural school girls fall into two categories: Those who are in primary schools and those who are in secondary schools. The primary school girls, especially those in upper primary generally do not charge a fee for the favours they give. Their major clients are their classmates and some of the local high school boys. However there is an occasional "pricing," e.g. anywhere from fifty cents to a shilling or two (sometimes referred to as "enticing money" by the boys. These girls usually are not very much interested in money as such, since their clientele is small and without money anyway. However they do indulge in sexual matters for other favours, e.g. sweets and any other small things the boys would be willing to offer them.

Their "place of business" is usually in the bush and often after school hours before they get home or during the holidays. With the money they get when they get it, they buy small things such as cakes and other consumable things available within their area and the small markets. From time to time these girls are enticed by older boys who have finished primary schools

and who are still around the villages either unemployed or casually employed. The pregnancy among these girls is not fully known although it is understood to be high.

School girls are also victims of their teachers. In the primary schools, girls have sexual relations with the teachers not for money but for other rewards. For example, if a girl performs badly on her C.P.E. examination, it is said that some teachers and headmasters ask the girls for sexual favours so that such girls could be allowed to repeat. Other girls who may do poorly on the term examination might also befriend the teacher and allow them to have their carnal knowledge so that they pass. In the recent past one of the popular Kikuyu records has been singing about the same problems we are talking about here. Appropriately it is titled "NDALI YA MWALIMU" or the pupil who is the teachers sweetheart.

#### Urban Primary:

The town and urban girls who fall in this category cater to the school boys also after school hours and during weekends. Their fees is slightly higher than that of their rural sisters but is not much more than two to three shillings. Basically they are after good times such as a promise by the boy that they will be taken to the films or a teen dance or similar promises. With the money they charge when they are not paid in kind, they buy themselves gifts such as extra dress, shoes or any inexpensive things. Some of these town girls are understood to be encouraged to "sleep with a man" by their relatives for supplemental incomes.

#### Urban Secondary:

The secondary schools girls fall into two categories. The rural and the urban. As most girls' schools are boarding, generally any transaction which takes place does so over the weekend when the girls have an "off" or during the holidays. The difference between the two groups in terms of sexual behaviour is that the town/urban secondary school girls have many opportunities for contact with wealthy clients than their counterparts in the rural schools. Thus the charges for sexual favours by the urban schoolgirls is higher and approximates the fee charged by the professionals - up to 50 shillings.

The secondary school girls who attend public or private day schools and especially in urban areas have another advantage over those who are attending boarding schools. We have found that in those day schools where lunch is not served and the girls have to either go home or to a nearby "chakula" places for their meals, some enterprising gentlemen have found means of enticing some of these girls for sexual purposes. Thus, some of these men are prepared to offer "free" lunch to the girls, not just for one day but for several days, weeks and months. In return, the "lunch girl" has to offer some "services". Some girls have become victims of these unscrupulous men.

Though this is not prostitution in its formal sense, these girls nevertheless must be considered with the class of prostitutes since they accept to have sexual intercourse in exchange of an occasional free lunch. Just how extensive the practice is in the urban areas, no one knows.

In the rural areas, the prices range from ten shillings to roughly 30 shillings a night - an almost half the amount of the urban rates. These prices seem to reflect the economic disparities between rural and urban settings and at the same time reflecting the social sophistication of the urban girls. One distinguishing characteristic of these two different groups is that the urban secondary school girls have a higher rate of sexual promiscuity than the rural girls.

We have been interested in knowing who are the clients of these girls and what is the method of contact. Among the urban school girls, sometimes boys are involved in recruitment - not for prostitution purposes as such but mainly "to meet a friend". In some cases this is pre-arranged between a school lad and an enterprising gentleman who usually has a high income, drives a flashy car, is well dressed and in almost all cases he is married with a family. Such men request the intermediary to bring some "young things" around for a drink or a film. If it is the former the intermediary school boys usually gets enough to drink and a small amount of pocket money. His major interest is generally alcoholic beverage. After "delivering the girl, his usefulness for the day ends there and the young lady is driven to expensive hotels, treated to tasty meals and usually given an expensive present. From there on, she is usually obligated and may go to bed with the "host". The place where they have the affair ranges from a rented hotel room, to back of the car seat or in a bachelor friends' house.

When dinners, gifts and rides are not involved, the transaction involves cash. This amount, as already mentioned, ranges from forty shillings to seventy shillings. It is mainly used by the girl for buying the various cosmetics and other fashionable outfits. Where a young man is not involved to procure school girls for the gentlemen, other girls are involved. The situation is as follows: A certain man knows a certain girl who is attending school somewhere. He invites her to bring along her girlfriend for an evening if it is during the holiday - or for a weekend when the girls may have an off. Some of the girls so asked usually know what the gentleman is after and thus ask for a percentage. Some girls who are bold enough will ask the men what he is ready to pay and then charge him between forty and fifty percent of that price for the services of bringing such girl. In most cases the man obliges. Then a meeting place is arranged and upon the "delivery", the procurer disappears either to spend her money or to meet her own appointment. It is estimated that between 1/5 and 1/4 of all high school girls get involved in this business at one time or other during their secondary school career. The prices charged for sexual favours depends on the form the girls is in. Thus the form the higher, the price.

Rural Secondary:

Among the rural secondary school girls the situation is not much different with the exception that there are by far fewer people with cars, money and other impressive things in the rural community than there are to be found in the urban setting. Thus only the rural elites have access to these girls and especially during the weekends. The rural town elites also have access to these girls, as many secondary schools are not very far from towns and there is usually free time when the girls are allowed by the school authority to visit the towns. Again the charges depend according to the form one is in and the higher the form the higher the income.

There is no evidence in the cases of school girls who sell sexual favours to show that family income or position has any major effect on whether the daughter becomes tangled in this business or not. Thus, the children of the elites, especially the urban elites whom one would expect to have enough allowances (some in fact have more than they need), are found in the groups that we are describing. If such girls, who are well dressed, well fed, and who are not lacking in material belongings can in fact indulge in sexual trade, it seems that their social impact on the poorer girls in their school, who would be expected to look upon them for social entiquity has to be great. Whether it is this way or not, is difficult to verify. However, the high class secondary school girls who have most of the material things they need as well as contacts, are depended upon by the poorer classmates for making the

"correct" contact on their behalf. For making such contact, it is understood that they are paid a fee-either by the man before he goes with the girl or by the girl who has been so introduced.

Mothers and Daughters:

Our intensive discussions with the social workers throughout the country reveal several cases of maladjustment. The type of maladjustment which surely cannot be less than the foundation of serious national social-psychological problem. We have found out that especially in the poor sections of our urban areas, mothers, who themselves may have been prostitutes for many years, have introduced their trade to their young daughters, sometimes school-going and under the legal definition of the age of majority which is the age which legally a girl is considered mature to make her own decision with or without the consent of her parents or guardians.

The mothers who have introduced their daughters to their "trade" are generally those who are old, although some may still have some "steam" left in them, and have some admirers. Many times such mothers will introduce the customer to their daughters but at much higher price than the customer would have paid for the senior woman. Other times, it is the visiting male who expresses the wish to have sexual intercourse with the young daughter and in that case the mother "consults" with her daughter and makes the arrangements.

Whatever money is negotiated for the girl, the mother is understood to keep most of it and only giving her daughter the amount she needs for her own limited purchases.

Health and Prostitution:

Venereal Diseases:

Studies that have been done - world wide, including here in Kenya on prostitution have concluded that prostitutes are major sources of ill-health and especially maladies such as venereal disease. Professional prostitutes, however, are said to be less of a threat as transmitters of venereal disease than the amateur or good time prostitutes.

Thus, it can be expected that if young women as well as men are involved frequently in clandestine sexual affairs with different persons, the rate of venereal diseases in the country can be expected to go up, and infect many innocent people. The end result is ill-health to the country.

#### Diet and the Prostitute:

Nation-wide we have very little knowledge of how many people are suffering from lack of sufficient and nutritious food. Estimates that are from time to time made do not give a full picture. The most affected group of people in terms of dietary requirement are the children - a reason why we hear more about malnourished children than we hear about the adults. For some adults, however their nutritional standards cannot be considered anything less than chronic. Many adult diseases therefore, can be directly attributed to lack of adequate diets.

For the common and "low-class" prostitute, the situation is bad even though one would have assumed that they earn enough money from their illicit trade to be in a position to at least feed themselves well. But as it turns out most fulltime malayas live on "fish and chips" type of diet. During the day those who have no other employment spend time sleeping. In the late afternoon and early evening they are busy looking for customers. Night clubs and all-night bars are full of them, drinking soft drinks if they are alone or beers and liquors if they have already made their "kill".

These type of prostitutes do not seem to have time to eat and when they do, it is the type of diet which at best is starchy and at worst is not conducive to good health. Because of lack of eating properly, it is therefore likely that this class of prostitutes in particular suffers ill-health more often than the general population.

#### Money Alcohol, Men and Prostitutes

Chances are that where you find alcohol you will also find men. Where you find men you will also find women. Conversely, where in public places you find prostitute, you will also find alcohol and men. Money, men, women and alcohol are the foursome that go along very well in each and every society.

Drinking in our country has become such national passtime that looked at as a national problem, it is greater in magnitude than our problem of unemployment. Alcohol consumption is so high that the makers of beers and other popular but otherwise outlawed drinks such as "Chang'aa" run out of them from time to time. Our estimates for Kenya are that in the aggregate, Kenyans are spending more money for alcohol consumption each year than they are spending on the education of their children or on any other consumer activity including food. We point out here that even though many of the drinkers are social drinkers, and not alcoholics, the problems is nevertheless one that can be considered as a number one national social problem. The number of hours lost on the job by those suffering from hang-overs, the number of injuries that occur as a result of senseless drinking, the number of marital and family disharmony that occur in our society, if calculated in economic terms they would amount to millions of shillings each year.

In all this, it is the male who loses the most. In the bar, besides buying drinks for himself and his friends, he is also most likely and most often the one who pays the girlfriends' (prostitute) drink. This is in addition to paying whatever amount the female friend will demand. And added problem is for the married urban male who probably has his family in town. In such situation, the man cannot take his "girlfriend" to his house. The only other alternative is to take the girl to his bachelor friend's house, which does not happen too often, or more likely, such man rents a room in the lodge. Lodges infact have become so important that most lodge keepers earn a very handsome income through hourly rent to those ladies and gentlemen who are in a hurry. In most communities where beer halls are found, chances are that one will also find rooms for rent attached to such bar.

Because of the heavy uncontrolled and frequent drinking of our people, we are beginning to note that marriages and family life for a good many people are becoming interrupted. The consequence can be expected to result to a massive social problem that if not carefully considered can interrupt the very foundation of society. Like the common prostitute who eats very occasionally, some of men can be considered to be deficient in certain basic nutrients that the body requires. To many of them, the "kilo" (roasted meat) and the beer are the only foodstuffs that they know. Drinking and dart playing are the only games they play. The body treated this way has to become lazy and we suspect that this laziness is carried on to the job. The result is inefficiency on the job with the resultant lose of time and money.

In the rural areas, we have found that the problem is much more serious. As is well known, many rural people do not have regular incomes coming to them at the end of each month.

Many, depending on the region, depend either on the irregular items they can sell from time to time or for those who have some kind of cash crop, they depend on the "pay day" for them to have any kind of cash. The pay day for some rural folks is when the societies, e.g. coffee, tea, dairy, etc. to which they belong pay out the meager funds that for some, they are not enough to even pay the school fees for two children. The amount of money they get depend on their produce which in turn depends on the weather of which they have no control over. Other people depend on urban remittances from their working relatives when and if those relatives send any money.

But this is not all. What too often happens is that the money, whenever it is paid out, is paid at the nearest divisional or locational center and usually on a market day. It is more than often the man of the house who goes to collect the money. If the man collected the money and went home or did his essential purchases, things would not be bad at all. However, most men go to the nearest bar with a friend to "have one for the land". They drink bottled beers which are expensive. Some manage to drink all the money without realising it - after all, Christmas to some of the rural folks comes only once in a while.

Some other men spend their money in such way that they cannot recollect exactly how they spent it. We have found that rural and urban prostitutes are very much aware of the farmers pay days. Usually on these days these women are to be found in market places and for some reason or the other, they are on such days very friendly to the farmers. It is man's nature that a smile from a well dressed, clean looking young lady always touches a cord which calls for a reciprocal response, which for some of our men is answered by offering the "young woman" a drink or two. When beer and women mix in the head of the poor farmer who has not had a loud laugh or a "good time" for sometime, chances are that the man will wind-up in the local lodge with the woman. It is then that whatever money he may have put-away for his other more urgent needs gets depleted by the woman.



On his return home the same night or the following day or two, the man starts a general fight with his family - all in effort to cover up his guilt and shame. Many children have been kicked out of school on account of lack of school fees. Rural divorces, separation and sometimes bitter fights, are in part due to alcohol consumption. Rural prostitutes, who associate with the hard-working farmers but only on certain days, are a danger to public health of the communities because of their being possible carriers of venereal diseases which they transmit to the men. Unknowingly, the man in turn transmits these diseases to their wives who may suffer for many years without knowing the causes of their suffering.

The above description is not limited to the rural men alone. In urban areas the situation is the same if not worse. The same problems are experienced by the urban manual workers whose economic situation is not much better than that of the rural man. Further more it should not be interpreted that it is only the rural prostitute who is dangerous to our small farmers. The rural prostitute most often learns her behaviour from her urban sisters. It is known that there is an apparent movement of prostitutes from large urban areas to small towns when men are selling their crops and have the money (on rural pay day). These prostitutes operate in bars, and they are sometimes encouraged by bar owners as they increase the sale of beer.

The above description should not be understood to affect only our economically weak people. Chances are that these categories of people are better off than the well paid middle class, whose drinking and womanization is beyond belief. His economic, and personal problems in fact might be far more serious than many people think.

#### Prostitutes, Prostitution and Destitution:

There is no doubt in our mind that some people become prostitutes because they find themselves in a compromising situation or because they are in a situation which leaves them with no other alternative. However, it does not follow from this that prostitution is always a result of destitution. Many of the prostitutes operating in our country have both the means and the ability to find a morally acceptable alternative of securing a livelihood. From the standpoint of the type of prostitutes operating in the country - both rural and urban - one must conclude that prostitution is largely an economic institution which has

the desire to make cheap and quick money as its chief driving force.

For other prostitutes however, as Bennett has concluded<sup>1</sup> the reasons are psychological. The major factors operating in the individual who becomes a prostitute appear to be family causes including absent, dead or ineffective fathers, maternal deprivation and its consequences for personality and economic pressures towards and lack of family pressures away from prostitution. The large number of broken homes and parental examples of promiscuity could contribute ultimately to increase in prostitution.

Other investigators<sup>2</sup> have found that some juvenile prostitutes become so because they have had very inadequate or disrupted family background. Many young prostitutes have no fathers or are orphans reared by indifferent relatives. Some are children of prostitutes. Many are reared in a world where beer brewing, prostitution, thieving and quarrels form an incessant background from which children cannot be isolated.

#### Prostitution and the Law:

Under the 1968 Vagrant Act (No. 61 of 1968, Laws of Kenya) women can be arrested and prosecuted in the court of law if they are found to be without lawful means of subsistence. For the purposes of the Act, Prostitution is not considered to be a lawful means of earning a living. Apparently this law seems to be in operation only in the large towns and cities and not in the rural areas.

The law however is rendered ineffective because of the difficult nature of proving someone a prostitute, or of "catching one in the act of prostitution". Furthermore, the fact that only women are considered as prostitutes makes any (but useless) attempt to control prostitution a mockery of the law. This is particularly so when we remember that women could hardly sell their bodies if there were no men to buy these services. For all practical purposes, it would seem to us that it is the male who in fact encourages prostitution since he is the one who maintains it. Thus in any

<sup>1</sup> F.J. Bennett. "Prostitution and Venereal Disease in East African Towns". Unpublished. Mimeo - 9 pages

<sup>2</sup> J. Carlebach. Juvenile Prostitutes in Nairobi E.A. Studies no. 16. E.A.I.S.R. Kampala, 1962.

definition of a prostitute the male must be considered and included in such definition.

For these reasons therefore, any legislation or any act enacted, which renders the woman and not the man, subject to criminal charge for prostitution in any society, can only be considered as intrinsically unjust and should therefore be excluded from the law.

The law as it exists in Kenya in regard to prostitution is basically a bad law which fails to understand the reason why prostitution occurs and exists in society. Because of this failure to understand the causes, the law does not help either in prevention of prostitution or in rehabilitation of the known and convicted prostitute.

The law as it exists at the present in Kenya is one of punishment which is aimed at deterring future "crimes". Thus the practice of repatriating convicted prostitutes to their districts of origin does nothing more than moving a prostitutes from one area of the country at public expense. In this way those prostitutes who may have venereal diseases may spread them to any area which would otherwise have been free. Prostitutes who are generally arrested are those who make little money from their trade. They are the so-called street-walkers or beer-hall girls. Because they are aware that they are subject to police arrests at any time, the majority of them have become highly mobile, moving from one town or one rural areas to another. They stay in any place long enough to make their contacts but never long enough to be identified by the law enforcement authorities.

The law which attempts to suppress prostitution can be seen as one which makes it difficult to control and minimize social ills such as control of transmission of venereal diseases from one area to another. The law makes it difficult for contact follow-up because prostitutes who may have transmitted a disease in one town might be in another town the next week or month without anyone having known whom they were.

The law in Kenya should be repealed, and in keeping with the changing social-economic conditions aim at educating the public about the causes and dangers of prostitution. Without this understanding it is doubtful whether there is any law which can ever reduce one of man's oldest institution.

Social Change and National Boredom

The increasing rates of prostitution and senseless over-drinking on the part of both the males and females, young and old, uneducated and educated, rural and urban, surely is not because the Kenyans enjoy doing these things all the time. It is rather a symptom of something which is much deeper than what we see.

We believe, the symptoms are indications of something that is lacking in people's lives. It seems to us that the final cord of social fabric which has kept a people together and given them moral and psychological support has finally disintegrated and has not been replaced by anything new or long-lasting. No matter where one looks - in urban or rural areas, one sees people moving without a sense of personal belonging or purpose. In the urban areas people drink because they have nothing else to do. It is not much fun to stay in rooms from when one leaves his place of work to the following morning, day after day and week after week. The neighbourhood does not have much to offer in terms of recreational activities. The only place that urban people feel they can meet their friends and socialize is in the bar. The only thing one can do in the bar is have a drink, play darts or listen to the noisy jukebox. In the bar at least one is able to ignore his many personal problems even though it is only for short period.

In the rural areas, the situation is not much better. The neighbourhood dances are no more. The concept of the family is becoming smaller and smaller. The only place one can find-out the days-going-ons is the market center bar. The only one open in the evenings. Men handle together there under Kerosine lamps and if they can afford a beer they will have one. If not they will stare at those who have some and sometimes even "demand" that their friend buy them a beer.

Meanwhile, in both rural and urban areas the woman and children are left at "home". They too get bored. The children become unruly and some become juvenile delinquents - in search of something to do. The women in the rural areas at least are not so bad. They get together and try to discuss their next harambee project or they go to sing hymns at the church or in a neighbours' house.