

# **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA**

A qualitative study on Violence against Female Sex Workers Conducted  
in the FCT, Cross-River and Lagos State.

**SHiPS for MARPs PROJECT**  
SOCIETY FOR FAMILY HEALTH (SFH) NIGERIA



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## **Qualitative Study conducted by:**

Strengthening HIV Prevention  
Services for Most At Risk  
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# Foreword

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women defined the term “gender based abuse” as “any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Violence against women and girls is one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world. It knows no social, economic or national boundaries. Worldwide, an estimated one in three women will experience physical or sexual abuse in her lifetime.

Gender based violence has been recognised as a global public health and human rights problem that leads to high rates of morbidity and mortality, including gynaecological problems, sexually transmitted infections, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance dependence, suicide, and mortality.

This study report determines the; occurrence of physical, emotional, financial and sexual violence against female sex workers in Nigeria, facilitators of these forms of violence, remedies for victims of violence and also the knowledge of the human rights of Female Sex Workers among themselves, Law Enforcement Agents, Healthcare Workers and their special boyfriends.

This report will be a useful tool to government, non government and private sector partners who work to combat Gender Based Violence in Nigeria. It is also hoped that this report will serve as a useful reference to researchers, other professionals and those concerned about Gender Based Violence.

**OKEKEARU Ifeanyi**

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We gratefully acknowledge the members of the study team for their excellent work in the field in generating quality data.

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# Acronyms

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| AIDS  | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome             |
| DiCs  | Drop in Centres                                 |
| FCT   | Federal Capital Territory                       |
| FGD   | Focused Group Discussion                        |
| FSWs  | Female Sex Workers                              |
| GBV   | Gender Based Violence                           |
| HCW   | Healthcare Workers                              |
| HIV   | Human Immunodeficiency Virus                    |
| HQ    | Headquarters                                    |
| IDI   | In-depth Interview                              |
| LEA   | Law Enforcement Agent                           |
| MARPs | Most-at-Risk-Populations                        |
| M&E   | Monitoring and Evaluation                       |
| OSSs  | One Stop Shops                                  |
| SBF   | Special Boyfriend                               |
| SHiPS | Strengthening HIV Prevention Services for MARPs |
| STI   | Sexually Transmitted Infection                  |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund                  |
| VAW   | Violence against Women                          |

# Executive Summary

Gender-based violence (GBV) is the general term used to capture violence that occurs as a result of the normative role expectations associated with each gender, along with the unequal power relationships between the two genders, within the context of a specific society (Bloom 2008, p14). Violence against women is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. A better understanding of violence against female sex workers is necessary in order to develop interventions targeting this issue. Thus, the SHiPs for MARPs project began a multi-state study on Gender based violence among FSWs with the aim to determine the occurrence of violence, the knowledge of their rights and their support systems.

The participants in this study was made up of a cross-section of FSWs, their special boyfriends, health care workers and members of the law enforcement agencies through qualitative descriptive study using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and In-depth Interviews (IDIs) in three (3) selected states, namely FCT, Lagos and Cross-river. The goal of this study was to determine the occurrence of physical, emotional, financial and sexual violence against female sex workers in Nigeria.

Data collection took place in the FCT, Lagos and Cross-river within the month of May 2016. A total of 9 FGDs and 27 IDIs were conducted across the various target groups. Participants were purposively sampled in order to provide the study with in-depth and relevant information on the research topic domains. These domains included; Awareness of rights, Nature of GBV, facilitators of GBV and remedies for victims of violence.

The Study showed a general lack of awareness of the human rights of FSWs among FSWs themselves. Unlike the female sex workers, more of the special boyfriends were aware that FSWs had rights and stated that they should be treated as such. Out of all the respondents, awareness was highest among the health care workers and most of them stated that the FSWs have the same rights as everyone else and deserve to be treated that way. Quite a number of law enforcement agents stated the FSWs did not have

rights because of the illegality of their work. The Study also revealed that majority the LEAs did not know the content of the law which criminalizes sex work.

The forms of violence identified from the study included; physical, sexual, economic and psychological violence. The common sources of all the forms of violence identified from the study were the LEAs (Police officers) and SBF (Special Boyfriends). Thus, FSWs in this study mostly faced barriers reporting cases of violence.

The study revealed that the main facilitators of violence against FSWs were; disputes over clients among FSWs (intra-facilitator), Inter-facilitators of violence between SBF, Brothel managers and FSWs were identified to be; refusal to have sex due to physiological reasons, low educational level of FSW, receiving calls from clients, disrespect from boyfriends, high mobility of FSWs, brothel manager's interference between a dissatisfied client and an FSW. External facilitators such as harboring of criminals, resisting arrest, monetary gain as reasons why FSWs were violated by LEAs.

Participants were able to name a variety of remedies that they adapt after been violated some of which included; threatening to report clients, self pity and crying, taking no action either because of perceived illegality of sex work or for fear of being exploited by police, terminating relationships, self help in form of inflicting bodily harm on the perpetrators of violence against them (retaliation) while a few reported cases of violence to constituted authorities.

Findings from the study provided insight as to what is needed in combating the pervasive nature of gender based violence some of which include;

- Educate FSWs about their human rights
- Increase the awareness of the rights of FSWs among Law Enforcement Agents
- Greater Advocacy in support of legal reforms to discourage Gender Based Violence
- More Efforts to ensure enforcement of existing laws on violence
- Provision of services (including health services and counselling) specifically targeting FSW survivors of gender-based violence patients
- Training of health care workers and advocacy visits to the health care facilities

This report discusses the aforementioned findings and recommendations in details. It is hoped that this report will inform GBV programming.

# Chapter One

## 1.0 Introduction

Violence against women is the most pervasive yet under-recognized human rights violation in the world (Mary, et al., 2005). It is also a profound health problem that compromises their physical and mental health, and erodes their self-esteem (Mary, et al., 2005). In addition to causing injury, violence increases women's long-term risk of a number of other health problems, including HIV, chronic pain, physical disability, drug and alcohol abuse and depression. Women with a history of physical or sexual abuse are also at increased risk for unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and miscarriages. Despite the high costs of violence against women, social institutions in almost every society in the world legitimize, conceal and deny abuse. The same acts that would be punished if directed at an employee, a neighbor, or an acquaintance often go unchallenged when men direct them at women, especially within the family. For over three decades, women's advocacy groups around the world have been working to draw more attention to the physical, psychological, and sexual abuse of women and to stimulate action. They have provided abused women with shelter, lobbied for legal reforms, and challenged the widespread attitudes and beliefs that support violence against women.

## 1.1 Background

Fawole, et al. (2014) in a study "Prevalence and correlates of Violence against Female Sex workers in Abuja, Nigeria", the prevalence of violence against women (VAW) six months preceding the survey was 52.5%. Sexual violence was the most common (41.9%) of violence experienced, followed by economic (37.7%), physical violence (35.7%) and psychological (31.9%). The main perpetrators of sexual violence were clients (63.8%) and brothel management (18.7%). Sexual violence was significantly more experienced by older FSWs than their younger counterparts, by permanent brothel residents and among those who had been in the sex industry for more than five years. It was observed that; Respondents with good knowledge levels of types of violence were less vulnerable to physical violence, psychological violence was more likely among FSWs who smoked and the risk of economic violence decreased with educational levels. Consequences of the violence included sexually transmitted infections (20%) and HIV (8.0%). As regards the perpetrators of violence, an FSW said *"Many of the local thugs like to touch our backside or breast while we are walking on the streets, also some of our clients ask for more rounds of sex which was not in the initial*

*agreement when they refuse to pay for these extras this results in fights, slaps or attempted rape. These are some of the common things we experience with this work”.*

*“Policemen take advantage of us, they raid our brothels and then gang-rape us saying there is nothing we can do because our work is illegal”.*

*“When we are unable to pay our rent quickly some brothel managers ask for free sex every time until we can pay”.*

This survey gave an insight as to the existence of violence against the FSWs in Nigeria, thus raising questions as to the rights of female sex workers and the alleged illegality of their profession.

## **1.2 Rationale for the study**

It is well recognized that violence against women (VAW) is one of the most prevalent human rights violation in the world (UNFPA, 2008). Gender based violence is violence involving men and women in which the female is usually the victim and which is derived from unequal power relationships between men and women. It can also be qualified as violence which is directed specifically against a woman because she is a woman or affects women disproportionately. It includes, but is not limited to, physical, sexual and psychological harm (including intimidation, suffering, coercion, deprivation of liberty within the family, or within the general community) and that violence which is perpetrated or condoned by the state (UNFPA, 2009). The occurrence and prevalence however especially among Female Sex Workers (FSW), is yet to be determined.

Gender-based violence among FSW undermines the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims, yet it remains shrouded in a culture of silence. Victims of violence can suffer sexual and reproductive health consequences, including forced and unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted infections including HIV, and even death (UNFPA, 2016).

The culture of silence seats around the lack of knowledge of FSWs about their human rights, the legality of their profession and the systems in place to protect their rights as women and where they can go when violence has occurred.

The forms of violence experienced mostly by FSWs from a previous study are sexual, economic, physical and psychological.

The question of the legality of the profession makes it difficult to design or evaluate policies or programmes intended to address gender based violence against female sex workers.

To shed more light on this issue the SHiPs for MARPs project began a multi-state study on Gender based violence among FSWs. The participants in this study are a cross section of FSWs, law enforcement agents, Health care workers and clients/special boyfriends. The main aim is to determine the occurrence of violence, the knowledge of their rights and their support systems.

### **1.3 Goal of the study**

The goal of this study is to determine the occurrence of physical, emotional, financial and sexual violence against female sex workers in Nigeria.

### **1.4 Specific objectives of the study**

1. To provide insight as to whether the right to health for female sex workers is protected, as well as their right to be treated with dignity as opposed to the reported cases of violence and brutality against female sex workers.
2. To ascertain the knowledge of the rights of female sex workers from the sex workers themselves, their clients, health care workers and the law enforcement agents; and to also determine the occurrence of violence against female sex workers.

# Chapter Two

## 2.0 Methodology

The participants in this study was a cross-section of FSWs, their special boyfriends, health care workers and members of the law enforcement agencies through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and In-depth Interviews (IDIs) in three (3) selected states, namely FCT, Lagos and Cross-river.

The project utilized the states' SHiPS for MARPs M&E and State Programme Officers with support from the State Team Leaders to implement this study in the selected locations. The state team recruited Facilitators, Note takers and Transcribers to transcribe from all voice recorders used for data collection, while M&E officers were briefed electronically from the HQ before deploying to the field. Facilitators, Note-takers and transcribers were recruited in each of the states to transcribe tapes verbatim and efficiently, in order to draft concise reports. Essential to this study was that facilitators, note-takers and transcribers must understand and speak the local languages of the study location very fluently.

The three (3) states were selected purposively. Geographical and socio-cultural differences which may inform the sexual practices and behavioral patterns in these locations were also considered.

## 2.1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria for respondents

Inclusion criteria: Voluntary completion of an informed consent form must be ensured for all participants for both FGDs and IDIs.

- FSWs for the 1st group : Must be between the ages to under 19 years of age
- FSWs for the 2nd group: Must be between the ages of 20 years to 34 years of age
- FSWs for the third group: Must be from the age of 35 years and above
- Special boyfriends: Must be a male and must be 18 years or older and must have had sex with an FSW in the last 12 months.
- Law enforcement agent: Can be a Male or Female, but must be a member of Law enforcement agency legally recognized by the government of Nigeria.
- Healthcare Workers: Must be healthcare workers who have worked with MARPs, FSWs in particular.

## Exclusion Criteria

- Unable to understand or provide informed consent.
- MARPs who were observed to be under the influence of alcohol and drugs, which is likely to impair judgment and behavior.
- Duplicated recruit; that is, has been previously interviewed.

## 2.2 Selection of study sites

Three (3) states were purposively selected. Geographical and socio-cultural differences which may inform the sexual practices and behavioral patterns in these locations were also considered. The three states that were selected are Cross Rivers, FCT and Lagos. Two LGAs were randomly selected in each state where the FGDs were evenly conducted.

## 2.3 Number of FGDs/KII

| Tools and Number of Sessions |           |                     |                          |                              | TOTAL |      |
|------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------|------|
| State                        | FSW (FGD) | Client of FSW (IDI) | Healthcare Workers (IDI) | Law enforcement Agents (IDI) | FGDs  | IDIs |
| <b>FCT</b>                   | 3         | 3                   | 2                        | 4                            | 3     | 9    |
| <b>Lagos</b>                 | 3         | 3                   | 2                        | 4                            | 3     | 9    |
| <b>Cross rivers</b>          | 3         | 3                   | 2                        | 4                            | 3     | 9    |
| <b>Total</b>                 | 9         | 9                   | 6                        | 12                           | 9     | 27   |

## 2.4 Data Collection Instrument

Structured FGD and IDI guides were developed, pretested and were used to guide the collection of data from the participants. The IDI and FGD discussion guides are in the appendix.

## 2.5 Data Collection

Data collection will last for a cumulative period of 4 days in each state. Data will be collected by trained research assistants using the FGD and IDI guides.

The FGD and IDI sessions will be moderated by a facilitator while a note taker will take notes and record sessions with consent from the participants using the audio recorders, which will be later transcribed.

## 2.6 Data Analysis

All recorded interviews and focus group sessions will be transcribed into Microsoft word by a team of transcribers at the state level and where points or contributions made were either not lucid or missed; the notes taken will be used to edit the transcripts. This will be done for all focus groups and interviews.

For this study, thematic analysis approach will be utilized; the art of studying and looking across all transcribed interviews to identify common issues that occur, the main themes and commons views. The following steps will be adapted in analyzing the data collected.

**Step 1-** Annotation of transcripts: This is the first step. The transcripts will be read and studied to gain an overview of the data collected, but initial observations for completeness will also be made. This is important in arriving at the logic of the data collected.

**Step 2-** Identification of themes: This second step will begin with a detailed observation for themes. Themes will be collated in the margins of transcripts. Interviewees may use slangs or unpopular English words to refer to a brand, behavior or a practice in the course of the study and it will be important to track the frequency of such use of words. The use of some phrases or words may mean a lot in the context of many other things the study participants would be saying.

**Step 3-** Developing a frame for coding: At this point all identified themes will be put together to develop a coding frame and the themes will be matched under a code that applies. A coding frame is vital for presenting the key issues emanating from the data collected.

**Step 4-** Data coding: At this stage, identified codes will be applied to the entire transcripts; codes will be matched on the margins of the transcripts to related responses. It is expected that the whole data set will be coded and the coding frame will be refined where necessary to ensure that the analysis does not focus on some aspects of the data. A comprehensive analysis will be undertaken.

Finally, when all transcripts have been coded, the research team at the state will take data extracts out of its actual context and place them by other similar examples to filter patterns across the entire data set.

## **2.7 Field Staff Team Composition, Training and Supervision**

### **2.7.1 Field staff Team Composition**

The field staff comprised of State study coordinator, HQ supervisor, 3 Facilitators, 3 note takers and 2 transcribers. Each facilitator was assigned a note taker to facilitate data collection from specified respondent type thus: a team for FGD among FSW, a team for IDI among Law enforcement Officers, and the third team for IDI among Special boyfriends and healthcare workers.

### **2.7.2 Training**

The facilitators note takers and transcribers were trained on the methodology of the study. The facilitator's guides were extensively discussed and role plays were done to ensure the data collectors had adequate capacity to implement the research protocol accurately.

### **2.7.3 Quality assurance and Supervision**

The State study coordinator and HQ supervisor monitored the discussion and interview sessions. The first data collection session for each team was played back and reviewed for adherence to protocol and sufficiency of information. Feedback from the review was further used to build the capacity of data collectors.

## **2.8 Ethical consideration and Consent**

Qualitative methods of data collection can be extremely invasive of the personal and intimate aspects of people's lives and so, a great deal of care was applied in the protection of participants in this study.

Firstly, the facilitator discussed explicitly the aims of the research to participants. Potential risks of been involved in the study was communicated to the participants and the rights of the participants to choose whether they wished to be involved in the study or not was respected at every point in the course of the study; recruitment of participants was not coercive or manipulative.

Secondly, the facilitator ensured that participants do not suffer any harm for participating in this study including feelings of anger, guilt or fears related to disclosure of sensitive and embarrassing information or treated impolitely or unfairly because of self-disclosure.

Lastly, the facilitator will ensure that findings from this study; report or any publication will not be used in any way that will bring harm to the study participants.

# Chapter Three

## 3.0 Key Findings

### 3.1 Awareness about the Human Rights of Female Sex Workers

The Study revealed a common trend of the lack of awareness of the human rights of FSWs among all respondents. A majority of FSWs themselves were unaware of their human rights and even held the ideation that their rights were different from women who had other jobs other than sex work. They also cited that because they don't have rights, they don't receive protection from the law whenever cases of violence are reported as corroborated in the statements below;

*"I believe that the law that protects other women does not protect me because am doing this work" (FGD with FSW in Lagos).*

*"... human right is for women that are married now...I don't feel I have right as a prostitute" (FGD with FSW in Lagos).*

*"...I don't have any protection from the law...there's no need reporting because doing that will make them humiliate you the more" (FGD with FSW in Cross River)*

*"A friend once reported and was not given attention. She was insulted with the words "ashawo"..." (FGD with FSW in Cross River).*

#### 3.1.1 Special Boyfriend's Awareness

Unlike the female sex workers, Most boyfriends of the Female Sex Workers were largely aware that FSWs had rights and stated that they should be treated as such even though a few thought otherwise. Below are statements confirming this;

*"She is free to exercise her rights; she is free to operate her business..... She chose to do what she wants to do". (IDI with Boyfriend in Cross River)*

*"Woman wey dey for her husband house dey responsible, she deserve every right but compare to a runs girl (FSW), runs girl no even deserve any right as e be like dis....." (IDI with Boyfriend in FCT).*

### 3.1.2 Health Care Workers Awareness

The overall perception from health care workers was that FSWs had Human rights as any other citizen of Nigeria. They explained how people looked down on FSW and how their line of work doesn't allow them treat any human no matter the social class of the individual in a demeaning manner. One of the HCW had this to say

*“Everybody as a citizen of Nigeria, everybody has right to everything” (IDI with HCW in Abuja).*

### 3.1.3 Law Enforcement Agent Awareness

About some of the Law Enforcement Agents from this study stated that FSWs had human rights while majority cited factors such as illegality of their work, the environment they are domiciled in, mode of dressing, the way they talk and other vices as inhibiting factors to exercising their rights.

*“They have rights. As an individual, everybody has a right. You have the freedom of speech, you have right to live, you have right to you know... air out your views to whatever you don't like, they also have rights”. (IDI with LEA in Cross River)*

*“They are human being but the business they are doing are not legalized, they are not legal business, they are not government oriented business, work or organization so they don't have any right”. (IDI with LEA in FCT)*

*It's an offence to me, it's not legal.....Human right is the one that spoil this Nigeria.....their right is different from other women you know if now that you are a married woman we respect you more than the person that is irresponsible”. (IDI with LEA in Cross River)*

*“The right of a virtuous woman the respect is there, she dress well, she has that right of worshipping, she is eh she has that high class education like high grade of educational level, she can lead it's there, but in the sex worker they are like tied to that their world kind of, tied to that their world kind of, their dressings are not so much impressed, the way they talk the things they consume a responsible woman should not smoke, they smoke any kind of smoke and drink any kind of drinks they take like that”*

### 3.1.4 LEA Awareness about Law that Criminalizes Sex Work

While LEAs in Lagos State stated that Sex work was is a crime, they still carried out the arrests of FSWs. Results show that more interviewees were unaware of the specific content of laws,

and they were presumably less clear about their own responsibilities under the law. The IDI data suggests participants who thought sex work was criminal offence were unaware of the specifics of the provisions of the law. One of the LEAs had little knowledge of the specifics of laws and policies.

*“As of now, the law has not said anything that this is what we should do, we can just go there and arrest them”. (IDI with LEA in Lagos)*

*“No law that says we should arrest them or embarrass them. There is no law in Lagos state , even in Nigeria”. (IDI with LEA in Lagos)*

*“Sex work is criminal offence evidence that we find from them, like the brothel is not permitted; it’s not permitted by law because it causes nuisance to the society when they are caught, we take them to the station, after explaining, they [I/we] take statement on why they are on that because that is an illegal practice, illegal act, it is an illegal, it’s is crime, so by the time they make their statement, if actually we go for investigation we find out that you are involved or at times they are many; if they are involved for prosecution, we take them to the court...” (IDI with LEA in Cross River)*

*“In the penal code which guides the northern part of the country, I think section ehm 276 of the penal code is against this thing (Sex Work) and is against them (Female Sex Workers), while I think the section 348 of the penal code criminalizes their activities as nuisance...” (IDI with LEA in FCT)*

## **3.2 Nature of violence**

The result from the study indicated the common perpetrators of violence across the three states of study to be; the LEAs and Special boyfriends with peculiarities which point to area boys/ touts in Lagos and Cross River state. The various forms of violence identified from the study are Physical violence, Sexual violence, Economic violence and Psychological violence.

### **3.2.1 Physical Violence**

Battery was identified as the most common form of physical violence against female sex workers and this was perpetrated by LEAs, Special boyfriends, touts (Area boys) and soldiers:

*“...Police arrested us and beat us and took us to the station, it happens very often” (FGD with FSW in Cross River).*

*“...Na area boys, cult boys na dem beat me, commot my two teeth dem beat me, collect my money join am. Na the thing way we dey see...” (FGD with FSW in Cross River).*

*“My own boyfriend if I no give am money, him go beat me”. [Laughter] (FGD with FSW in Cross River)*

*“... a civil servant I will not mention his office he went and have affairs with a female sex worker and there was a price he was to pay of 500 naira which he was not having change he gave her 1000naira, for her to go and bring change for him he she couldn't bring the change, so he now say tor if you don't bring the change what we will do he will go in again without condom, the lady say no that she cannot do without condom that the first they did with condom so they should continue with condom and that they should not do that because she is protecting herself kind of, so later the lady refused that without condom he wont go into her again because the first he did with condom, and like that he left thinking everything has finished. the next thing he went and bring a gun and begin to shoot that place because he is a uniformed person and begin to shoot” (IDI with LEA in Abuja).*

*“...For me I followed a soldier man and took me to their camp before daybreak, he disappeared after making love to me. I met him the next day and he started beating me, nobody to report him to” (FGD with FSW in Lagos).*

*“...Sometimes my friend usually is beaten well and they [police] will f\*\*k her, most of them are touts” (FGD with FSW in Lagos).*

*“...One [tout] don beat me inside. E lock door. E f\*\*k me so tey...e no fit release. This boy lock door, e beat me so tey...my eyes, my two eyes swell up. In the morning, I carry my load...travel go treat myself... for our house”(FGD with FSW in Cross River).*

### **3.2.2 Sexual Violence**

Results show evidence of sexual violence against Female sex workers mostly from LEAs and Special boyfriends. This is corroborated by statements below;

*“...yes especially when it rains and the night becomes cold, they will forcefully have sex with us (FSW) in their vans while some will even stand to do it”(FGD with FSW in Cross River).*

*“...I don experience am. Dem come raiding here, police. I was inside my room lying down, I was alone, he started fingering my pant. The police man now came in and said, I should pull off my pant. After making love with him, he still collected me N=1000.” (FGD with FSW in Cross River).*

*“...sometimes in the night, dem wey dey arrest us us go come back make we f\*\*k them”. (FGD with FSW in Abuja).*

*“My boyfriend wanted to ‘f\*\*k’ and I objected because of menstruation and I was beaten and overpowered by the guy and the guy had his desire met” (FGD with FSW in Cross river)*

*“E don happen to me, the one wey we dey experience for street be say, if them catch you for street, if police catch you now, if you get money for pocket, na your luck be that, but if you no get money for pocket, all of them go f\*\*k you, some go use condom, some no go use condom” (FGD with FSW in Lagos)*

### **3.2.3 Economic Violence**

Stealing, extortion and exploitation as a way of evading arrest were recorded across respondents as forms of economic violence. Most of the respondents as deduced from the study also reported the major perpetrators of this violence as LEA followed by Clients/SBF.

*“...law enforcement agents extort us is as a result of nonpayment of salaries so they fall back on us for survival ”(FGD with FSW Cross River).*

*“...Yes they (police) have been doing it, regularly when they come for raking [//raiding/] here. They will ask a girl to f\*\*k them, after f\*\*king them, they will not pay, and they will still collect money. [Inaudible segment] like daily money from the girl. Like four, five thousand. After sleeping with the girl, they'll still carry the girl out of this environment and go to the station.” (FGD with FSW in Cross River).*

*“...dem dey collect, dem dey use their influence dey thief well well, them dey pretend to dey arrest, them are used to that thing. Sometimes sef if you give them your phone they no go give you back, they will say make you go give them receipt”(FGD with FSW in Abuja).*

*“...Dem don show, police don show oh. This na the second set to dey come today. More than three of four sets dey come in a day. And them use to collect money. Na their bank when dem dey come collect money, we be central bank, their ATM when police dey fix money, anytime when them need money, them dey withdraw kpa kpa kpa money go come out”(FGD with FSW in Abuja).*

*“...A client has come and collected the phone I just bought that day, even slippers, there is nothing they cannot steal from you”(FGD with FSW in Lagos).*

### **3.2.4 Psychological Violence.**

Threats of violence, intimidation, insults were identified in the study as forms of psychological violence. It was also reported across the respondents that the major perpetrators are LEA followed also by SBF/clients.

*“...Sometimes, dem go tell you say, open your yansh, make dem see yansh. When you open yansh, dem go tell you say...this kind rotten yansh na him una use dey take dey f\*\*k, f\*\*k.”(FGD with FSW in Cross River).*

*“... like if she misbehave I fit tell her sey you dey behave like person wey no get parent, you dey behave like person wey no get home training. As I just wey call lam different names, I dey call am snake” (IDI with SBF in Abuja).*

*“...We dey inside room, he first give me N1000, he con dey ask for many things, suck prick, pull off, climb, give from back, I said oga na only N1000 you pay, na em the man say do you know who i am? I am going to bring soldier here, they will flog you, don't hustle again o, if i see you outside, i go bring soldier, they will come and flog you, the N1000 now as he con dey threaten me I say okay no vex take your N1000, I no wan flogging”(FGD with FSW in Lagos).*

## **3.3 Facilitators of Violence**

Based on feedback from the data collection, the facilitators of violence were categorized into 3; Intra (from the FSWs), Inter (From Special boyfriends and Brothel Managers), External (From LEAs, Clients and HCW).

### **3.3.1 Intra Facilitators of Violence (from FSWs)**

It was generally observed that the only behavior that instigates violence from within the FSWs is dispute over customers. This is corroborated by the statement below;

*“Some of them use to fight with their customers or themselves. You want to take my customer, I’ve known this man before, since two years ago, now today how come the man enter your room, they can start fighting and use sharp object to injure themselves.....” (IDI with LEA in Lagos)*

### **3.3.2 Inter Facilitators of Violence (Boyfriends and Brothel Managers)**

The study revealed why FSWs get violated by their Boyfriends and brothel managers. Some of these reasons identified include; refusal to have sex due to physiological reasons, low educational level of FSW, receiving calls from clients, disrespect from boyfriends, high mobility of FSWs, brothel manager’s interference between a dissatisfied client and an FSW. This is depicted by the statements below;

*“My boyfriend wanted to ‘f\*\*k’ and I objected because of menstruation and I was beaten and overpowered by the guy and the guy had his desire met”. (FGD with FSW in Cross River)*

*“I have a boyfriend that beats me, if any client calls me, he will beat me and break my SIM card” (FGD with FSW in Lagos)*

*“There are some things I can’t discuss with them because their educational level is very low. I even do that to other girls even those seeing more money than me. I fight with one girl. I get another one immediately”. (IDI with Boyfriend in Lagos)*

*“Sometimes when I call my babe (FSW), she will say she is at this or that club and that really vexes me and causes quarrel” (IDI with Boyfriends in FCT)*

*“Like sometimes, we go get client, the client be like say them send am come, he go sex, f\*\*k f\*\*k f\*\*k, he no go release, add money, he no go add money, go, he no gree go, instead he go want to fight you, and if he fight you finish, if care is not taken, you go pay fine join, if manager come, either them go judge am, he go say make him share the money into two, me go take one, the client go take one or make you gree return the money give am, so na the sexual harassment way me i dey get be that”. (FGD with FSW in Lagos)*

### **3.3.3 External Facilitators of Violence (LEAs)**

The study revealed harboring of criminals, resisting arrest, monetary gain as reasons why FSWs were violated by law enforcement agents (Police Officers). This is corroborated by the following statements;

*“They are been arrested based on information in the sense that maybe most of them are harboring criminals...As a law enforcement agent, arresting the female sex workers is a way of curbing crime, you know like these bad boys, criminals, they see a brothel as a place they can easily hide themselves and two, armed robbers and criminals, they patronize these people a lot, so these are some of the reasons why law enforcement agents normally arrest them”. (IDI with LEA in Lagos)*

*“There is nothing that can make police assault female sex worker. The only ways is if you want to arrest them when their customer or area boys customer want to attack you” (IDI with LEA in Lagos)*

*“Before a police man becomes violent, it is when you the person try not to obey the order given. We are for peace and when we come to you, we speak to you in a peaceful manner; and when we speak to you in a peaceful manner, and you don’t want to obey that is the time we apply force; and then when we apply force, you may call it violence, it’s not violent; we are only trying to let you understand why we are there.” (IDI with LEA in Cross River)*

*“More than three or four sets of police men come here in a day and they collect our money, we are their central bank and their ATM. When police dey find money, anytime when them need money, them go come withdraw money commot from us”. (FGD with FSW in FCT)*

### **3.4 Remedies for Victims of Violence**

FSWs who had experienced violence reported a range of actions they took after been violated. Their responses to violence ranged between; threatening to report clients, self pity and crying, taking no action either because of perceived illegality of sex work or for fear of being exploited by police, terminating relationships, self help in form of inflicting bodily harm on the perpetrators of violence against them (retaliation) while a few reported cases of violence to constituted authorities. This is corroborated by statements below;

*“A client had used me and wanted to trick me so I followed up the client and threatened to report to his office and family and at last, the client paid the money” (FGD with FSW in Cross river).*

*“I feel bad and even cry sometimes”. (FGD with FSW in Lagos).*

*“Even if you report, police go still collect your money join”. (FGD with FSW in Lagos).*

*“Even if you want to report, the same police will ask for his own sex, so it is better you keep quiet”. (FGD with FSW in Lagos).*

*“My lover don beat me tire, so i don sack am”. (FGD with FSW in Lagos).*

*“Na so we come gather outside beat the man”. (FGD with FSW in FCT`).*

*“When it happens, we group ourselves to fight back and at times call on the area boys that are friendly to assist in the fight”. (FGD with FSW in Cross river).*

*“I now called security [police] and they now came to rescue me”. (FGD with FSW in Lagos).*

## Chapter Four

### 4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 4.1 Conclusion

The Study showed that there is a general lack of awareness about the human rights of FSWs. Of all the categories of respondents, awareness is lowest among the FSWs themselves. However the health care workers and special boyfriends mostly seem to be aware of the rights of FSWs as human beings.

Only some of the respondents who were LEAs were aware that FSWs should be accorded the same rights as every other person. It is evident that they are seen by a large proportion of the LEAs as less than women in other walks of life and don't deserve to be accorded the same rights as them. While most LEAs seem to be convinced that sex work is a crime, the Study shows that they are not aware of the specific content of the laws and their responsibility as regard the law.

These acts of violence can be categorised into four major types: Physical, Sexual, Economic and Psychological. The facilitators of these acts are Intra (among FSWs and mostly caused by arguments over clients), Inter (among Special boyfriends and Brothel managers which is mostly caused by dissatisfaction of a client) and External (among LEAs which is mostly caused by alleged criminality of the profession).

The main perpetrators of physical violence and sexual violence are the LEAs and special boyfriends with certain peculiarities such as touts and area boys. LEAs and special boyfriends are also the perpetrators of economic and psychological violence.

## **4.2 Implication for HIV**

Sexual violence is also a direct vehicle for the transmission of the HIV virus and other sexually transmitted infections. By virtue of sexual violence being forced and non-consensual sexual act, the likelihood of HIV transmission increases through the heightened possibility of physical injury to women and girls' reproductive tracts, and therefore, enabling a pathway of entry for the HIV virus. The study revealed the HIV risk the FSWs and their violators are exposed to by their actions. This was clearly painted by the respondents;

*“Sometimes in the night, dem (Police) wey dey arrest us us go come back make we f\*\*k them”  
(FGD with FSW in FCT)*

*“Most of times when they are being raped they don't use condom and they do it in a brutal way”  
(IDI with Health care Worker in FCT)*

*“E don happen to me, the one wey we dey experience for street be say, if police catch you for street now, if you get money for pocket, na your luck be that, but if you no get money for pocket, all of them go f\*\*k you, some go use condom, some no go use condom”. (FGD with FSW in Lagos).*

## **4.3 Recommendations**

### **4.3.1 Educate FSWs about their human rights**

One major observation across all respondents is lack of awareness of the rights of FSWs in the context of human rights. The level of awareness can be improved by integrating information, messages and services around reduction of gender-based violence into existing community-level programs disseminating HIV/AIDS/STI information and by strengthening community awareness and mobilization with a particular emphasis on key community leaders and other influential figures.

### **4.3.2 Increase the awareness of the rights of FSWs among Law Enforcement Agents**

*The LEAs are major facilitators of these acts of violence to FSWs, and as such efforts should be put in place to educate them about the rights of these women.*

Quite a number of the respondents indicated that they were not aware of the rights of these women; this can be corrected by advocacy visits to their organisations to inform them about the rights of FSWs and the dictates of the law regarding FSWs. Also within the law enforcement organisations there could be strict penalisations for anyone of them who commit these acts.

### **4.3.3 Greater Advocacy in support of legal reforms to discourage Gender Based Violence**

There is a need for clear and definite laws against GBV so as to discourage perpetrators of this act and advocacy for existing and new law reforms should be carried out via news media, street dramas, seminars, meetings, and posters, in order to build public support the reform.

### **4.3.4 More Efforts to ensure enforcement of existing laws on violence**

This can be achieved through policy level advocacy and training for police agencies and officers, emphasizing their role as protectors of human rights.

### **4.3.5 Provision of services (including health services and counselling) specifically targeting FSW survivors of gender-based violence patients**

Quite a number of FSWs indicated that there was nowhere safe and comfortable they could go to after suffering violence of any kind. Services should be provided for after care of this vulnerable group through integration of such services in the already existing HIV prevention/treatment programs such as the DICs and OSSs. Care and counselling could be offered to the affected ladies, thus providing a stigma free environment for them to be attended to.

### **4.3.6 Training of health care workers and advocacy visits to the health care facilities**

The health facilities under the programs might not be able to attend to all the cases of GBV due to distance and number. Therefore the already existing health facilities can be empowered to provide these services through advocacy visits and training of the health care workers.

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# Appendices

Study Team  
FGD Guides  
IDI Guides

# Study Team

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## Study guides for FGD with FSWs

### Introduction

Welcome and thank you for volunteering to take part in this focus group discussion, you have been asked to participate as your opinion is very important to the subject of discussion. The focus group discussion has been designed by the SHiPS for MARPS project to assess your current thoughts and perceptions about the cases of violence against Female Sex workers in Nigeria. The focus group discussion will take no more than 60 minutes.

For the purpose of recollection, may I tape/record the discussion with a device to facilitate its recollection? (If yes switch on the recorder). Despite being taped, I would like to assure you that the discussion will be anonymous and will not identify anyone of you in anyway. After this study, the tapes will be kept safely in a locked facility until they are transcribed word for word, after which they will be destroyed.

The transcribed notes of the discussion will contain no information that would allow individual subjects to be linked to specific statements. You should try to answer and comment as accurately and truthfully as possible. I and the other participants would appreciate it if you would refrain from discussing the comments of other group members outside the focus group discussion. If there are any questions or discussions that you do not wish to answer or participate in, you do not have to do so; however please try to answer and be as involved as possible.

## Ground Rules

1. The most important rule is that only one person speaks at a time, please wait until the person speaking finishes.
2. There are no right or wrong answers
3. You do not have to speak in any particular order
4. You do not have to agree with the views of other people in the group
5. Does anyone have any questions? (Answers).
6. OK, let's begin

## Introductory question

Can we all introduce ourselves? (*Use nicknames if you wish*)

I am going to give you a minute to recall cases or situations in which you or your colleagues have experienced any form of violence in the course of your work, such cases of violence can include physical violence, sexual violence, financial violence, verbal abuse and so on.

Is anyone willing to share their experience/s?

## Discussions

### 1. Experience with law enforcement agents

*Let's begin by talking about your experiences with the law enforcement agents, (the police officers to be precise)*

- a. Has any law enforcement officer (police officers), ever received your services and refused payment?
  - If yes what transpired after the refusal?
  - How often does this happen?
  - Have any Law Enforcement officer ever forcefully taken anything belonging to you? (This could include money, mobile phones etc). How often does this happen? How do you react when such things happen?

- b. Are there any individuals who extort money from you on a regular basis other than law enforcement agents? If yes, who are they? What are their reasons?
- c. Has any Law Enforcement officer been physically violent to you? If yes please give a detailed account of such an incident. How often does this happen?
- d. Have you ever been sexually assaulted by law enforcement officer? If yes can you give a detailed account of such an incident? How often does this happen?
- e. In cases where either you or your co-sex workers have been assaulted (physically or sexually), have any of you ever reported or filed complaints with the relevant authorities? If yes, which relevant authority took your complaints? What actions were taken to remedy the situation?
- f. What do you think are the reasons for poor treatment of sex workers by law enforcement officers and clients? What do you think can be done to change the behaviors of law enforcement officers and clients?

## 2. Experience with clients of FSW (special boyfriends)

*Okay, Let us start talking about your clients, your boyfriends in particular*

- a. What kind of clients do you usually attend to? How do your clients treat you?
- b. Do you have special boyfriends? How does he treat you? What can you say about the kind of regards he has for you?
- c. Have any of your clients received your services and refused to pay? If yes, what transpired after such refusal? How was it remedied?
- d. How often have clients received services from you and refused payment? How often does this happen?
- e. Have any clients ever stolen from you? (this could include money, mobile phones etc)
- f. Have any of your clients been physically violent to you? If yes how often? Please give a detailed account of the incident/s
- g. Has your boyfriend (if you have one) been violent to you in any way? (Physically, sexually, financially, verbally etc), if yes how often does this happen? Please give an account of the incident/s.

## 3. Experience accessing healthcare

When you attend clinic/hospital to obtain healthcare;

- a. Do you self-identify yourself as a sex worker the facility?
- b. Do you perceive any form of stigma from the providers when you make this disclosure?
- c. What is the level of attention provided to you at such facilities?
- d. Have you ever been denied services at such facilities because of your profession? If yes how did you feel?
- e. Do you feel stigmatized when accessing health care?

#### 4. Cases of Violence

Recounting some experiences of violence and assaults against you or your colleagues;

- a. How do survivors of sexual violence cope after the attack in this community or area?
- b. What are your community responses when sexual violence occurs? What is done to prevent violence? What is done to help survivors? How could these efforts be improved? Do women's support networks exist to help survivors?
- c. What social and legal services exist to help address these problems? (PROBE: health, police, legal counseling, social counseling.)
- d. Who provides these services? How could these efforts be improved?
- e. Has the problem of sexual violence gotten worse, better, or stayed the same since you arrived in this community?
- f. Do you have access to any form of education and information material that address violence against women? If yes, who provided them and in what form are these materials?

#### 5. Knowledge of the law

- a. Are you aware of your rights? If yes what are they? If no, would you like to know them?- Probe for fundamental human rights. Probe for knowledge of fundamental human rights.
- b. Do you feel protected by the law? If yes how? If no why?
- c. Do you know that there are certain rights applicable to women? If yes, do these laws apply to you? Please explain the reasons for your answers
- d. Are the rights of women different from the rights of female sex workers in this community? Please give reasons for your answers
- e. Do you feel reluctant to report cases of rape or assault? If yes why? If no, would you be willing to report if the relevant authorities are willing to help?
- f. What are your perceptions about sex work within the context of the Nigerian law?

In conclusion, of all the things we have discussed today, what would you say are the most important issues you would like to express about violence against female sex workers?

#### Conclusion

Thank you for participating, this has been a very successful discussion, your opinion will be a valuable asset to the study. We hope you have found the discussion interesting. I would like to remind you that any comments featuring in this report will be anonymous.

Thank you for your participation

# Informed consent form

Dear sir/madam,

Society for Family Health (SFH), a non-Governmental Organization (NGO) promoting healthy behavior of people in the country is conducting Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) or in-depth interview (IDIs) with Female Sex Workers, Health Care workers and Law enforcement Agents.

The objective of the interview is for the purpose of collecting information as to the rate of violence against female sex workers in Nigeria.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary and you will be asked some personal questions during the session and may last for only thirty minutes. However, we seek your permission to record your voice during the session to avoid losing useful information not captured by the note taker. Your participation is important and will help us better understand your view of the questions asked as your name is not required during the interview.

You are free to opt out from the interview session, if you are not comfortable with the questions being asked. Are you willing to participate in this study?

**NB:** Participant's consent should be obtained verbally or can be signed personally.

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Sign

Date

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# Study guide for In-depth Interview (IDI) with clients of female sex workers (special boyfriends)

## Introduction

Welcome and thank you for volunteering to take part in this interview. You have been asked to participate as your point of view is important.

This interview has been designed by the SHiPS for MARPS project to assess your current thoughts and perceptions about the cases of violence against Female Sex workers in Nigeria based on your experience. This interview will take between 45minutes to an hour. I would like to tape/record the discussion with a device to facilitate recollection of the discussions we would have? Do you permit this? (If yes switch on the recorder).

Despite being taped, I would assure you that the discussion will be anonymous. The tapes will be kept safely in a locked facility until they are transcribed word for word, after which they will be destroyed. The transcribed notes of the discussion will contain no information that would allow individual subjects to be linked to specific statements. You should try to answer and comment as accurately and truthfully as possible. If there are any questions or discussions that you do not wish to answer or participate in, you do not have to do so; however please try to answer and be as involved as possible.

## Introductory questions

I am just going to give you a minute to think about your experiences with female sex workers, can you please share this experience?

## Guiding questions

1. Relationship with female sex workers
  - a. How often do you seek the services of a female sex worker?
  - b. How do you see your relationship with a female sex worker? (Probe for how long he has been in this relationship)
  - c. How do you treat her (and other female sex workers)?
  - d. What do you think about treating them with respect? (probe further based on response)
  - e. What are your experience(s) with disagreement with a your girlfriend or other sex workers (Probe for the nature of the disagreement and how was it resolved)
  - f. What do you think about being violent with your girlfriend or any other female sex worker (probe for the nature of violence, types of violence the respondent knows and possible reasons for the violence).

## 2. Knowledge of rights of female sex workers

- (a) What women rights do you know of?
- (b) What do you think about female sex workers having rights (Probe for the rights female sex workers should have)
- (c) What do you think about female sex workers having the same rights as other women (Probe further based on response).

In conclusion, of all the things we have discussed today, what would you say are the most important issues you would like to express on violence against Female sex workers?

### Conclusion

Thank you for participating, this has been a very successful discussion, your opinion will be a valuable asset to the study. We hope you have found the discussion interesting. I would like to remind you that any comments featuring in this report will be anonymous.

Thank you for your participation

## Study guide for in depth interview (IDI) with healthcare worker

### Introduction

Welcome and thank you for volunteering to take part in this interview. You have been asked to participate as your point of view is important.

This interview has been designed by the SHiPS for MARPS project to assess your current thoughts and perceptions about the cases of violence against Female Sex workers in Nigeria based on your experience. This interview will take between 45minutes to an hour. I would like to tape/record the discussion with a device to facilitate recollection of the discussions we would have? Do you permit this? (If yes switch on the recorder).

Despite being taped, I would assure you that the discussion will be anonymous. The tapes will be kept safely in a locked facility until they are transcribed word for word, after which they will be destroyed. The transcribed notes of the discussion will contain no information that would allow individual subjects to be linked to specific statements. You should try to answer and comment as accurately and truthfully as possible. If there are any questions or discussions that you do not wish to answer or participate in, you do not have to do so; however please try to answer and be as involved as possible.

### Introductory questions

I am just going to give you a minute to think about your experiences with female sex workers, if you have had any experience with them, can you please share this experience?

### Guiding questions

1. Experience with Key Populations (Female Sex Workers)
  - a. How long have you worked as a healthcare worker? Could you briefly share with me the category of persons that you interact with daily?
    - What do you think about providing health care services to female sex workers (Probe for the person's perception of female sex workers and discrimination/stigmatization against FSW). (Probe further based on response)
2. Perception about the rights of Key populations (FSWs)
  - (a) What do you think about FSW's rights to quality healthcare (Probe further on these rights and on the response of the respondent)
  - (b) What do you think about the rights of women and that of FSWs (Probe further based on response)
  - (c) Would you like to know more about the rights of female sex workers?

In conclusion, of all the things we have discussed today, what would you say are the most important issues you would like to express on violence against Female sex workers?

## **Conclusion**

Thank you for participating, this has been a very successful discussion, your opinion will be a valuable asset to the study. We hope you have found the discussion interesting. I would like to remind you that any comments featuring in this report will be anonymous.

Thank you for your participation

## Study guide for In-depth Interview (IDI) with Law Enforcement Agent.

### Introduction

Welcome and thank you for volunteering to take part in this interview. You have been asked to participate as your point of view is important.

This interview has been designed by the SHiPS for MARPS project to assess your current thoughts and perceptions about the cases of violence against Female Sex workers in Nigeria based on your experience. This interview will take between 45minutes to an hour. I would like to tape/record the discussion with a device to facilitate recollection of the discussions we would have? Do you permit this? (If yes switch on the recorder).

Despite being taped, I would assure you that the discussion will be anonymous. The tapes will be kept safely in a locked facility until they are transcribed word for word, after which they will be destroyed. The transcribed notes of the discussion will contain no information that would allow individual subjects to be linked to specific statements. You should try to answer and comment as accurately and truthfully as possible. If there are any questions or discussions that you do not wish to answer or participate in, you do not have to do so; however please try to answer and be as involved as possible.

### Introductory questions

I am just going to give you a minute to think about your experiences with female sex workers, if you have had any experience with them, can you please share this experience?

### Guiding questions

1. Experiences with female sex workers
  - (a) What is your rank?
  - (b) How long have you been in service?
  - (c) What is your opinion about arresting female sex workers (Probe for their involvement in the arrest and how often the arrest occurs).
  - (d) Why are these arrests made and on what basis?  
-Probe as to what sort of evidence is collected to trigger arrests of FSWs
  - (e) How are the FSWs treated after the arrest?
  - (d) What incidence can bring about a violent encounter with a female sex worker?  
(Probe for experiences)
  - (f) How do you handles cases being reported by FSWs (Probe based on response)

## 2. Knowledge of the Law regarding FSWs

- (a) What's your opinion about sex work in the context of the law (Probe further based on response)
- (b) What legal provisions of the law state that sex work is a criminal offence?

## 3. Nature of cases handled relating to FSWs

- (a) What kind of cases have you handled relating to FSWs and how were the cases handled? (Probe further based on response)
- (b) What are the most frequent offences female sex workers are charged with at the police stations?
  - Probe as to what these charges are and the reasons these charges are used as opposed to charging them for their sex work profession
- (c) What sort of evidence is used to make arrests?

## 4. Knowledge of the rights of female sex workers

- (a) What do you think about the rights of female sex workers? (Probe based on response)
- (b) What do you think about the rights of women and that of FSWs (Probe further based on response)

In conclusion, of all the things we have discussed today, what would you say are the most important issues you would like to express on violence against Female sex workers?

## Conclusion

Thank you for participating, this has been a very successful discussion, your opinion will be a valuable asset to the study. We hope you have found the discussion interesting. I would like to remind you that any comments featuring in this report will be anonymous.

Thank you for your participation.











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