

# Prevalence of Transactional Sex in Selected Fishing Communities of Kainji Lake Basin

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**Abstract:** The paper examined the prevalence of transactional sex in the fisheries sector of Yauri emirate of the Kainji Lake Basin. A total of 187 questionnaires were administered in ten selected fishing communities and further subjected to descriptive analysis. The study on HIV/AIDS carried out revealed that prevalence of transactional sex is on the increase in selected fishing communities of the Kainji Lake Basin. 11.8% have accepted sexual various propositions in exchange for work related activities. It is no longer gainsaying that people exchange sex for gift or economic gain therefore; transactional sex activities are gradually being noticed in some of the fishing communities of Kainji Lake Basin. Recommendations were proffered for the study. (Nature and Science. 2009;7(11):74-80]. (ISSN: 1545-0740).

**Keywords:** Fish, Sex, gift, livelihood and HIV/AIDS

## 1. Introduction

Nigeria has one of the fastest growing rates of new HIV/AIDS cases in West Africa and an enormous population.(UNAIDS, 2004) Findings from the Ministry of Health's 2003 HIV seroprevalence survey revealed a national HIV prevalence rate of five percent, similar to the recent UNAIDS estimate of 5.4 percent. Small scale fisheries and related activities such as fish processing and trading have long been recognized to provide safety net for the 'poorest of the poor' in rural communities in developing countries (Panayotou, 1985, Jui Larsen et al 2003, Neiland and Bene, 2004) Food security is one of the major problems facing humanity particularly in the developing countries like Nigeria.

There is a growing consensus in literature that HIV/AIDS increases food insecurity and poverty (Baylies, 2002; DeWaal2002; Du Guerny, 2002; Boudreau and Hollemam, 2002; SADC FANR, 2003). In addition, some scholars note an indirect effect of HIV/AIDS: the early adoption of coping strategies which leave households vulnerable to other "shocks" (Rugalema, 1999; De Waal2002; SADC FANR, 2003). While both men and women are engaged in fish trade, local women are aware that they have a good opportunity to trade fish with full time fishers and other seasonal immigrants in the fishing camp even if they lack initial capital to start with. Women, as local informant put it, "go to the flats with nothing and return with a lot of fish. As a form of networking, some local women have their boyfriends in the fishing camps, which they visit and from whom they get fish usually on a regular basis, in exchange for sexual favour, (Bene and Merten 2008).

As one woman describes it "For those who have a boyfriend there (in the camp) it is easier. They get sometimes for the same price, while others who do not have a boyfriend have to pay more. So, as I am having boyfriend, I get the fish much cheaper so I can also sell it cheaper. So there is no big loss (if prices drop). Nevertheless, many of the fish I was just given because I was staying with the boyfriend. So these I can sell now" (Mbeza, 2002). The objective of the study is to investigate the extent to which fish/gift items are exchange for sex in selected fishing communities of Yauri emirate of Kainji Lake basin.

## 2. Methodology

Kainji lake basin comprises of Niger and Kebbi States with the following neighbouring emirates Kontagora, Borgu and Yauri . For this study, the sample was taken from Yauri emirates from the following communities: Wara, Wawu, Tunga Mairuwa, Zamare, Rukubalo, Yauri, Rashe Salkawa, Hella, Barashi Tunga Alhaji Sharo. The selections of these communities were based on accessibility, level of fisheries activities and traditional institutions. A total of 187 questionnaires and 20 interview guides for key informants will be administered in the communities and further subjected for statistical analysis.

## 3. Result and Discussion

On the socio – economic characteristics as shown in Table 1, on sex, 63.6% of the respondents were males while 36.4% were females. The variation may be as a result women restriction to their household that is, they are in Purdah, which buttresses the findings of gender studies carried out by Yahaya, 1999. The higher number of males in the study agrees with findings of experts that

almost twice as many men as women were aware of HIV/AIDS. (UNAIDS, 1998)

76.0% of the respondents were still in their active (reproductive) age, that is, 15 – 45 years. 24% were above 46 years. These ages are the active and they are crucial to agricultural development. It implies that they were in sexually active ages which support the finding of NDHS (2003) that majority of those who contract the HIV/AIDS virus fall under the age of 30 years (NDHS, 2003). Thus, they are the very people who are vital to the economic future of the rural communities where poverty is dominant.

Majority of the respondents (78.1%) were married, 21.4% were single while 0.5% were widow. This is an indication of a tendency for sexual continuation, particularly among the married people of the fishing communities. On religion, the respondents (84.5%) were Muslim faithful, only 15.5% practiced Christianity and 0.5% claimed to be idol worshipper. With this finding the belief of the majority supports more than one wife and encourages multiple relationships. Majority (58.7%) were into polygamy, 2.1% were monogamous and 49.2% could not response. This is not surprising because some of the unmarried respondents may constitute to the high percentage.

Only 18.7% had primary education and the same percent for respondents who had secondary school education.

More than half of the respondents (57.2%) had no formal education. Some of the fishing communities are more interested in sending their children to Quranic School within and outside the community than attending western education. This has made them not see the need for at least primary school in their immediate environment. Therefore, the low level of western education may affect the knowledge of devastating HIV/AIDS that is ravaging globally.

The study revealed that 84.5% of the respondents had their primary occupation in fisheries related activities and only 15.5% were into skill labour (such as welding, carpentry) and trading in other products. 27.8% of the respondents had secondary occupation such as firewood cutting, food hawking and haulage. The result corroborates Neiland et al, 2005 that combination of activities ranging from catching, processing, trading and transportation are important occupation in the fishing communities.

#### Characteristic of Respondent

| Variable              | frequency(F) | Percent (%) |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Sex</b>            |              |             |
| Male                  | 119          | 63.6        |
| Female                | 68           | 36.4        |
|                       | <b>187</b>   | <b>100</b>  |
| <b>Age</b>            |              |             |
| 15-25                 | 45           | 24.1        |
| 26-35                 | 55           | 29.4        |
| 36-45                 | 42           | 22.5        |
| 46-55                 | 28           | 15.5        |
| Above 55              | 17           | 9.1         |
|                       | <b>187</b>   | <b>100</b>  |
| <b>Marital Status</b> |              |             |
| Single                | 40           | 21.4        |
| Married               | 146          | 78.1        |
| Widow                 | 1            | 0.5         |
| Separated             | -            | -           |
| Divorced              | -            | -           |
|                       | <b>187</b>   | <b>100</b>  |
| <b>Number of wife</b> |              |             |
| One                   | 4            | 2.1         |
| Two                   | 59           | 31.6        |
| Three                 | 27           | 14.4        |
| More than three       | 5            | 2.7         |
| No response           | 92           | 49.2        |
|                       | <b>187</b>   | <b>100</b>  |
| <b>Religion</b>       |              |             |
| Islam                 | 157          | 84.5        |
| Christianity          | 29           | 15.5        |
| Idol                  | 1            | 0.5         |
|                       | <b>187</b>   | <b>100</b>  |
| <b>Education</b>      |              |             |
| Primary               | 35           | 18.7        |

|                             |            |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|
| Secondary                   | 35         | 18.7       |
| Tertiary                    | 5          | 2.7        |
| Adult Education             | 5          | 2.7        |
| No formal education         | 107        | 57.2       |
|                             | <b>187</b> | <b>100</b> |
| <b>Primary Occupation</b>   |            |            |
| Fishing                     | 23         | 12.3       |
| Farming-fishing             | 23         | 12.3       |
| Trading in fish             | 15         | 8.0        |
| Processing of fish          | 40         | 21.4       |
| Boat construction           | 27         | 14.4       |
| Craft/gear making           | 7          | 3.7        |
| Skilled labour              | 5          | 2.7        |
| Others                      | 29         | 5.5        |
|                             | <b>187</b> | <b>100</b> |
| <b>Secondary Occupation</b> |            |            |
| Skilled labour              | 1          | 0.5        |
| Firewood cutting            | 2          | 1.1        |
| Food vendor                 | 45         | 24.1       |
| Transporting                | 4          | 2.1        |
| No response                 | 135        | 72.0       |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>187</b> | <b>100</b> |

62.5% of the respondents said they became sexually active between ages 15-20 while 10% were sexually active before age 10. About 35% could not remember the exact age .16.9% have had 1-2 sexual partners since they were 12years old. 11.6% had 3-4 sexual partners since then, 8.3% had above 5 partners, 28.2% had 5 or more sexual partners. Majority (68.1%) live with one partner, 21.9% live with two, and 7.5% live with three and 2.5% live with four. 6.0% of the respondents had over 10 sexual partners before marriage, 7.0%) had between 5-9 partners, 29.9% had between 1 – 4 partners and 57.0% said they had none. 9.3% said they have had extra marital sex while 86.5% claimed that they never did; 3.5%

did not response. 1.0% had experienced extra marital sex with over 10 persons in the past 12 months, 4.1% with between 5-9 persons, and 18.4% with between 1-4 persons.

Majority indicated that they have been involved in sexual relationships with more than one partner, suggesting the occurrences of multiple sex partners even among the married. Majority of respondents said that in the last twelve months their involvement in sex with multiple partners had not required the use condom or any other safe sex practices. This is a factor that is capable of spreading of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV and unwanted pregnancies in the communities.

**Table 2: showing Sexual behaviour, Common Diseases and Prevention in the Fishing Communities.**

| Age of first sexual intercourse      | Frequency(F) | Percent(%) |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| 10-15                                | 65           | 34.8       |
| 16-20                                | 74           | 39.6       |
| 21- 25                               | 23           | 12.3       |
| 26-30                                | 10           | 5.3        |
| Above 30                             | 4            | 2.1        |
| No response                          | 11           | 5.8        |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>187</b>   | <b>100</b> |
| <b>Partners since age 12 years</b>   |              |            |
| One                                  | 39           | 20.9       |
| Two                                  | 30           | 16.0       |
| Three                                | 13           | 7.0        |
| Above three                          | 21           | 11.2       |
| No response                          | 20           | 10.7       |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>187</b>   | <b>100</b> |
| <b>Never had any sexual relation</b> |              |            |
| Still too young for sex              | 8            | 4.3        |
| Too old for sex                      | 5            | 2.7        |
| A decision to abstain                | 10           | 5.3        |
| Don't consider it necessary          | 2            | 1.1        |
| No reason                            | 2            | 1.1        |
| No response                          | 160          | 85.6       |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>187</b>   | <b>100</b> |
| <b>If married when did you start</b> |              |            |

|  |            |            |
|--|------------|------------|
| <b>married life (year)</b>                       |            |            |
| 1-5  | 19         | 10.2       |
| 6-10   | 34         | 18.2       |
| 11-15  | 50         | 26.7       |
| Above 15   | 14         | 7.5        |
| No response                                      | 70         | 37.4       |
| <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>187</b> | <b>100</b> |
| <b>Number of sexual partners before marriage</b> |            |            |
| Between 1 and 4                                  | 60         | 32.1       |
| Between 5 and 9                                  | 17         | 9.1        |
| Over 10  | 24         | 12.8       |
| None   | 71         | 38.0       |
| No response                                      | 15         | 8.0        |
| <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>187</b> | <b>100</b> |
| <b>Use of condom during sex</b>                  |            |            |
| Yes  | 38         | 20.3       |
| Never  | 141        | 75.4       |
| I can't remember                                 | 2          | 1.1        |
| No response                                      | 6          | 3.2        |
| <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>187</b> | <b>100</b> |

26% of the respondents were involved in extra marital affair while 74.3% said they are not involved. On reasons for their involvement 17.1% of the respondents said it was a routine as part of life style, 2.7% said long separation from home, 1.6% said because they needed money and 74.3% did not response. The majority did not response it may because they are private or personal matter and such they are willing to discuss especially if someone is not familiar to them. This result may have serious implication on the spread of HIV/AIDS in the selected fishing communities. 36.4% of the respondents said their activities take them away from home which confirmed one of the attributes of fisherfolk as a mobile group, this result also substantiate the reason they are involved in extra marital affairs. The study revealed sexual activity when away from home, 13.4% said they sexual relation and only 10.7% did not response. The information from key informant confirmed that there is prevalence of transactional sex in the study area.

4.8% claims to engage a professional colleague as regular partner among occasional sexual partners while 9.6% said with those individuals who patronized their services. Only 1.1% patronized Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs). The seasonality in the fisheries may encourage the people to succumb to such arrangement to sustain their means of livelihood and most time the fisherfolk have daily cash flow within their reach. 11.8% have accepted sexual various propositions in exchange for work related activities and 41.2% did not response. Although, 2.1% said is what they do often while 15% said sometime which corroborates Awounda (2003) that due to poverty women fishmongers have become

victims of fishermen who are now demanding sexual favours on top of supplying fish". It is no longer gainsaying that people exchange sex for gift or economic gain for their up keep, commercial sex activities are thriving in the area which may be one of consequences of effect of global warming on the water bodies which the desired attention has not been proffered. 32.6% said there are commercial sex workers (CSWs) in their communities, 42.2% said there are none, and 17.1% said they do not know if they could be found in the communities. . . , 7% said they come from within the community, 11.2% said they come from nearby villages and 15.5% did not know where they come from. The result revealed different ethnic group may be involved in such activity.

5.9% of the respondents said there are just a few CSWs, 19.3% said they are many and majority did not response. The non response of the majority may be to protect the communities from been stigmatized since their religion forbids such activities and this might be that they want to disabuse the mind of the people that their communities are free of HIV/AIDS risks. Most of the CSWs might have been attracted by presence of migrant fishermen who often stay away from their individual families. Similarly, the availability of daily cash income in the hands of young adult fishermen may also attractive ladies/hawkers to the communities. From the study, it was revealed that prevalence of sex for exchange of gift/economic gain. This could be done directly or indirectly in subtle manner among commodity hawkers and their clients which supports the statement of ActionAid Kenya (2003) that "women traders who wants to buy fish are often coerced to offer sex for fish.

**Table 3. Showing the exchange of goods for sex and various transactional sexual activities in the study area**

| <b>Variable</b>  | <b>Frequency (F)</b> | <b>Percent (%)</b> |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Involvement in extra-marital sex</b>                            |                      |                    |
| Yes  | 48                   | 25.7               |
| No   | 139                  | 74.3               |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>187</b>           | <b>100</b>         |
| <b>Push factors to extra marital affairs</b>                       |                      |                    |
| Vengeance  | 3                    | 1.6                |
| Routine  | 32                   | 17.1               |
| Long separation  | 5                    | 2.7                |
| Meeting old partners   | 1                    | 0.5                |
| Just a need for change   | 4                    | 2.1                |
| Need for money   | 3                    | 1.6                |
| No response  | 139                  | 74.3               |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>187</b>           | <b>100</b>         |
| <b>Activity cause separation from home</b>                         |                      |                    |
| Yes  | 68                   | 36.4               |
| No   | 119                  | 63.6               |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>187</b>           | <b>100</b>         |
| <b>Sexual relation outside home</b>                                |                      |                    |
| Yes  | 25                   | 13.4               |
| No   | 142                  | 75.9               |
| No response  | 20                   | 10.7               |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>187</b>           | <b>100</b>         |
| <b>Category of sexual partners</b>                                 |                      |                    |
| <b>Outside</b>   |                      |                    |
| Professional colleague   | 9                    | 4.8                |
| People who use my service  | 18                   | 9.6                |
| People I met while conducting my activity                          | 5                    | 2.7                |
| Prostitute   | 2                    | 1.1                |
| No response  | 153                  | 81.8               |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>187</b>           | <b>100</b>         |
| <b>Acceptance of sexual proposition on work related activities</b> |                      |                    |
| Yes  | 22                   | 11.8               |
| No   | 88                   | 47.1               |
| No response  | 77                   | 41.2               |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>187</b>           | <b>100</b>         |
| <b>Sex proposition in exchange for money</b>                       |                      |                    |
| Often  | 4                    | 2.1                |
| Sometimes  | 28                   | 15                 |
| Never  | 102                  | 54.5               |
| No response  | 53                   | 28.3               |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>187</b>           | <b>100</b>         |
| <b>Commercial sex workers in the locality</b>                      |                      |                    |
| Yes  | 61                   | 32.6               |
| No   | 79                   | 42.2               |
| I don't know   | 32                   | 17.1               |
| No response  | 15                   | 8.0                |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>187</b>           | <b>100</b>         |
| <b>Origin of the commercial sex workers</b>                        |                      |                    |
| Indigene   | 13                   | 7.0                |
| From nearby villages   | 21                   | 11.2               |
| I don't know   | 29                   | 15.5               |
| No response  | 81                   | 20.4               |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>187</b>           | <b>100</b>         |
| <b>Population of commercial sex workers</b>                        |                      |                    |

|              |            |            |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Just few     | 11         | 5.9        |
| About 10     | 3          | 1.6        |
| Many         | 36         | 19.3       |
| No response  | 137        | 72.7       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>187</b> | <b>100</b> |

#### Patronage of commercial sex workers

|              |            |            |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Yes          | 22         | 11.8       |
| No           | 1          | 0.5        |
| I don't know | 48         | 25.7       |
| No response  | 116        | 62.0       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>187</b> | <b>100</b> |

#### Use the services of the commercial sex workers

|              |            |            |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Often        | 7          | 3.7        |
| Sometime     | 6          | 3.2        |
| Never        | 92         | 49.2       |
| No response  | 82         | 43.9       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>187</b> | <b>100</b> |

#### Conclusion

The study investigated the exchange of fish and other gift items for sex in fishing communities as observed in a number of countries around the World. It was discovered that the occurrence of transactional sex is gradually setting in some of the fishing communities in the Kainji Lake Basin. These facts were discovered during a study to test the knowledge, attitude and practices of HIV/AIDS in fisheries sector of Yauri emirate of Kainji Lake Basin which is in consonance with the situation found in the Lake Chad Basin. Also discovered was their involvement at one time or the other in fish/gift items for sex brought to mind the relatively high vulnerability of this group to poverty. This is associated with limited access to fishing opportunities, basic infrastructure, social amenities and other livelihood diversifications. The prevalence of fish for sex in fishing communities is gradually been noticed in the study area. Therefore the following are recommended in the Yauri emirate of Kainji Lake Basin.

- Mainstreaming of gender equality in the fishing communities
- Awareness raising, and prevention through condom use campaign
- Empowerment interventions

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