

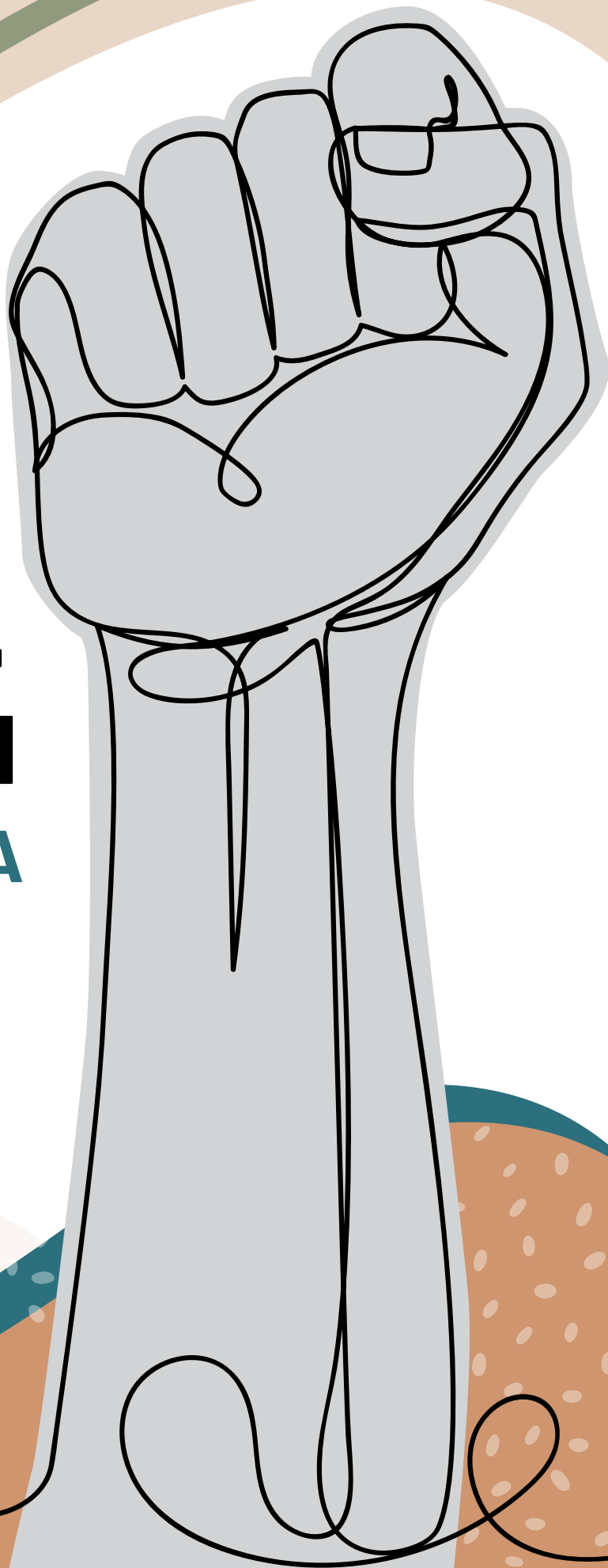
REPORT

# SEXUAL CORRUPTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Understanding  
prevalence and context



African Centre for Development  
Research and Evaluation





# SEXUAL CORRUPTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

## **PUBLISHED BY THE**

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# INTRODUCTION

## STUDY OBJECTIVE

Determine awareness of sexual corruption

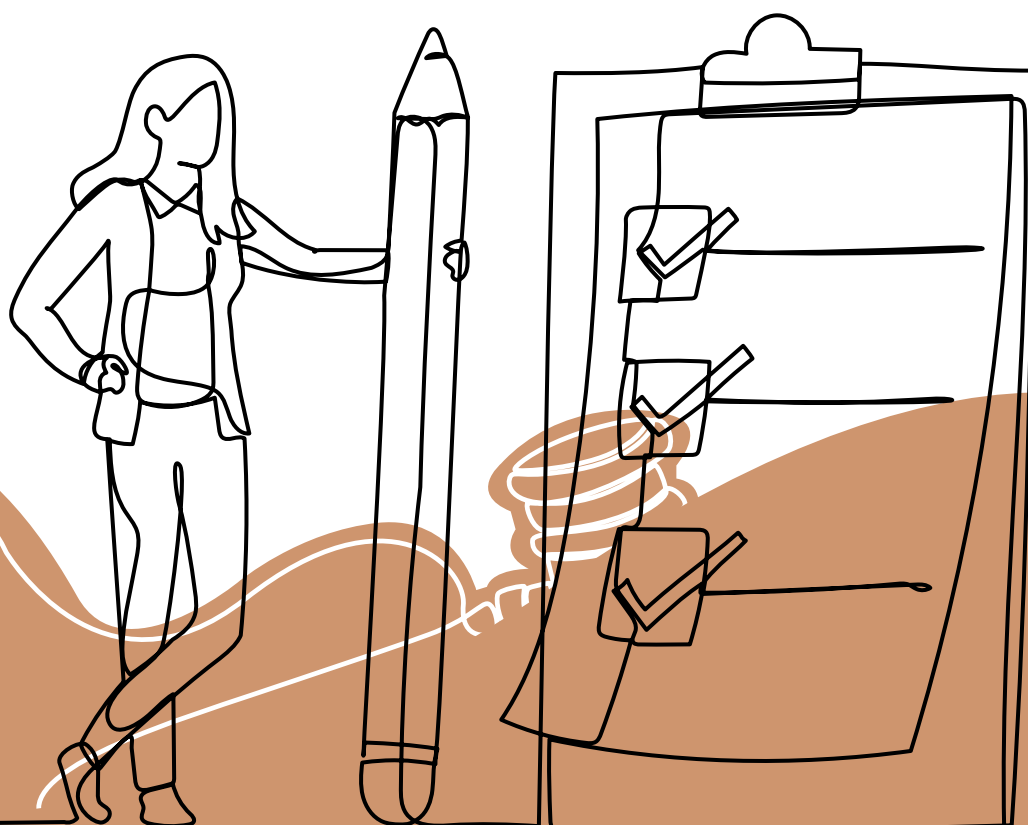
Understand scope and magnitude

Frequency of sexual corruption

Identify vulnerable groups

Record the experiences of survivors

Recommendations for advocacy, awareness raising, and policy change



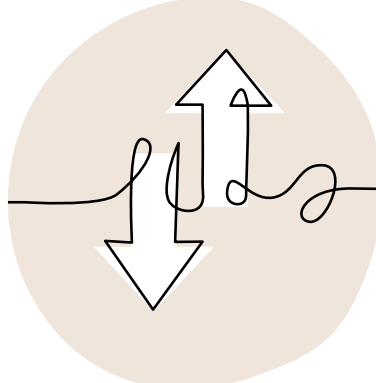
## UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL CORRUPTION

Sexual corruption, also known as sextortion, occurs when a person abuses their entrusted authority to obtain sexual favors in exchange for services or benefits (Bjarnegård et al., 2024). It has three key components:



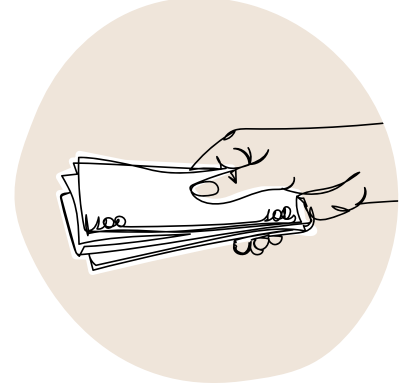
### **Abuse of authority:**

Power is abused by someone with entrusted authority for personal gain.



### **Quid pro quo exchange:**

A service or benefit connected to the entrusted authority is conditioned on a favour.



### **Sex as a currency:**

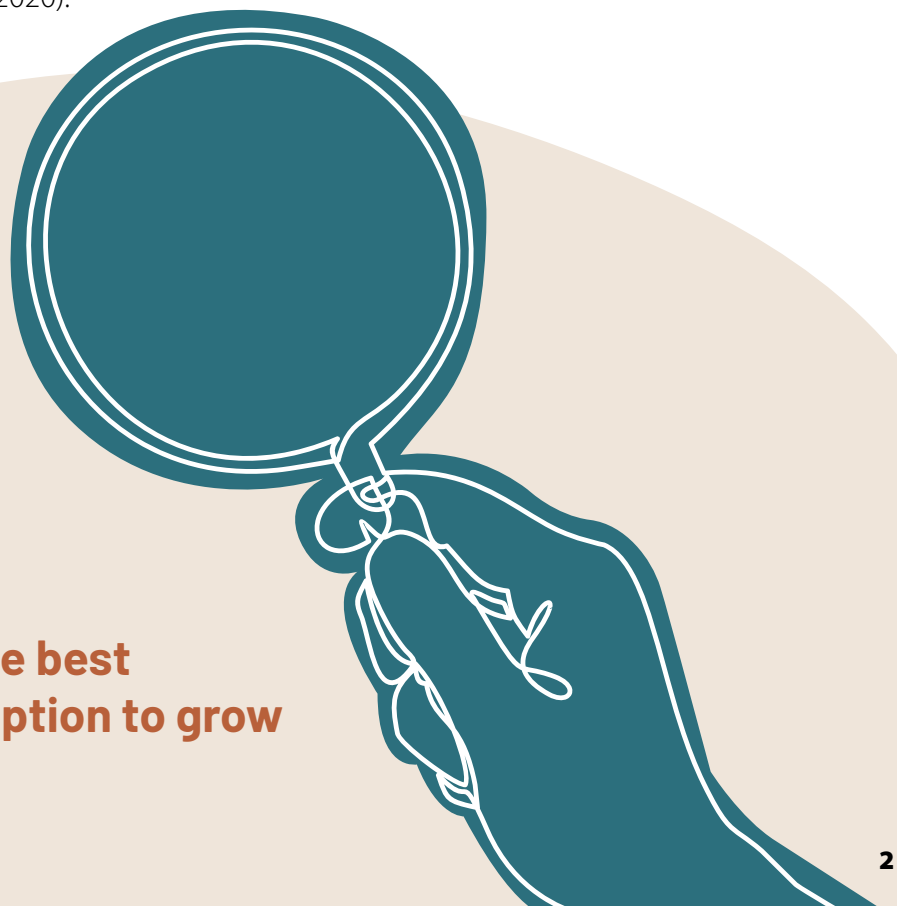
The currency of the transaction is a sexual favour.

Sexual corruption is both a form of corruption and gender-based violence, disproportionately affecting women and girls (Eldén et al., 2020). It perpetuates gender inequalities and undermines social, economic and political development (United Nations, 2020).

“

**People's indifference is the best breeding ground for corruption to grow**

Delia Ferreira, Transparency International



## SEXUAL CORRUPTION OCCURS ACROSS VARIOUS SECTORS GLOBALLY

### Education



### Public Service



### Law Enforcement



### Employment



- 20% of individuals in Latin America and MENA region experienced sexual corruption or know someone who has (Feigenblatt, 2020)
- 57% of respondents in Zimbabwe reported having to offer sexual favors for employment, services or schooling (Feigenblatt, 2020)
- Higher incidence reported in Johannesburg compared to Bogota, particularly in the water sector (UNDP-SIWI Water Governance Facility, 2017)
- A study by Leach et al. (2014) found that sexual harassment and abuse by teachers were widespread in schools across sub-Saharan Africa, with girls being the primary targets.

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

# 2

**Systematic and  
scoping review of  
existing literature**

**Quantitative  
survey (n=1560) at  
household level across  
South Africa projected  
to the 18+ population  
demographics  
(42,692,575)**

**27 In-depth  
interviews with  
survivors of sexual  
corruption**

### QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY

To ensure national representativity and minimize potential bias, a rigorous random probability sampling technique was employed to select participants from diverse geographical locations and demographic backgrounds across the country.

#### Survey Methodology

Market	South Africa
Province	Nationwide
Methodology	CAPI (Face-to-Face) Random probability sampling
Survey length	20 Minutes
Survey language	English, Sesotho, Sepedi, Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans
Sample achieved	1,560 (Unweighted) & 42,692,575 (Weighted)
Fieldwork duration	5 Weeks with a 2 week break for the Festive Season

## Target Respondent

**AGE**  
18 years and older

**RACE**  
All ethnicities

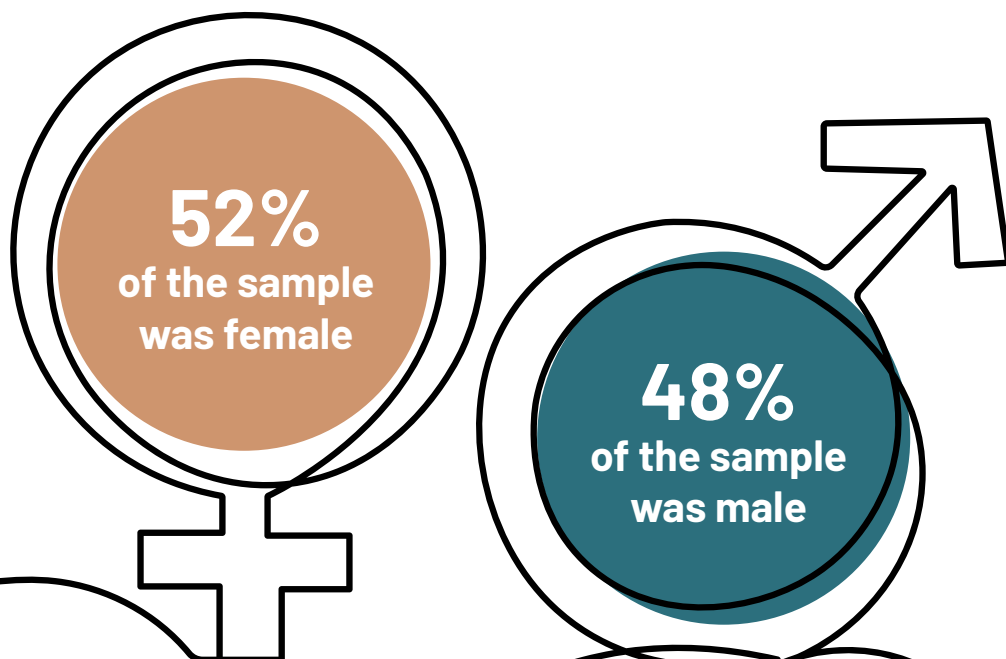
**GENDER**  
Male and Female

**COVERAGE**  
Nationwide

## WEIGHTED RESPONDENT PROFILE (N = 42,692,575)

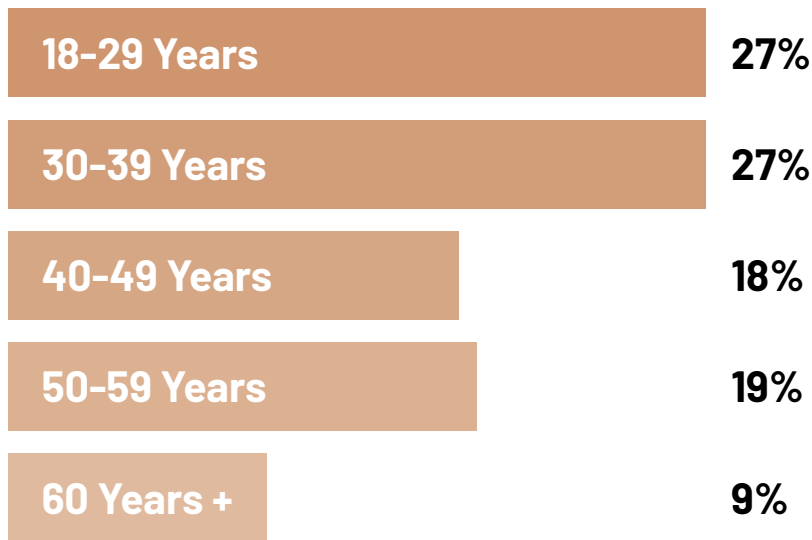
The infographics below provide the profiles of the respondents that were interviewed in the study.

### Gender

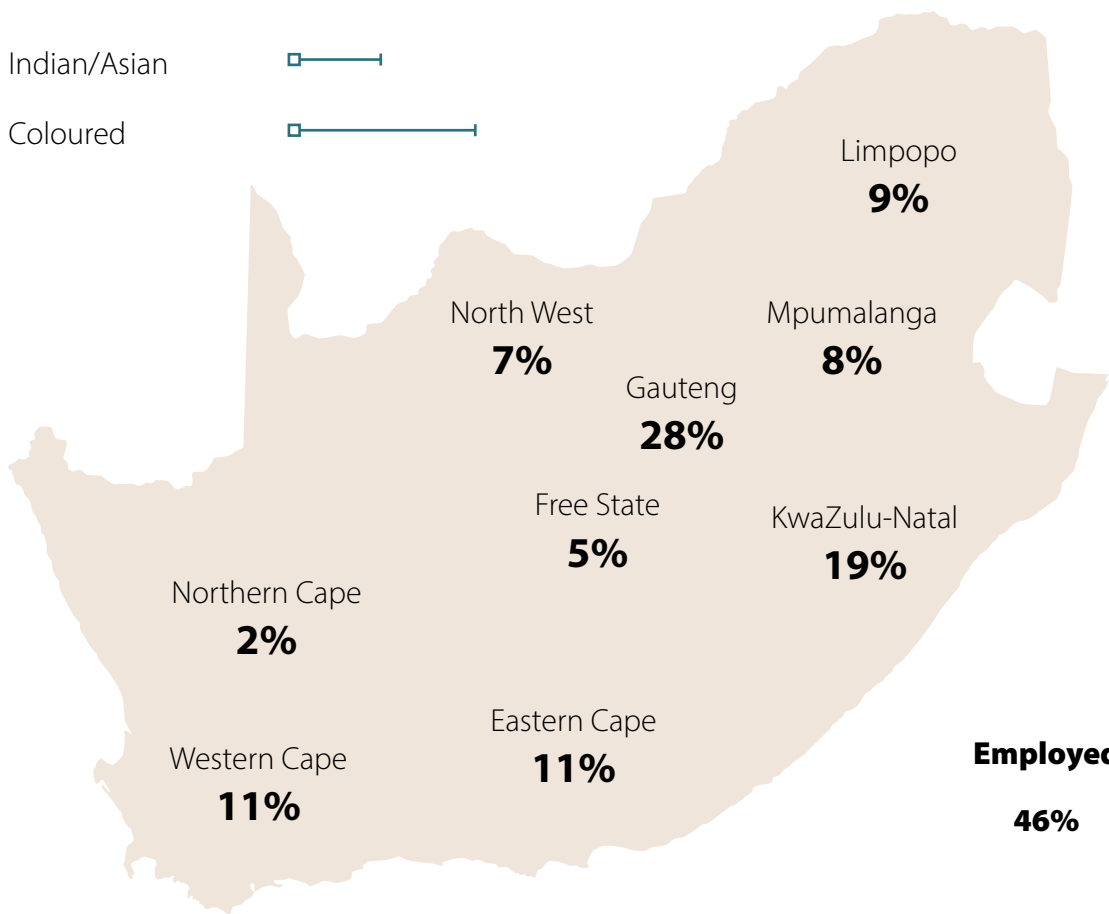




Age of Respondents



Race of Respondents



**Employed**  
46%

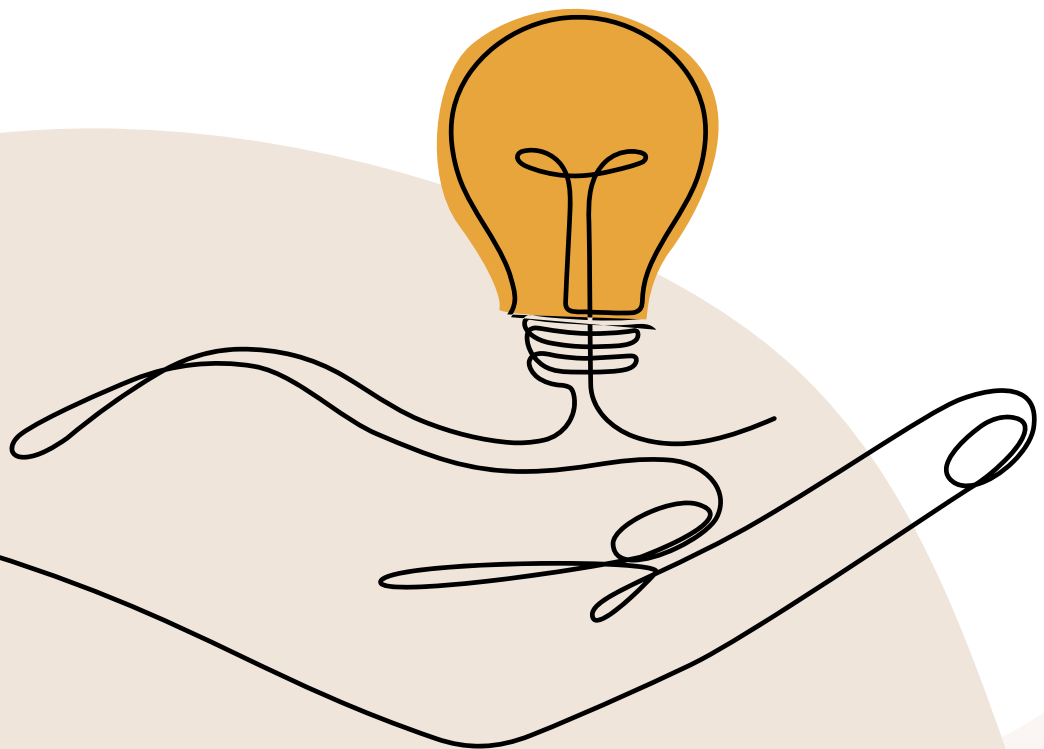
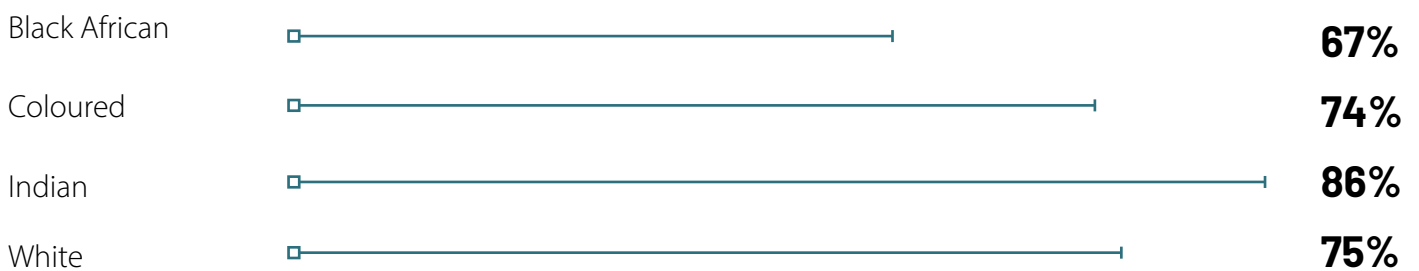
**Unemployed**  
54%

## AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE

**69% are familiar with the term 'sexual corruption'. This is relatively even amongst men and women, and across age groups.**

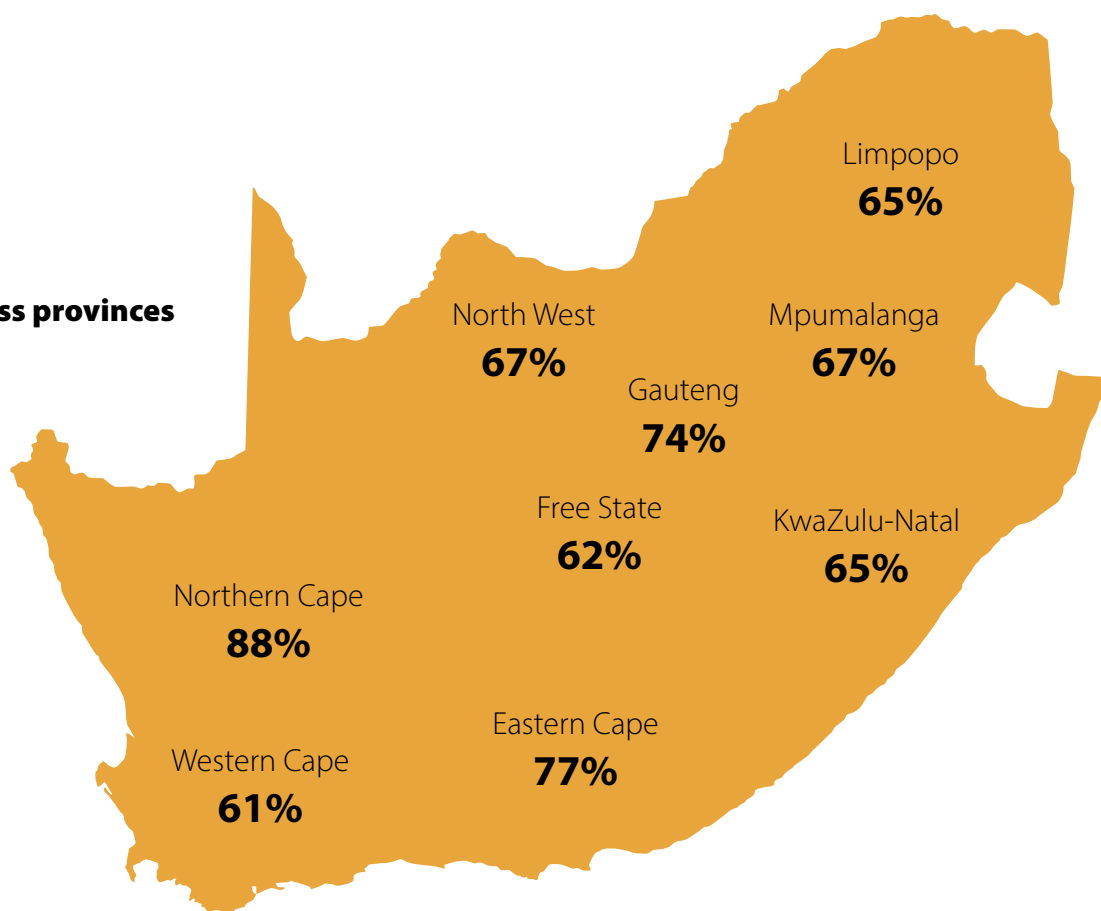
Findings suggest that a large portion of the population are familiar with the term 'sexual corruption', this was prior to providing them with the definition. Awareness is lowest in the Western Cape but highest in the Northern Cape and greater amongst those with a tertiary education. Furthermore, it was found that awareness is relatively similar in all household income levels but becomes slightly higher with each income band. Interestingly, it is highest in the R15,000.00-R20,000.00 category with 83% being familiar with the term.

### Awareness across race groups

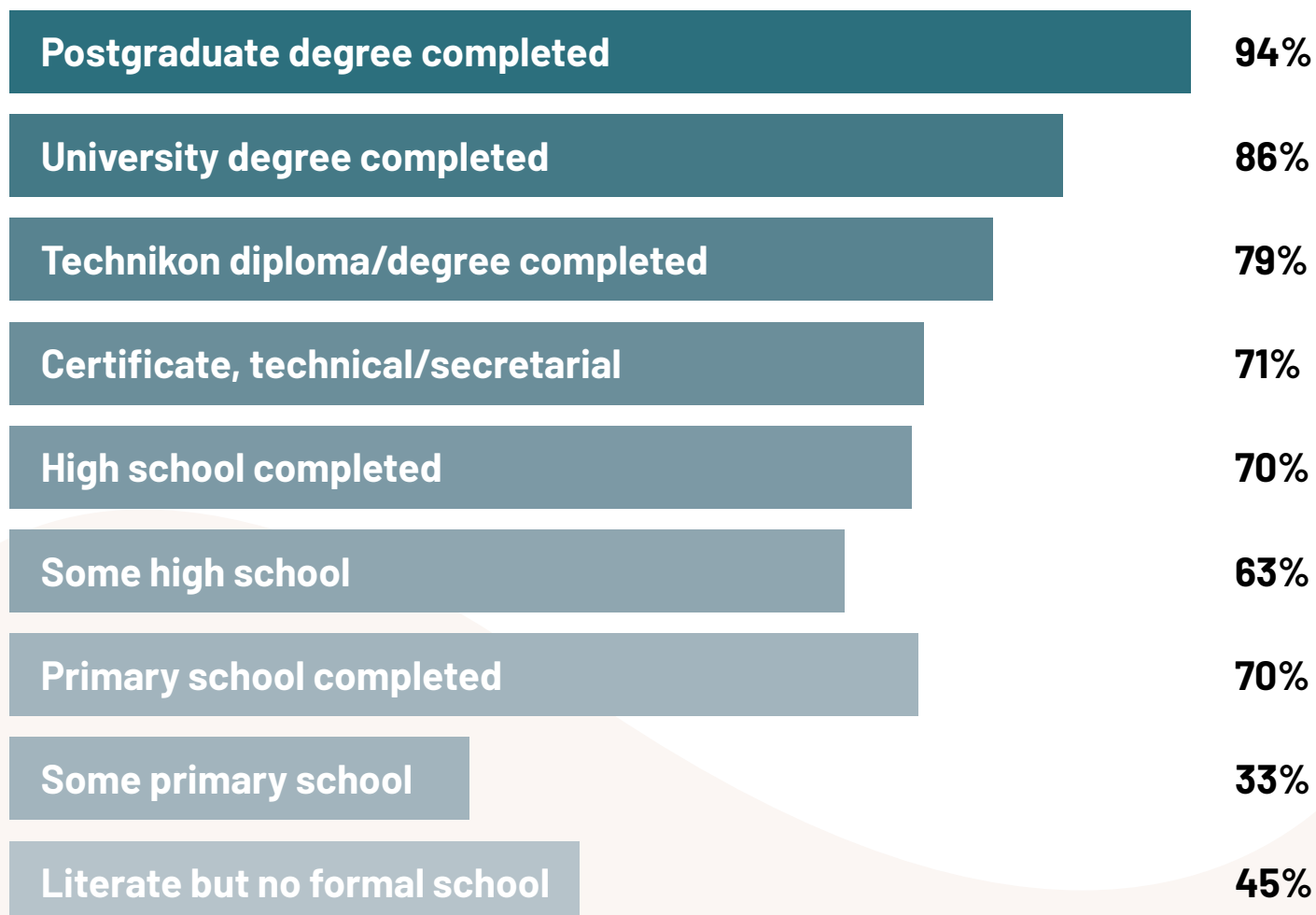


QB1: Are you familiar with the term-sexual corruption?

### Awareness across provinces



### Awareness across education levels

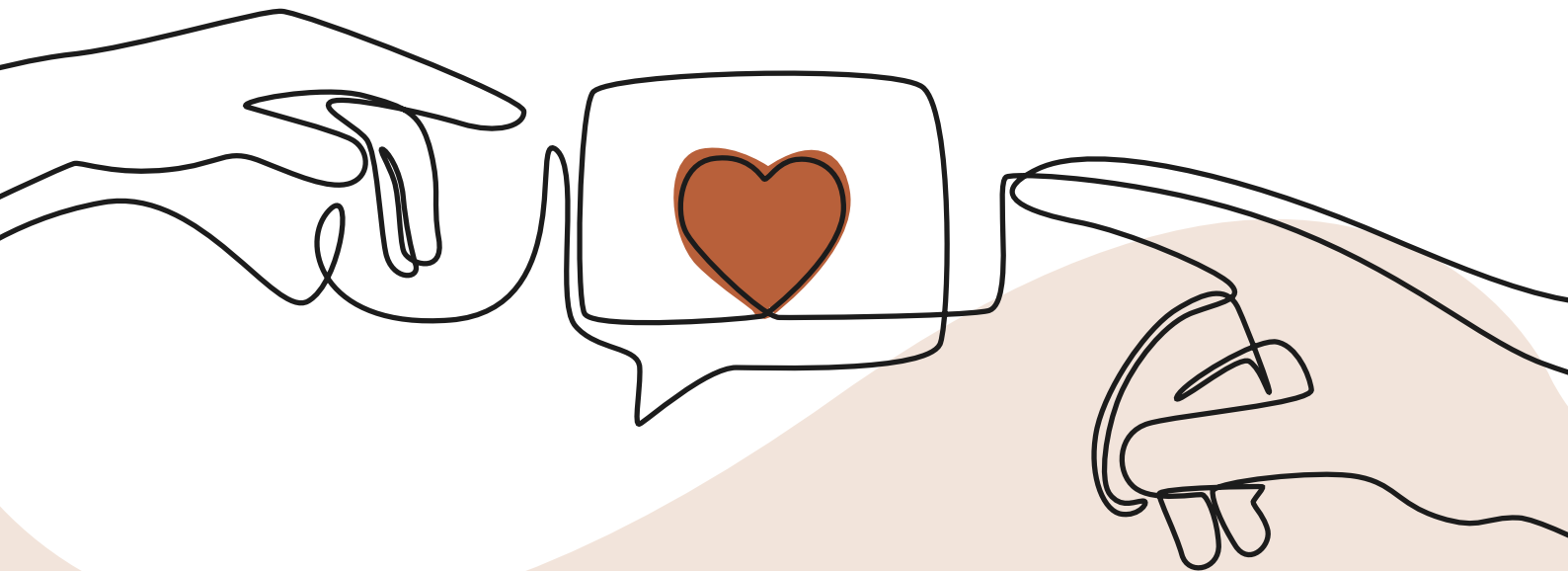


QB1.1: How did you come to be familiar with the term “sexual corruption” ?

SOCIAL MEDIA IS THE LARGEST SOURCE OF INFORMATION

The individuals were questioned on familiarity with the term sexual corruption prior to providing a conceptualisation and in this instance, 53% of respondents became familiar with the term ‘sexual corruption’ through social media. Once conceptualised, 23% of respondents noted that they became familiar with the term through social media.

How individuals became familiar with sexual corruption – first mention



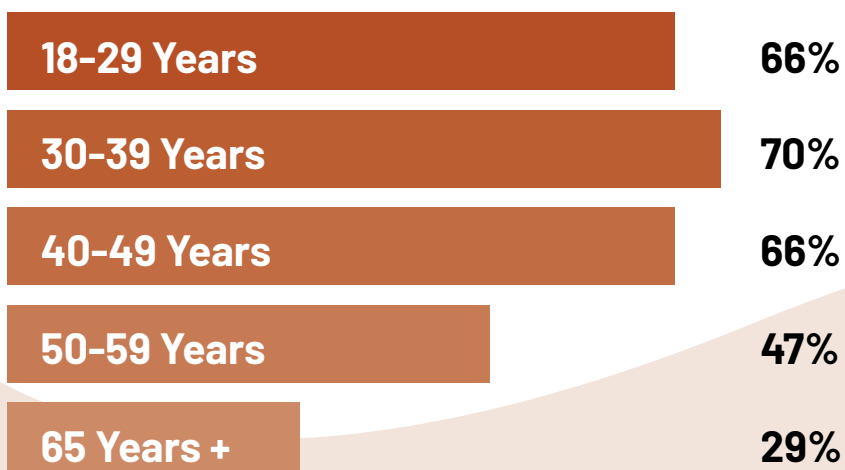
## How individuals became familiar with sexual corruption – second mention



## OTHER TERMS TO DESCRIBE SEXUAL CORRUPTION

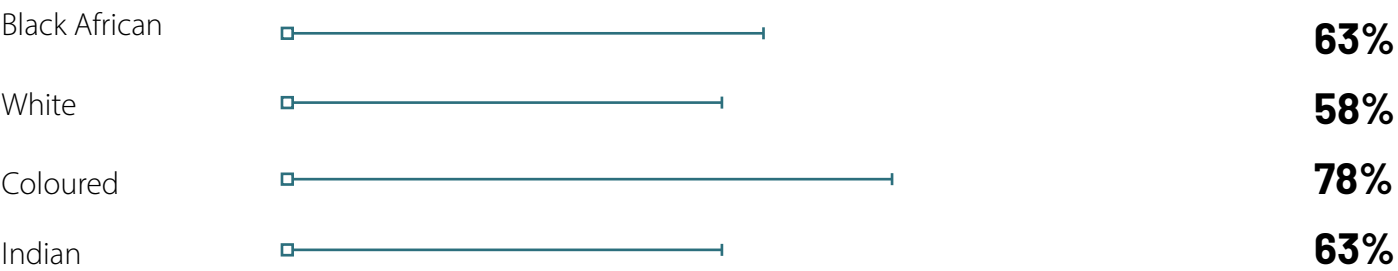
**63%** of respondents are familiar with other terms used to describe the act of demanding sexual favours in exchange for services, employment or other benefits. Younger groups are more likely to refer to sexual corruption in other terms and this is specifically high in the Indian race group. Furthermore, the Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal are the provinces that are most likely to refer to sexual corruption in a different term.

## Familiarity with other terms across age groups

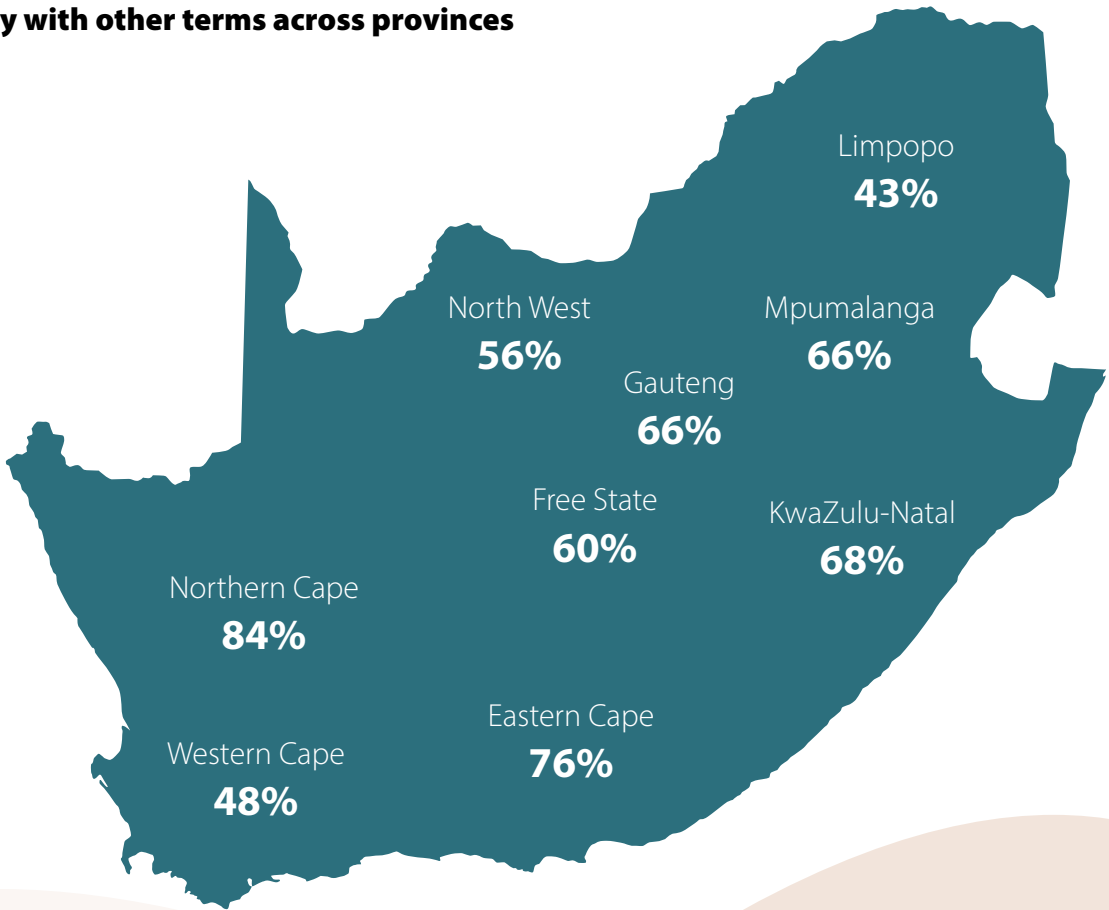


**QB2: Have you heard of any other terms used to describe the act of demanding sexual favours in exchange for services, employment, or other benefits?**

**Familiarity with other terms across race groups**



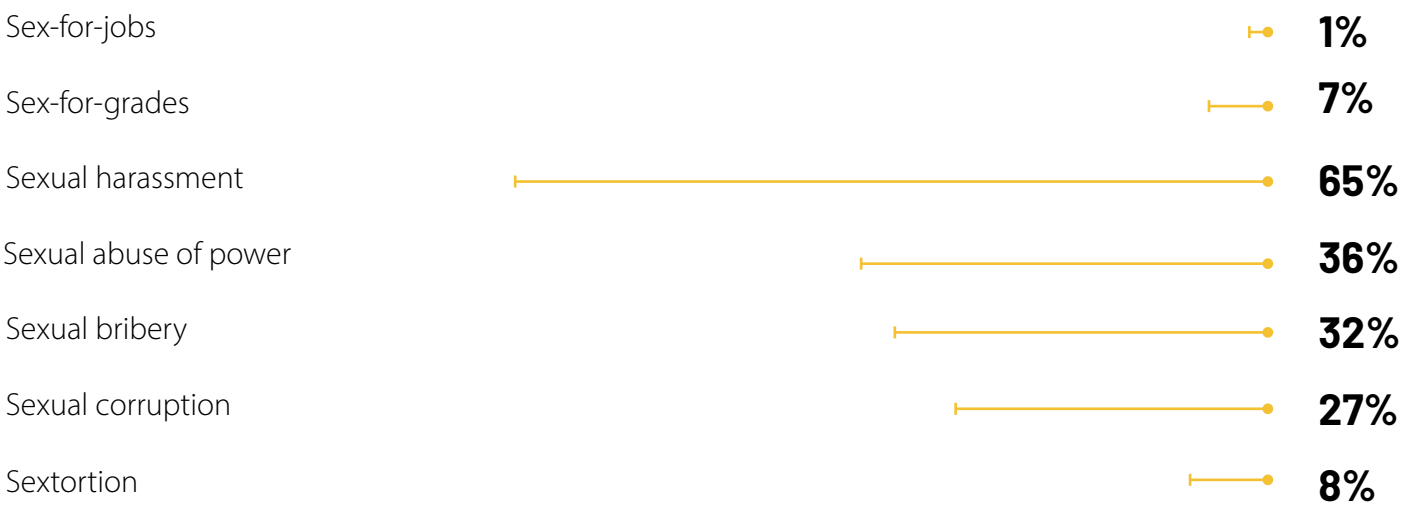
**Familiarity with other terms across provinces**



SEXUAL CORRUPTION AND SEXUAL BRIBERY ARE THE MOST COMMON TERMS

Alternative terms, like sexual bribery and sexual harassment are more likely amongst younger generations and black and Indian communities. Sexual abuse of power is also a common term, suggesting that individuals are aware that this happens in cases where one individual has power over another or occupies a position of power.

Most popular terms



Single mention of other terms



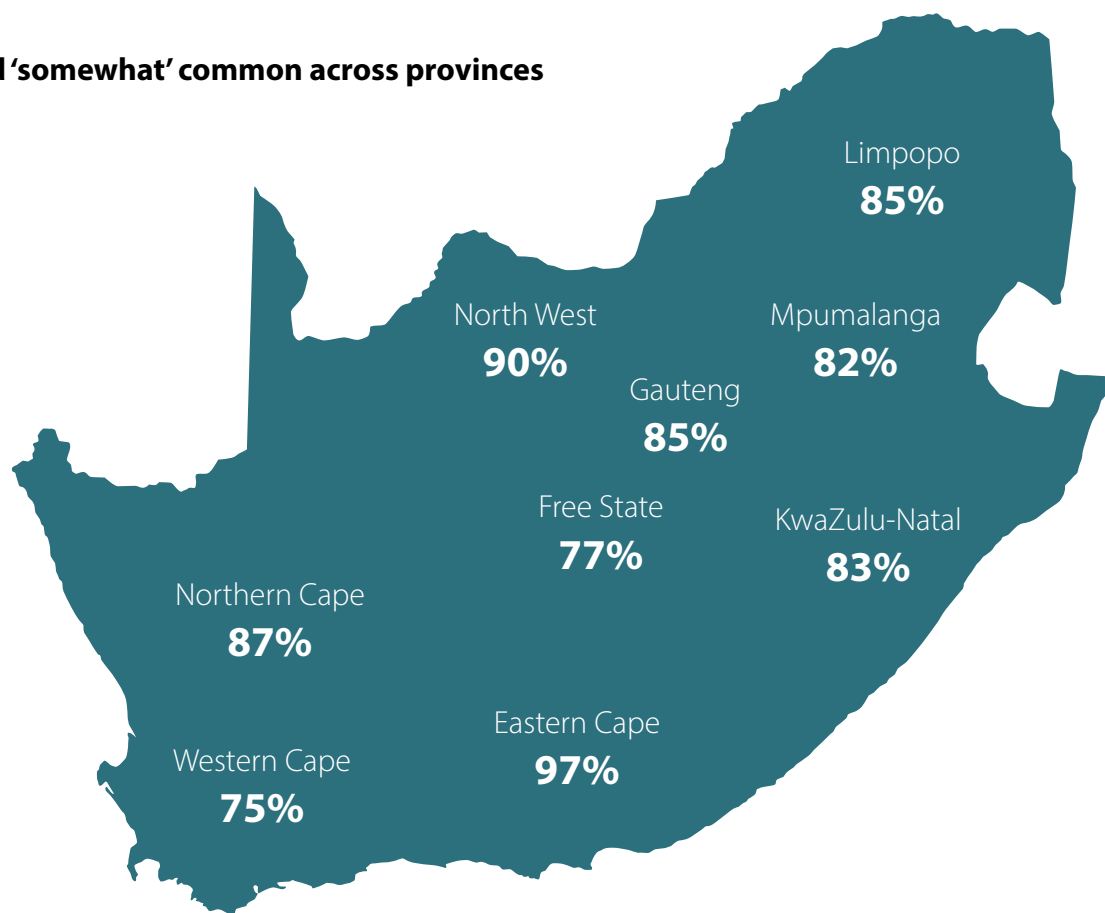
### QB3: How common is sexual corruption in South Africa?

#### SEXUAL CORRUPTION IS COMMON ACROSS MOST PROVINCES

**84%** describe sexual corruption as a somewhat or very common practice in South Africa.

Eastern- Cape, North-West and the Northern Cape illustrate that a higher portion of respondents, consider sexual corruption as common and this may suggest higher degrees of exposure. In addition, slightly more females (57%) than males (55%), describe sexual corruption as very common.

#### 'Very' and 'somewhat' common across provinces



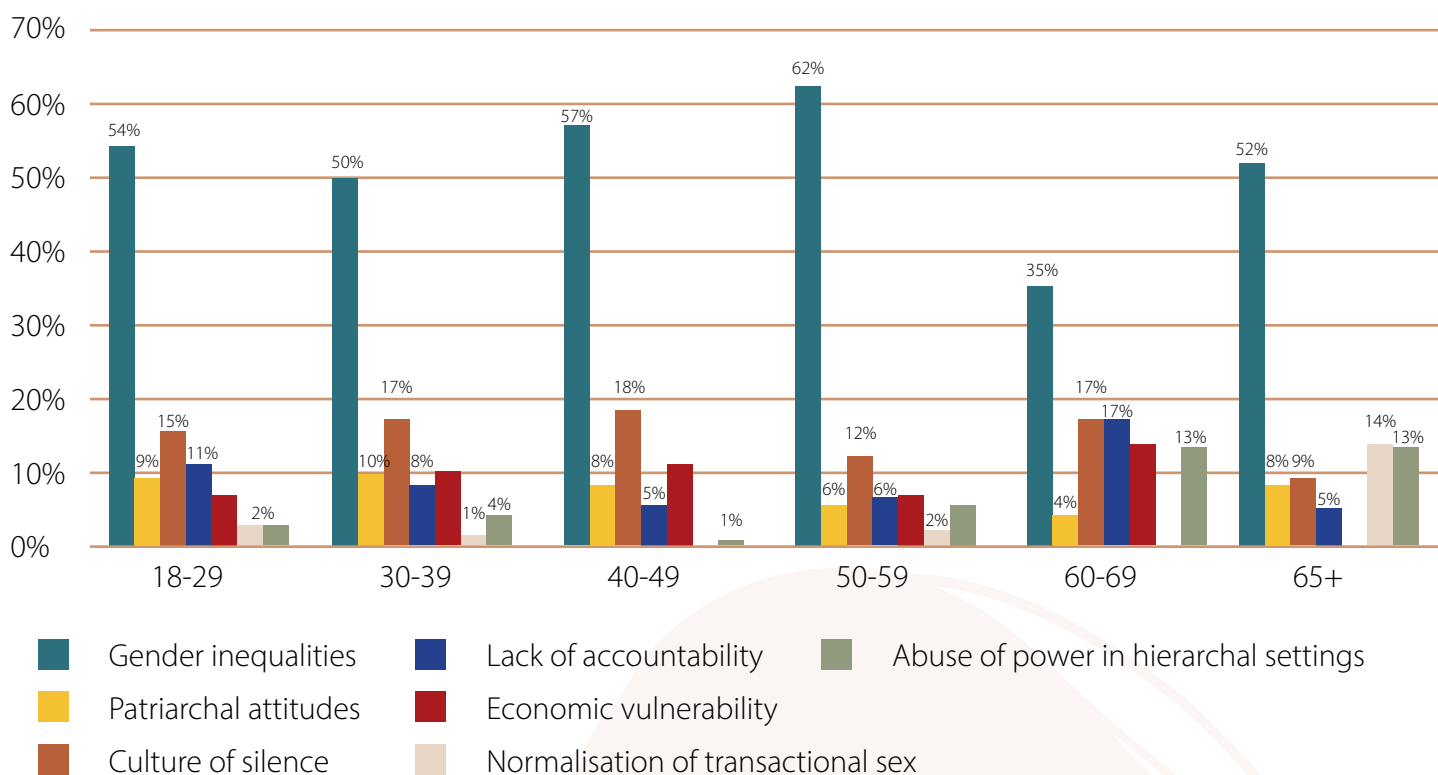
#### GENDER INEQUALITY IS THE BIGGEST SOCIAL NORM CONTRIBUTING TO SEXUAL CORRUPTION

Most believe that gender inequalities are the largest contributing factor normalising sexual corruption and this resonates most with those aged 50-59. 17% of respondents over the age of 60 highlight the culture of silence as an issue, and this is similarly echoed across other age groups. Across age groups, few regard abuse of power in hierarchical settings, normalisation of transactional sex and economic vulnerability as contributing factors.



**QB4.1: What are the three most popular social norms and behaviours that you believe contribute to this normalization**

**Perceptions on contributing social norms by age**



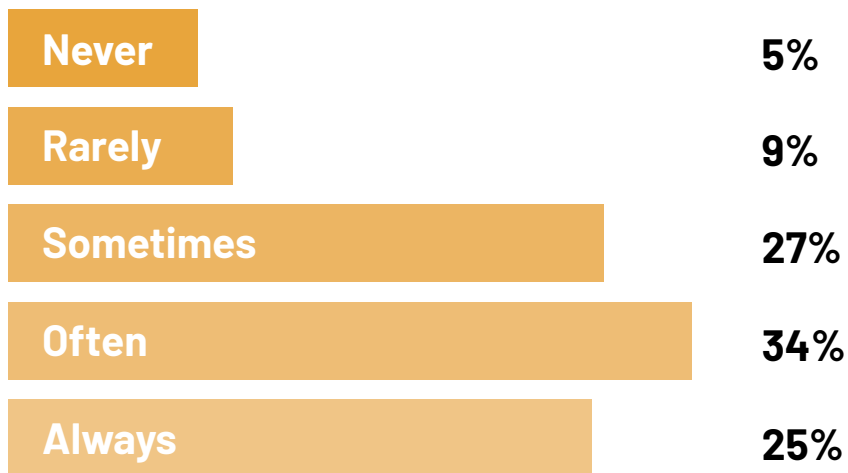
## VULNERABLE SECTORS AND GROUPS

4

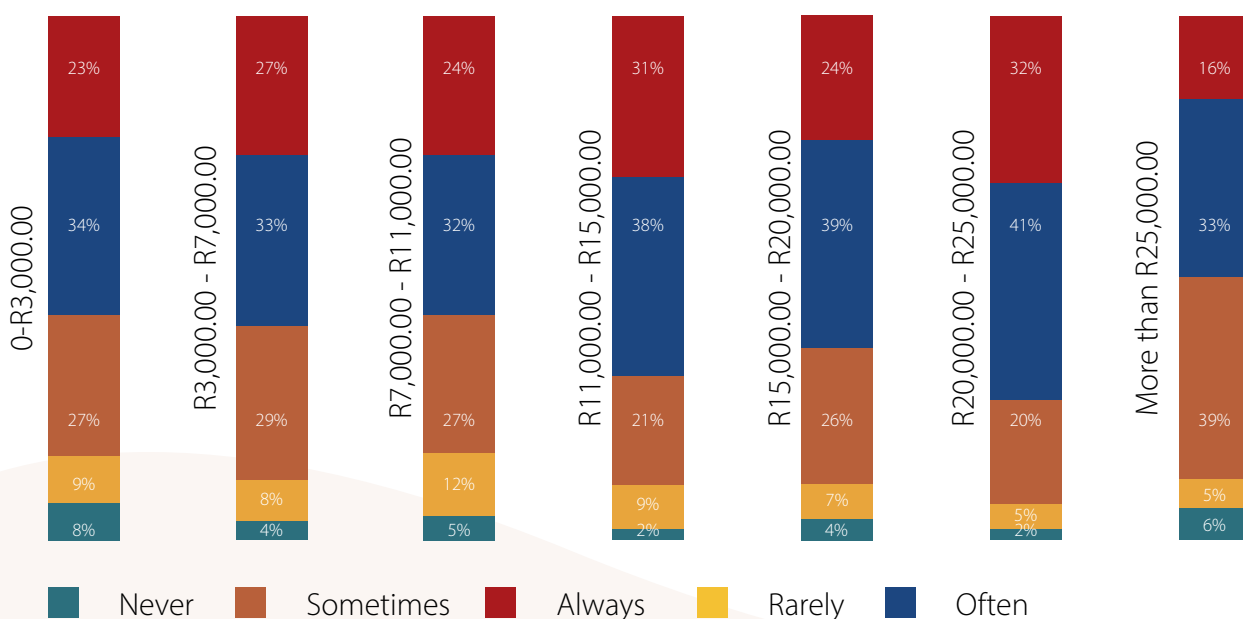
**Almost 6 in 10 respondents state that sexual corruption happens always or often in South Africa**

Across household income, there is a relatively evenness on the frequency of sexual corruption. This may suggest that all income earners are aware of how frequent sexual corruption occurs because most people occupy a seat in a chain where they are ruled by management, seeking promotions, or even better jobs.

### Familiarity with other terms across age groups



### Frequency of sexual corruption across household income



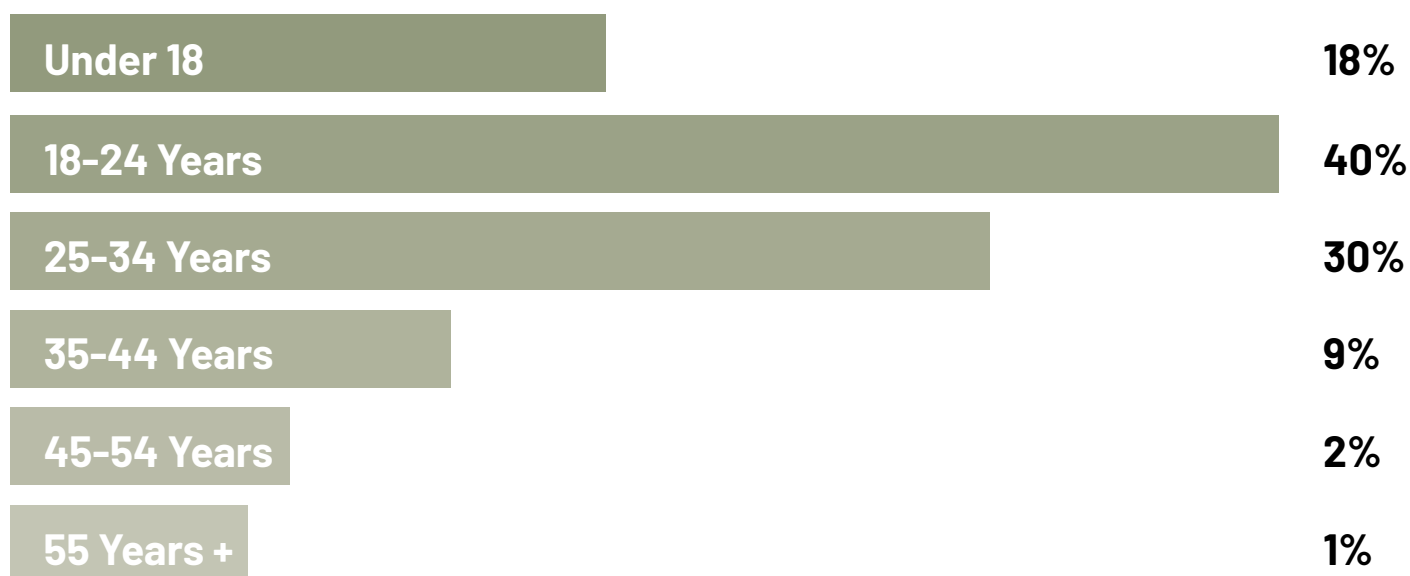
**QC1. How often does sexual corruption occur as an intentional and equal exchange of sex/sexual favours for a benefit?**

- QC2: In your opinion, which age group is most vulnerable to sexual corruption?;
- QC3: In your opinion, which gender is most vulnerable to sexual corruption?;
- QC4: In your opinion, which sector has the highest prevalence of sexual corruption?

## 18-24 YEAR OLD FEMALES ARE MOST VULNERABLE

18-24 year olds, followed by 25-34 year old females are the most vulnerable to sexual corruption and this may be for a plethora of reasons, taking place in academic institutions or even as new entrants, deemed young and vulnerable' in the workplace. Many respondents regard government as the sector with the highest prevalence for sexual corruption, this may be either in service delivery or in context of a working environment.

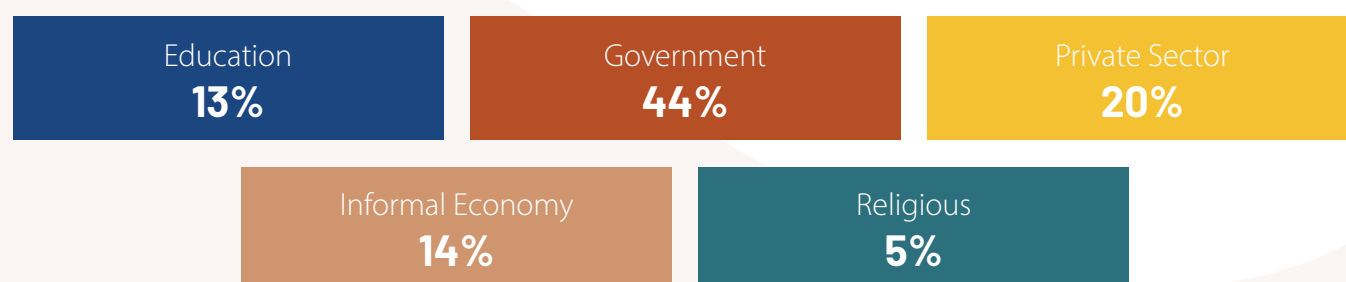
### Most vulnerable by age



### Most vulnerable by gender



### Sectors with the highest prevalence of sexual corruption



## SCOPE AND MAGNITUDE

# 5

### UNVEILING PREVALENCE AND DISPARITIES OF SEXUAL CORRUPTION

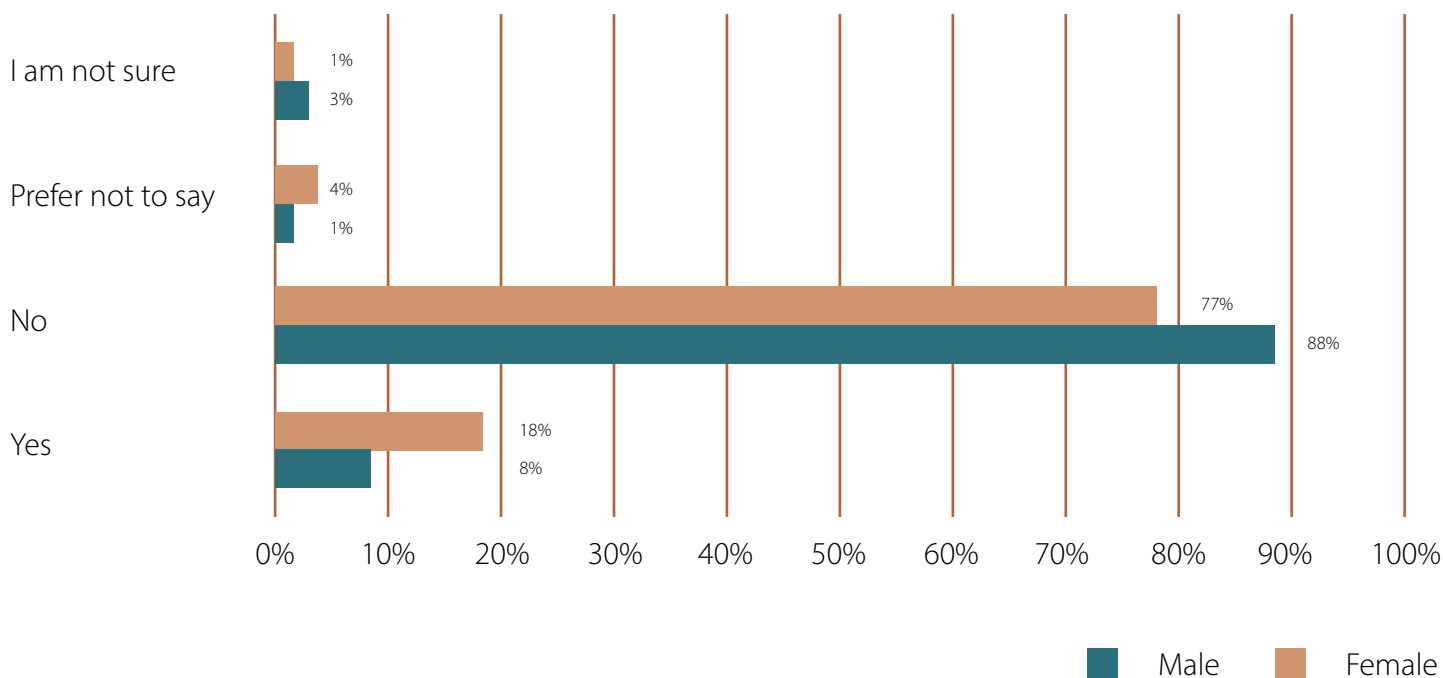
#### Prevalence



**It's mostly common to women.**

North-West Participant, Male: 18-29

#### Prevalence amongst gender



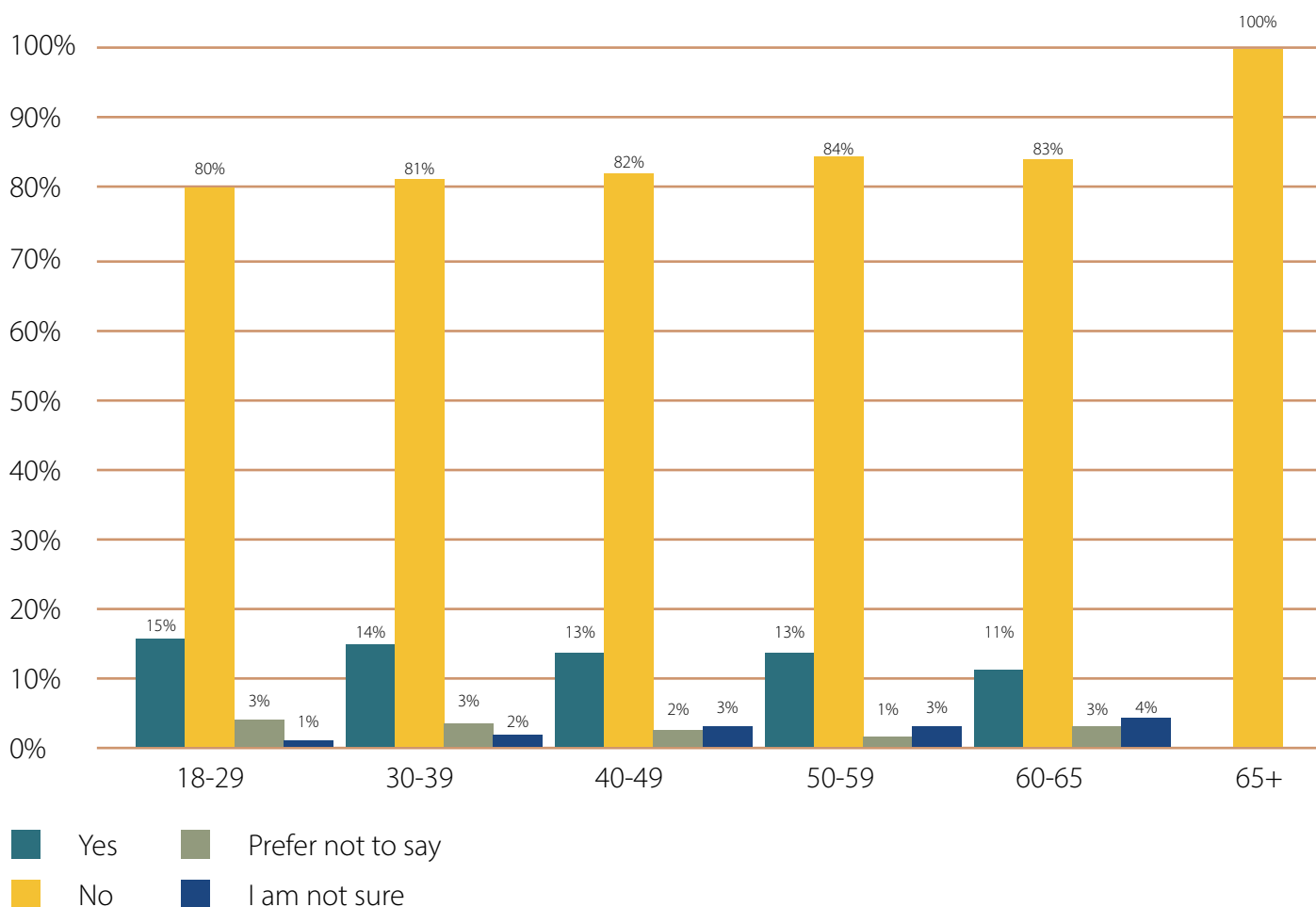
**It is mostly happening to black females.**

Limpopo Participant, Female: 30-39.

**QD1: Have you ever been in a situation where someone used their position of authority to seek sexual favors from you, either directly or indirectly?**

## MOST PREVALENT AMONGST 18-29 YEAR OLDS

### Prevalence by age



**I first gave in, agreed to the whole set-up but as time went on, I just couldn't you know, I just couldn't.**

Gauteng Participant, Female: 18-29.

**I don't have much confidence, and I have flashbacks of what happened. I don't know any services that can help me.**

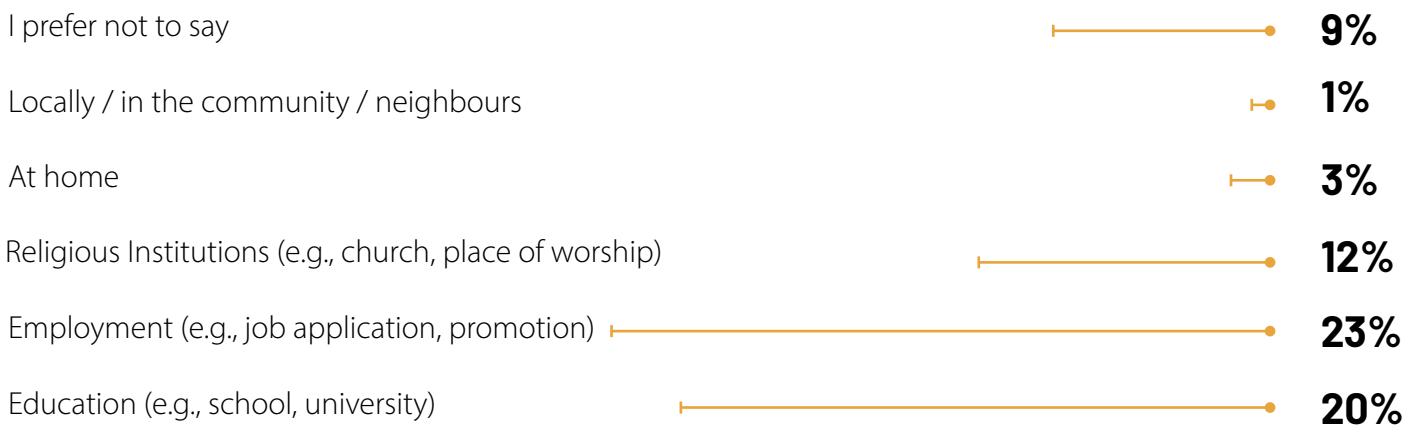


North-West Participants, Male: 18-29

QD1.1: Please indicate the general setting or circumstance in which an incident of sexual corruption took place

MOST HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL CORRUPTION IN PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT

Where sexual corruption occurs



“ **The guy then told me that he has the job, but he will need me to sleep with him first, I asked him to buy me alcohol so the shyness can go away, he did buy me and we went to the hotel and the rest was history but he did give me the job afterwards.**

Limpopo Participant, Female: 30-39.

**So with me, my boss pressured me into engaging in sexual activity in exchange of a promotion. He actually promised me a lot of things hey, career advancement which included work trips, exposure and so forth.** ”

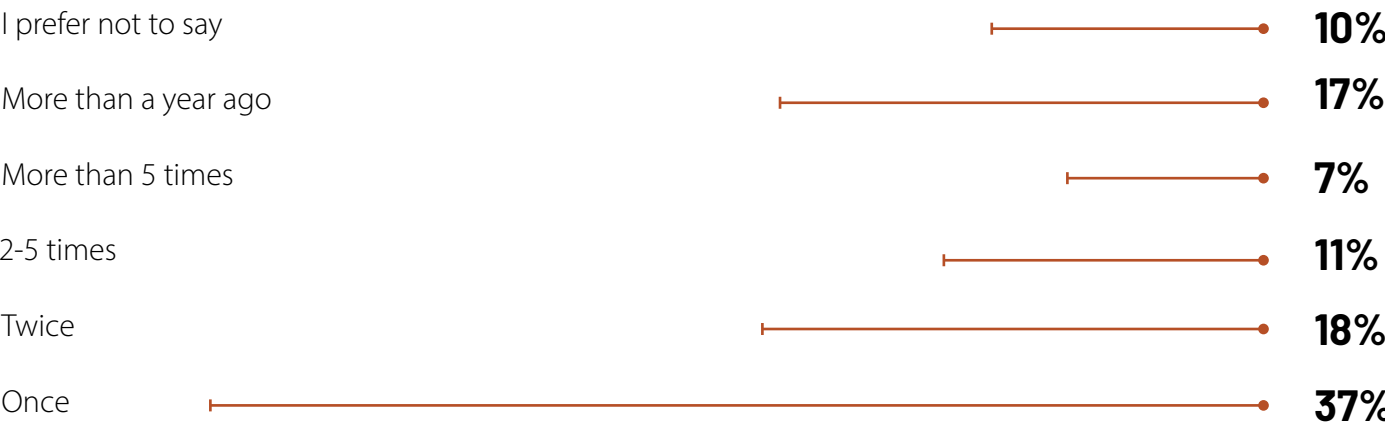
Gauteng Participant, Female: 18-29.

**QD1.2: In the past 12 months, how frequently have you either personally experienced or observed a situation that seemed to involve someone attempting to use their position of authority to obtain sexual favors?**

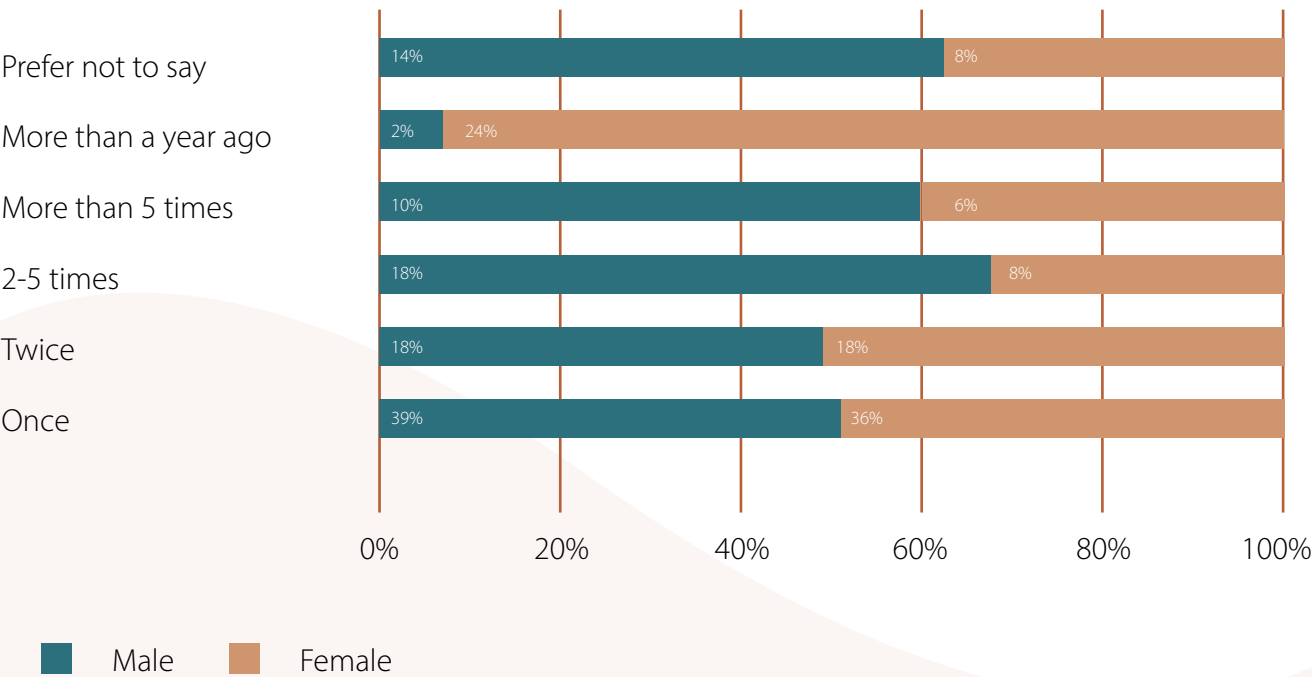
### DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN SEXUAL CORRUPTION EXPERIENCES

37% of the total sample and 39% of males state that they have experienced sexual corruption at least once. 56% of this being between the ages of 18 and 29. Individuals aged 30 and above, and more specifically 50-59, have experienced sexual corruption on more than one instance. Furthermore, 36% of men, report experiencing sexual corruption two or more times.

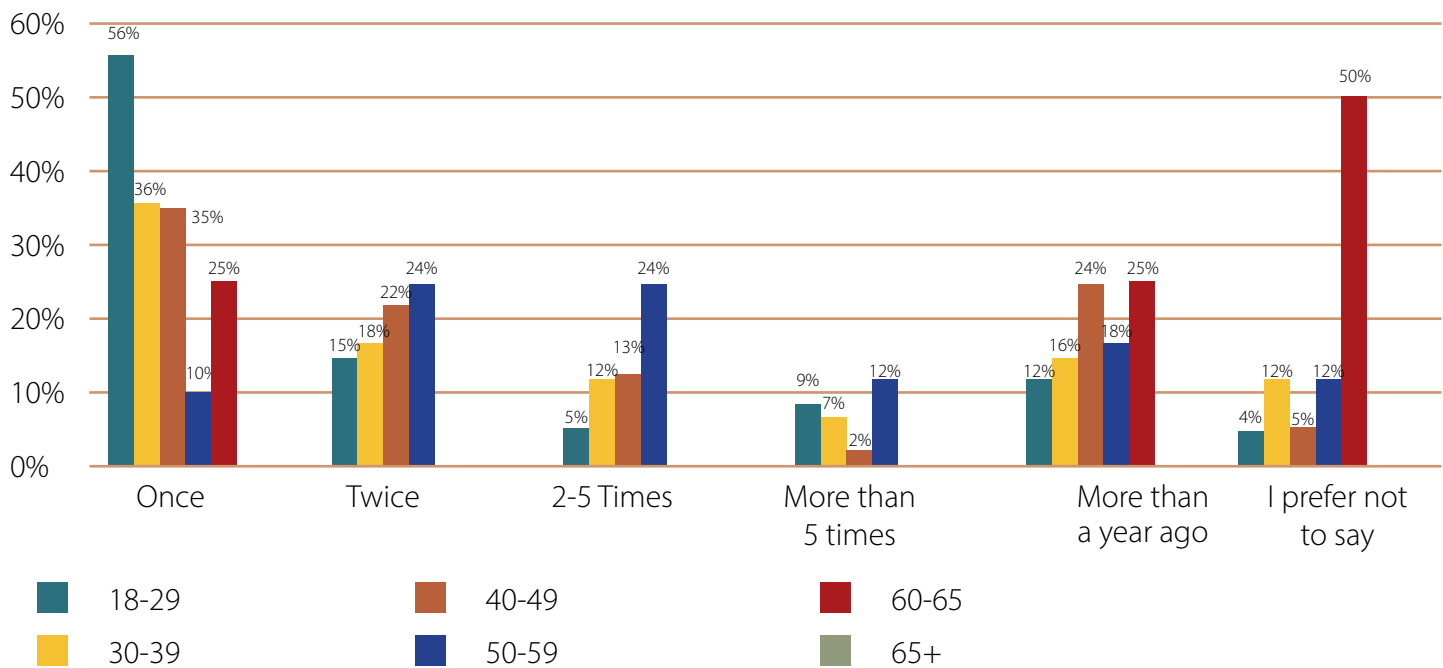
#### Frequency across general population



#### Frequency by gender

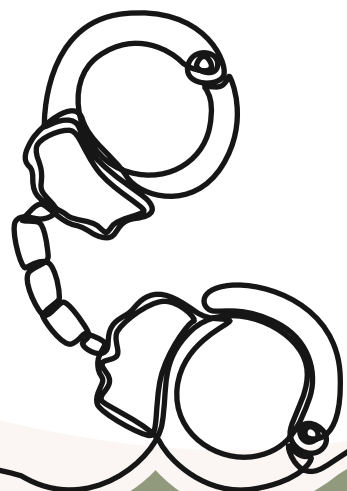


Frequency across age groups



“ I was once violated back in school by my teacher, at first I took it as a normal thing, she manipulated me into believing that what was happening was normal irrespective of how uncomfortable I was of the situation.

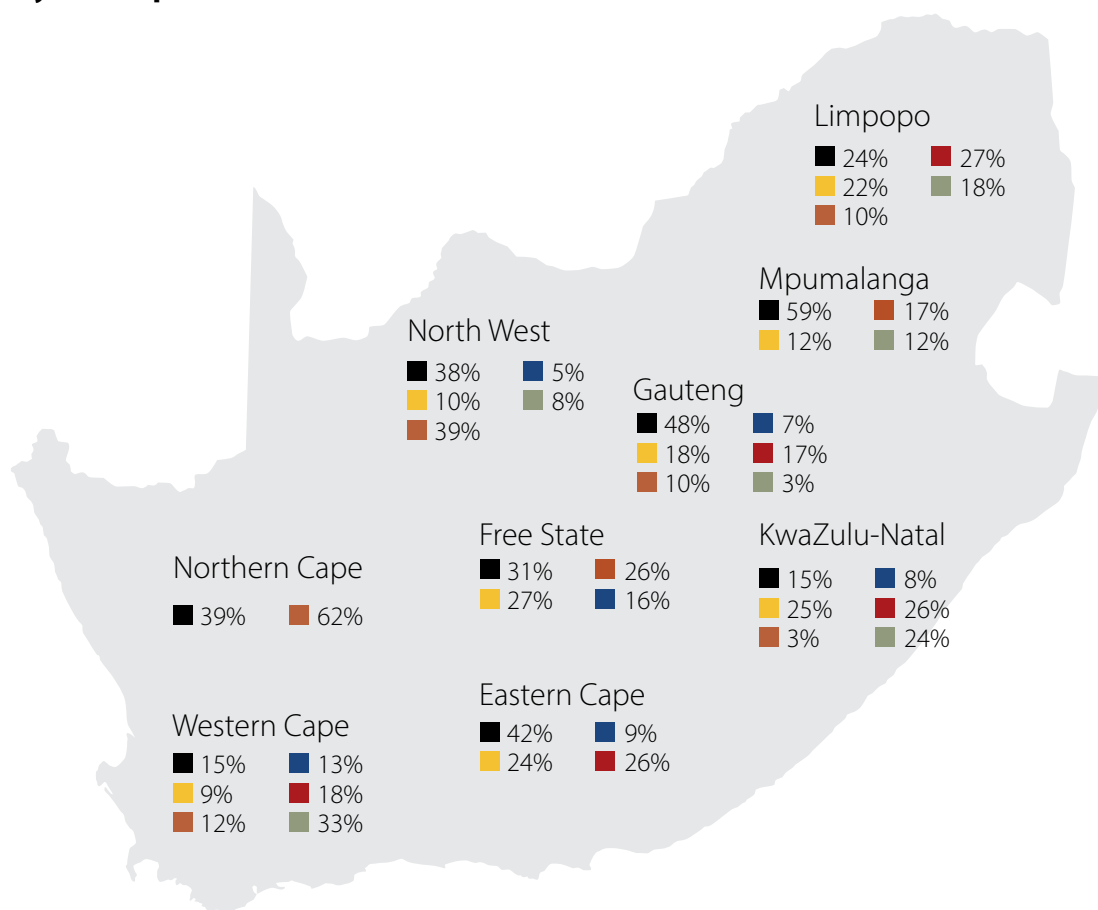
Free-State Participant, Male: 18-29.





## FREQUENCY OF OBSERVED OR EXPERIENCED SEXUAL CORRUPTION INCIDENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

### Frequency across provinces



Once
  2-5 times
  More than a year ago
  Twice
  More than 5 times
  I prefer not to say

## PERPETRATORS ARE LIKELY TO ACT AGAIN

In most cases, those who have experienced sexual corruption more than once, it occurred with the same individual and in the same context. This is also the case for individuals residing in low income households. For those residing in higher income homes ( R20 000 and above), it is evident that individuals experience sexual corruption on more than one occasion, with different individuals and in different scenarios. Furthermore, roughly 24% of the respondents experience sexual corruption on more than one occasion, in different contexts and with different individuals.

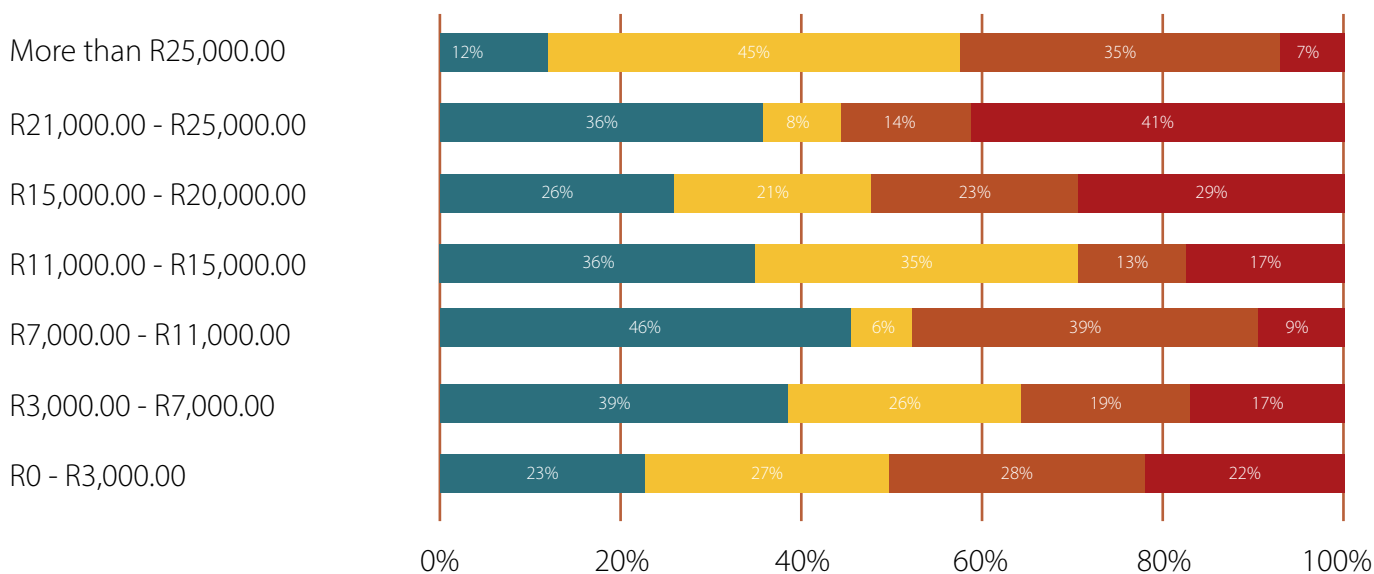
### Instances of sexual corruption



**My boss pressured me into engaging in sexual activity in exchange for a promotion. He actually promised me a lot of things hey, career advancement which included work trips, exposure and so forth.**

Gauteng Participant, Female: 18-29.

## Instances across household income



- It occurred with the same individual in the same context
- It occurred in the same sector with a different individual (i.e., Education, Healthcare Services etc.)
- It occurred in different sectors / context with different individuals
- I prefer not to say



**It started in high school with a teacher then ended up also happening in my company where I was working.**

North-West Participant, Male: 18-29.

#### QD1.4: Do you think this is a crime; if so, who would you report it to?

### 41% STATE THAT SEXUAL CORRUPTION IS A CRIME, AND IT MUST BE REPORTED.

5% of respondents stated that sexual corruption is not a crime and they would not report it because they're unaware of who to report it to (1%), some are afraid of receiving death threats or experiencing other consequences (2%), and some feel that reporting the crime is pointless and nothing will be done about it (3%). 3 respondents (1%) also highlighted the power dynamics of sexual corruption stating that they cannot report it as one individual holds power over another.

**28%**

Police

**8%**

Employee / senior  
management / HR

**1%**

Relevant authorities

“

**Many cases go unreported due to fear, shame, or lack of trust in the system.**

Northern Cape Participant, Female: 50-59

**Another thing, it is not easy to report such cases because your job will be on the line. I would just tell my sister and she would advise me to be patient because my job is important.**

”

Mpumalanga Participant, Female: 30-39.



QD1.6: Who did you report your case to?

ONLY 26% OF VICTIMS HAVE REPORTED THEIR CASE OF SEXUAL CORRUPTION



Total number of incidences per province

Eastern Cape - 10	Free State - 3	Gauteng - 61	KwaZulu Natal - 22	Western Cape - 20
Limpopo - 12	Mpumalanga - 3	North West - 8	Northern Cape - 1	

Total number of reported cases

Eastern Cape - 4	Free State - 1	Gauteng - 16	KwaZulu Natal - 5	Western Cape - 5
Limpopo - 0	Mpumalanga - 1	North West - 1	Northern Cape - 1	

% Of reported cases

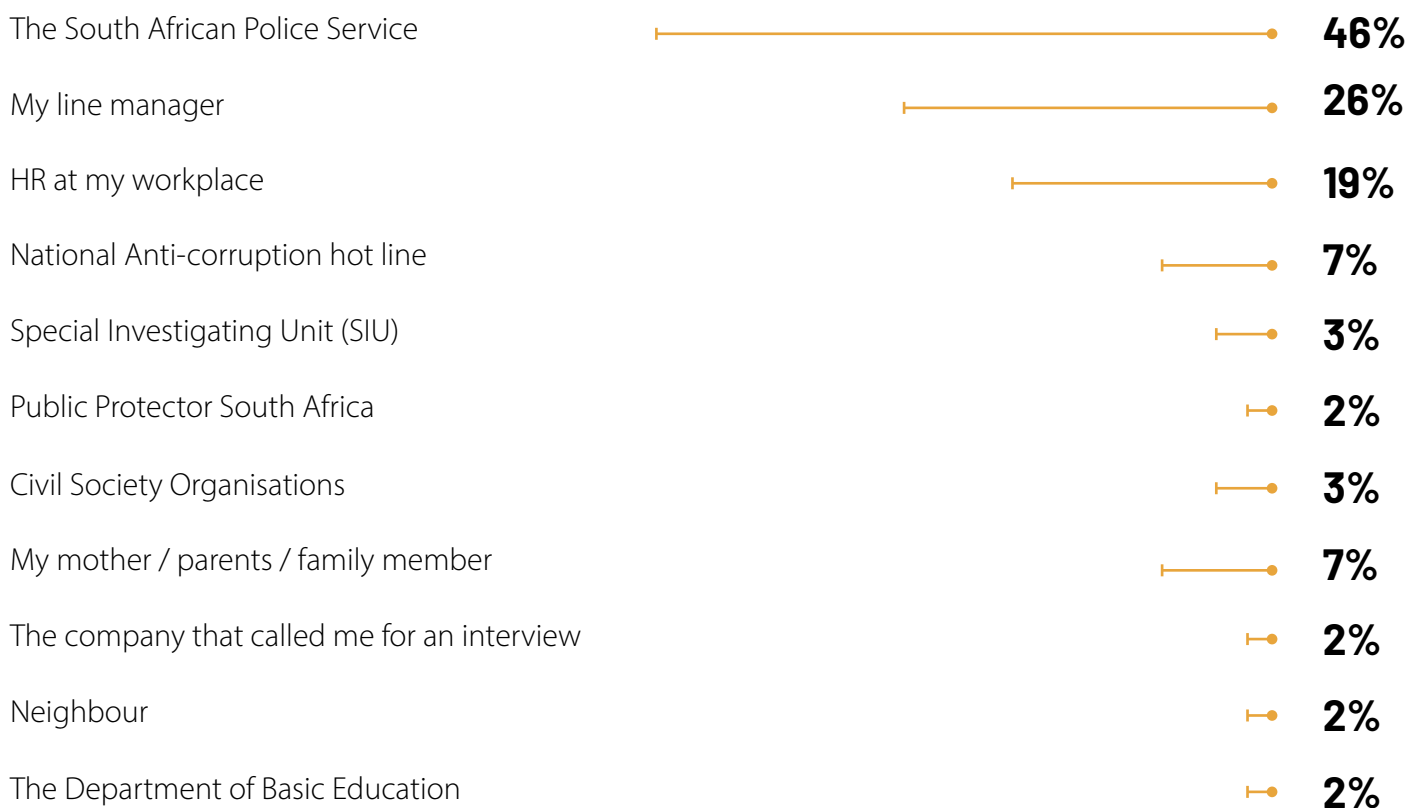
Eastern Cape - 54%	Free State - 23%	Gauteng - 31%	KwaZulu Natal - 19%	Western Cape - 19%
Limpopo - 0%	Mpumalanga - 30%	North West - 13%	Northern Cape - 100%	

“ Many cases go unreported or are dismissed due to lack of evidence, allowing perpetrators to continue their abuse. The legal system often fails victims, making it difficult for them to seek justice

Limpopo Participant, Male: 18-29.

## MOST REPORT THEIR CASES TO THE SAPS

### Place of reported cases



**46%**  
of victims have reported their cases  
to the South African Police Service

**26%**  
have reported it to their  
line manager

**19%**  
have reported it to the HR  
department at their workplace

**7%**  
told a family member

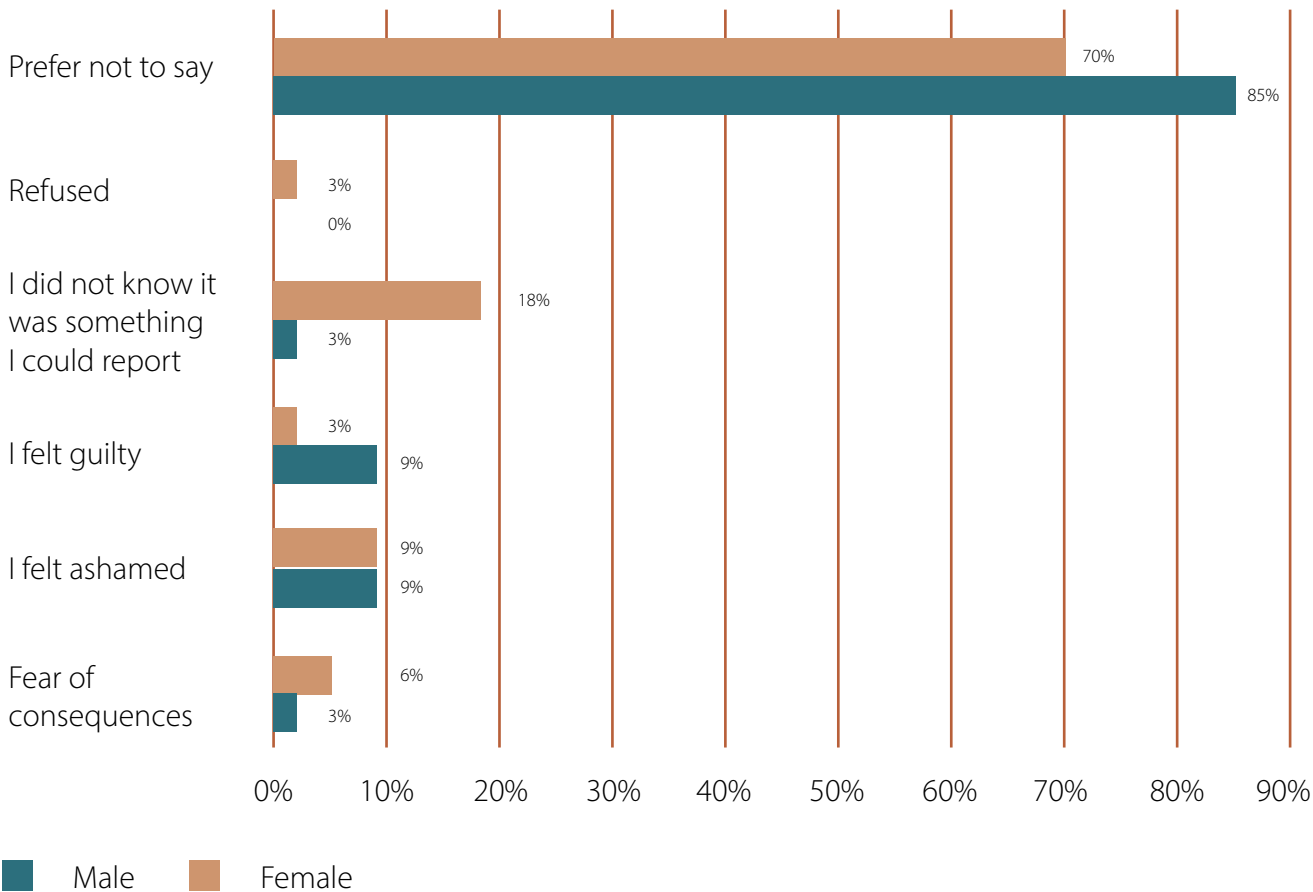
**QD1.7: Please indicate which of the following factors, if any, influenced your decision**

**VICTIMS ARE FEARFUL OF THE CONSEQUENCES, FEEL ASHAMED AND DO NOT KNOW THEY CAN REPORT WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THEM.**

The data on reasons for not reporting experiences of sexual corruption reveals significant gender differences and a pervasive reluctance to disclose information. The most striking observation is the high percentage of both males (85%) and females (70%) who preferred not to say why they didn't report their experiences, suggesting deep-rooted hesitancy to discuss the issue, possibly due to fear, shame, or cultural taboos. A notable finding is that 18% of female respondents did not know they could report sexual corruption, compared to only 3% of males, highlighting a significant gender gap in awareness about reporting mechanisms and rights. Both women and men

were likely to cite shame as a reason for not reporting (9%) while men were slightly more likely to cite guilt (9% vs 3% for women), indicating that emotional and psychological factors play a role in underreporting, with gender-specific impacts. Fear of consequences, such as victimization or losing benefits, was cited by 6% of women and 3% of men, suggesting that power dynamics and potential repercussions are significant deterrents to reporting for both genders. Overall, the data suggests that women face more barriers to reporting than men, being more likely to feel ashamed, fear consequences, and be unaware of reporting options.

**Rationale for not reporting by gender**

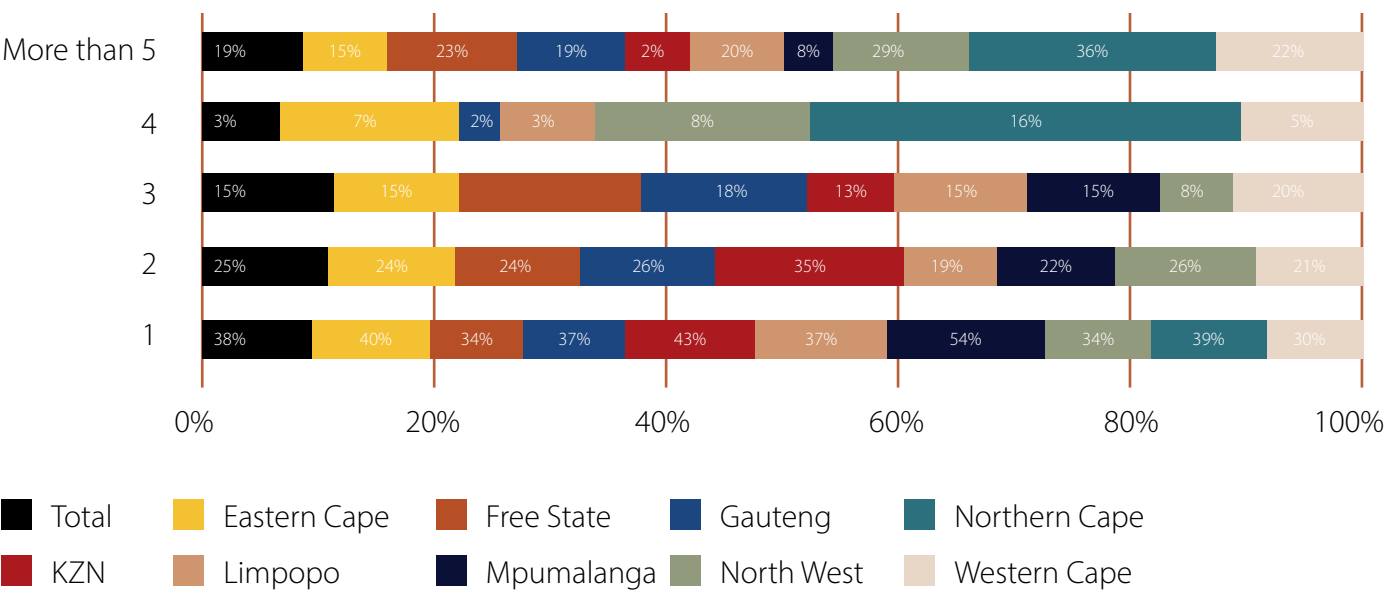


QD2: Do you know of someone else that has experienced sexual corruption?  
QD2.1 How many individuals do you know that experienced sexual corruption?

RESPONDENTS ARE AWARE OF BETWEEN 2 AND 3 CASES  
OF SEXUAL CORRUPTION AMONG PEOPLE THEY KNOW

**36%** of respondents know someone else who is a victim of sexual corruption.

Sexual corruption is widespread in South Africa, with 62% of respondents knowing two or more victims, and 19% knowing more than five. This aligns with the country’s broader challenges of gender-based violence and systemic corruption. The prevalence reflects deep-rooted issues stemming from historical inequalities, power imbalances, and economic vulnerabilities. Underreporting is likely, given the discrepancy between those knowing multiple cases (62%) and those affirming knowledge of “someone else” (36%). This mirrors South Africa’s struggle with underreporting of sexual crimes due to fear, stigma, and lack of faith in the justice system. These findings underscore the urgent need for strengthened efforts to combat gender-based violence and corruption at both societal and institutional levels, supporting initiatives like the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide.



**“ I decided to leave everything behind, never reported the matter because the person had money. Its either he was going to make the case go away or hire people to kill me. Money has power and influence. I just resigned after some time, when seeing that the guy wanted to constantly sleep with me.**

Limpopo Participant, Female: 30-39



**QD2.2: What is the gender of the individual/s that experienced sexual corruption?**  
**QD2.3 In what sector did the sexual corruption occur to the individual/s?**

*These questions allowed for multiple responses and therefore may not add to \*100.*

## CORRUPTION'S GENDER GAP: WHERE POWER MEETS VULNERABILITY

**Other sectors where sexual corruption occurred include taverns, local communities and circle of friends/ family.**

Sexual corruption primarily affects women (93% of victims). It's most prevalent in employment (61%), followed by education (28%), public services (25%), and religious institutions (16%). The workplace is the main concern, necessitating strong anti-harassment policies. Educational settings raise alarms about student safety. The issue's presence in public services calls for improved governance. These findings highlight the widespread nature of sexual corruption across sectors, emphasizing the need for comprehensive prevention strategies and victim support.

### Gender of sexual corruption victims



### Sectors where sexual corruption took place



**“ Those that are looking for jobs are the target market especially your entry level jobs.**

Limpopo Participant, Female: 30-39.

**The employment sector has a lot of sexual corruption.**

Gauteng Participant, Female: 50-59.

**QD3: Has there ever been a time when someone who had authority over access to certain opportunities (such as an employer, public official, supervisor or teacher) either directly or indirectly suggested providing you with a service, job, or other benefit in exchange for intimate or sexual activity, and you turned down this suggestion?**

**QD3.1 What were the consequences of the rejection?**

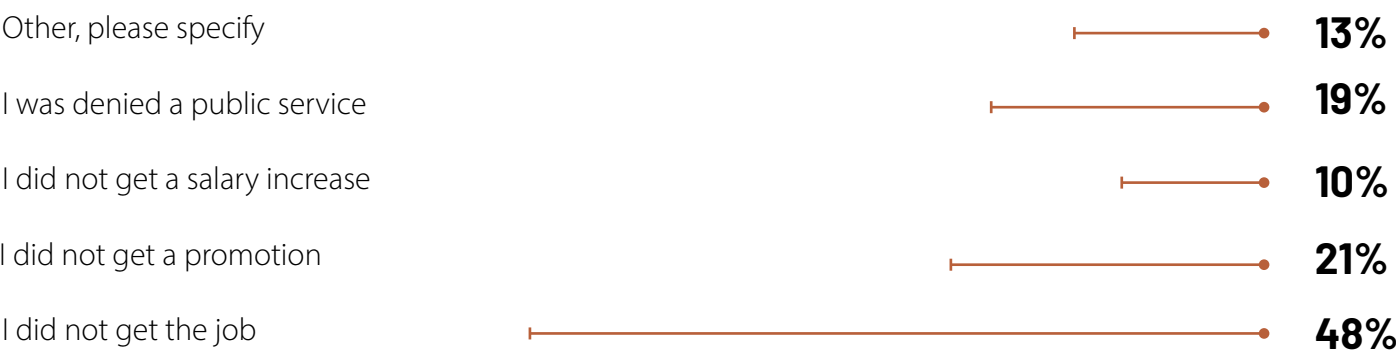
**THERE IS A PRICE FOR SAYING “NO” TO QUID PRO QUO**

Rejecting sexual propositions from authority figures primarily led to professional consequences. Not getting the job (48%), promotion (21%), or public service (19%) were the most common outcomes, accounting for 80% of responses. The “Other” category (13%) showed diverse impacts such as denied leave, ill treatment and academic repercussions. Positive outcomes were rare, and only 3% reported no consequences. The data highlights the severe career impact of rejecting such propositions.

**Incident of respondents declining sexual propositions for benefits**



**Consequences of rejecting sexual propositions**



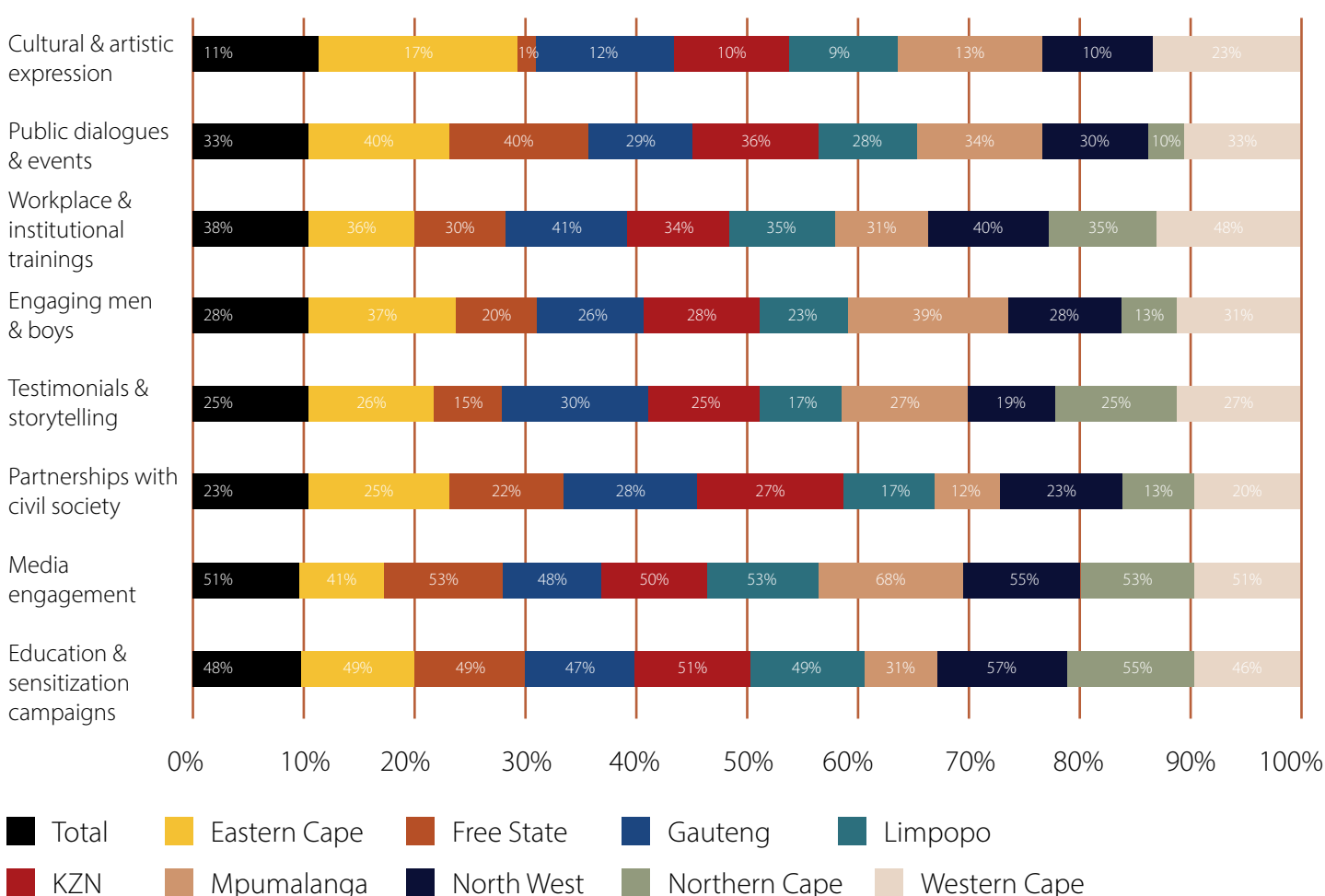
**“ I cannot go sit down and speak with someone about my matters cause I also don’t know what they’re going to do with my matters so I just keep it to myself and we just sat down and spoke with a few friends at the Tavern and yeah you know life moves on.**

Free State Participant, Female: 30-39.

## STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE PUBLIC AWARENESS ON SEXUAL CORRUPTION

Media engagement and educational campaigns are the most effective strategies for raising awareness about sexual corruption in South Africa. Significant provincial variations underscore the necessity for tailored, region-specific approaches.

### Recommendations for raising awareness



### More awareness programmes, more awareness campaigns

North-West Participant, Male: 18-29.

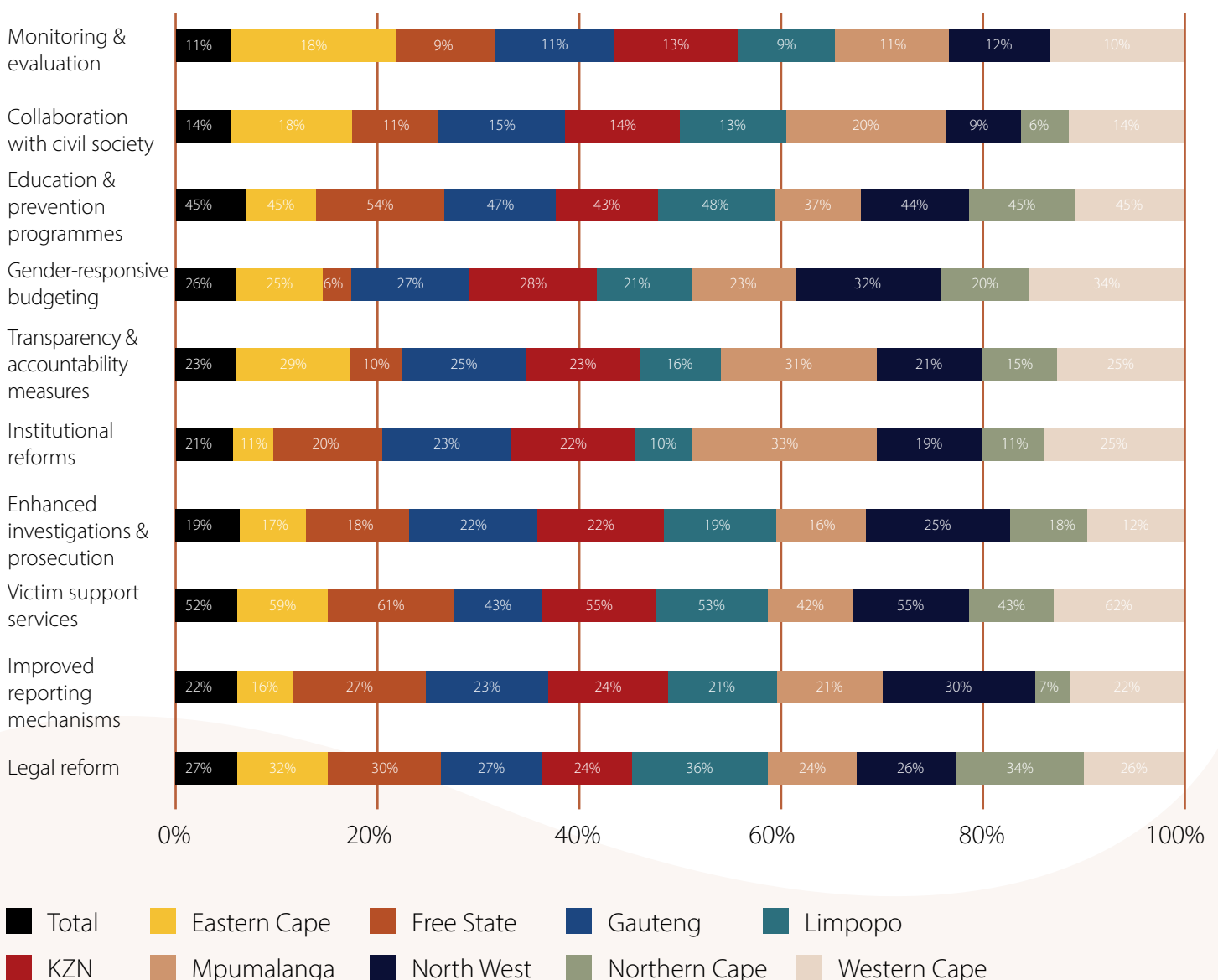
**QE1: What recommendations would you suggest for raising awareness about sexual corruption in South Africa?**

## QE2: What policy changes do you think are necessary to address sexual corruption in South Africa?

### PRIORITIZING ENHANCED VICTIM SUPPORT INITIATIVES IS ESSENTIAL

To address sexual corruption in South Africa, the most strongly supported policy changes are enhancing **victim support services** (52%) and implementing education and prevention programs (45%). Legal reform (27%) and gender-responsive budgeting (26%) also receive significant backing. While enhanced investigations and prosecution (19%) and institutional reforms (21%) have moderate support, they are seen as less crucial. The data suggests a multi-faceted approach is necessary, with a primary focus on supporting victims and prevention through education, complemented by legal and budgetary reforms. Regional variations in support for different strategies indicate that tailored, province-specific approaches may be more effective than a one-size-fits-all national policy.

### Recommendations on policy changes



## PROFILE OF INDIVIDUALS AT RISK OF EXPERIENCING SEXUAL CORRUPTION

The individuals most vulnerable to sexual corruption in South Africa are likely to be:

- Women
- Residing in Gauteng, with potentially elevated risk in North West, Limpopo, and Western Cape (though not statistically significant).
- Employed full-time
- Earning a middle-income (R15,000 - R20,000 per month)
- Having previously experienced and accepted offers of sexual corruption

It's crucial to note that while the Eastern Cape serves as the reference category, residents there are still at risk, potentially more so than in provinces like Northern Cape. The non-significant results for Limpopo, North West, and Western Cape suggest that targeted interventions in these areas may also be beneficial, as the lack of statistical significance doesn't necessarily mean the absence of risk.



**There should be awareness campaigns in our communities, so people know where to go when faced with this problem.**

Limpopo Participant, Female: 30-39.

**Create transparent reporting mechanisms and ensure cases are handled with urgency and fairness.**



Northern Cape Participant, Female: 50-59



**Provide holistic support services, including legal aid and counseling, to encourage victims to come forward.**

Western Cape Participant, Male: 40-49

**Have more therapists and social workers in place for victims.**



Gauteng Participant, Female: 18-29.

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS	(N = 42 692 575)		
	EXPERIENCED SEXUAL CORRUPTION		
Awareness of sexual corruption	aOR	p-value	95% CI
Yes	Ref		
No	0.64	0.08	0.39 - 1.05
Know another person that has experienced sexual corruption			
Yes	Ref		
No	0.82	0.35	0.55 - 1.23
Individual offered a service, job, or benefit by someone in authority in exchange for sexual activity and declined?			
Yes	Ref		
No	0.05	0.000***	0.03 - 0.08
Gender			
Male	Ref		
Female	2.15	0.001***	1.39 - 3.34
Race			
Black	Ref		
White	0.82	0.70	0.31 - 2.16
Coloured	1.38	0.42	0.62 - 3.05
Indian	1.64	0.42	0.48 - 5.58
Age group			
18 - 29	Ref		
30 - 39	0.74	0.24	0.44 - 1.22
40 - 49	0.61	0.11	0.33 - 1.12
50 - 59	0.79	0.55	0.37 - 1.67
60 years and older	1.35	0.75	0.20 - 9.07
Province			
Eastern Cape	Ref		
Free State	0.85	0.81	0.22 - 3.19
Gauteng	2.45	0.02*	1.12 - 5.34
KwaZulu-Natal	0.98	0.97	0.40 - 2.41
Limpopo	1.71	0.24	0.69 - 4.23
Mpumalanga	0.94	0.91	0.28 - 3.09
North West	2.00	0.24	0.62 - 6.42
Northern Cape	0.19	0.02*	0.04 - 0.80
Western Cape	1.46	0.50	0.47 - 4.47

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS	(N = 42 692 575)		
	EXPERIENCED SEXUAL CORRUPTION		
<b>Employment status</b>			
Working full-time	Ref		
Working part-time	0.49	0.04*	0.24 - 0.97
Stay at home individual	1.01	0.98	0.26 - 3.85
Pensioner/Retired	0.23	0.17	0.02 - 1.93
Student	0.35	0.01**	0.28 - 0.89
Unemployed (looking for work)	0.50	0.01**	0.28 - 0.89
Unemployed (not looking for work) and prefer not to work	0.28	0.03*	0.09 - 0.90
<b>Total net monthly household income</b>			
R0 - R3 000	Ref		
R3 000 - R7 000	1.07	0.80	0.59 - 1.96
R7 000 - R11 000	1.62	0.16	0.81 - 3.23
R11 000 - R15 000	1.37	0.39	0.66 - 2.86
R15 000 - R20 000	2.56	0.03*	1.08 - 6.05
R21 000 - R25 000	1.68	0.33	0.58 - 4.82
More than R25 000	0.73	0.55	0.26 - 2.03
<b>Educational attainment</b>			
No education and incomplete education	Ref		
Primary	0.39	0.34	0.05 - 2.73
Secondary	1.02	0.92	0.58 - 1.81
Tertiary	1.01	0.96	0.50 - 2.05
<b>Marital status</b>			
Never married	Ref		
Married	0.67	0.19	0.37 - 1.22
Widowed	0.79	0.84	0.08 - 7.18
Divorced	2.07	0.20	0.67 - 6.34
Separated	0.91	0.84	0.38 - 2.16
Prefer not say	0.77	0.73	0.17 - 3.40
Ref = Reference, aOR: Adjusted Odds Ratio; CI: confidence interval; p<0.05*; p<0.01**; p<0.001***			

## UNVEILING THE SHADOW: SEXUAL CORRUPTION IN SOUTH AFRICA'S LANDSCAPE OF INEQUALITY

The study reveals a **concerning prevalence of sexual corruption in South Africa**, with 15% of respondents reporting personal experiences. This issue **disproportionately affects women (19%) and young adults aged 18-29 (17%)**, underscoring its gendered nature. Alarmingly, 93% of known victims were female, highlighting the urgent need for gender-sensitive interventions. These findings must be understood within South Africa's broader context of **deep-rooted inequality, pervasive gender-based violence, high unemployment rates, and limited access to opportunities and services for many citizens**.

**The employment (56%) and education (23%) sectors emerged as the most common settings** for these incidents, reflecting the vulnerability of individuals seeking jobs or educational advancement in a country grappling with an unemployment rate exceeding 30%. This prevalence in key developmental sectors points to how **sexual corruption intersects with and exacerbates existing socio-economic challenges**, potentially widening the gulf of inequality and limiting upward mobility for vulnerable groups.

Despite its prevalence, sexual corruption remains **significantly underreported**, with only 24% of victims coming forward. This low reporting rate, **attributed to fear of consequences and a lack of awareness about reporting mechanisms**, mirrors broader issues of underreporting in gender-based violence cases in South Africa. It indicates not only a pressing need for improved support systems and public education but also reflects a deeper societal issue of normalized violence against women and a lack of trust in institutional responses.





## WHERE TO FROM HERE?

By addressing sexual corruption through a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach, South Africa can work towards creating safer environments and promoting gender equality across all sectors of society.

### Awareness and Education

1

- Implement targeted media campaigns and educational programs, especially for vulnerable groups.
- Engage men and boys in prevention efforts.

### Strengthen Reporting Mechanisms

2

- Establish safe, confidential reporting channels.
- Increase awareness of existing reporting options.

### Victim Support

3

- Enhance support services for survivors, including legal aid and counseling.
- Implement gender-responsive budgeting to ensure adequate resources.

### Policy and Legal Reform

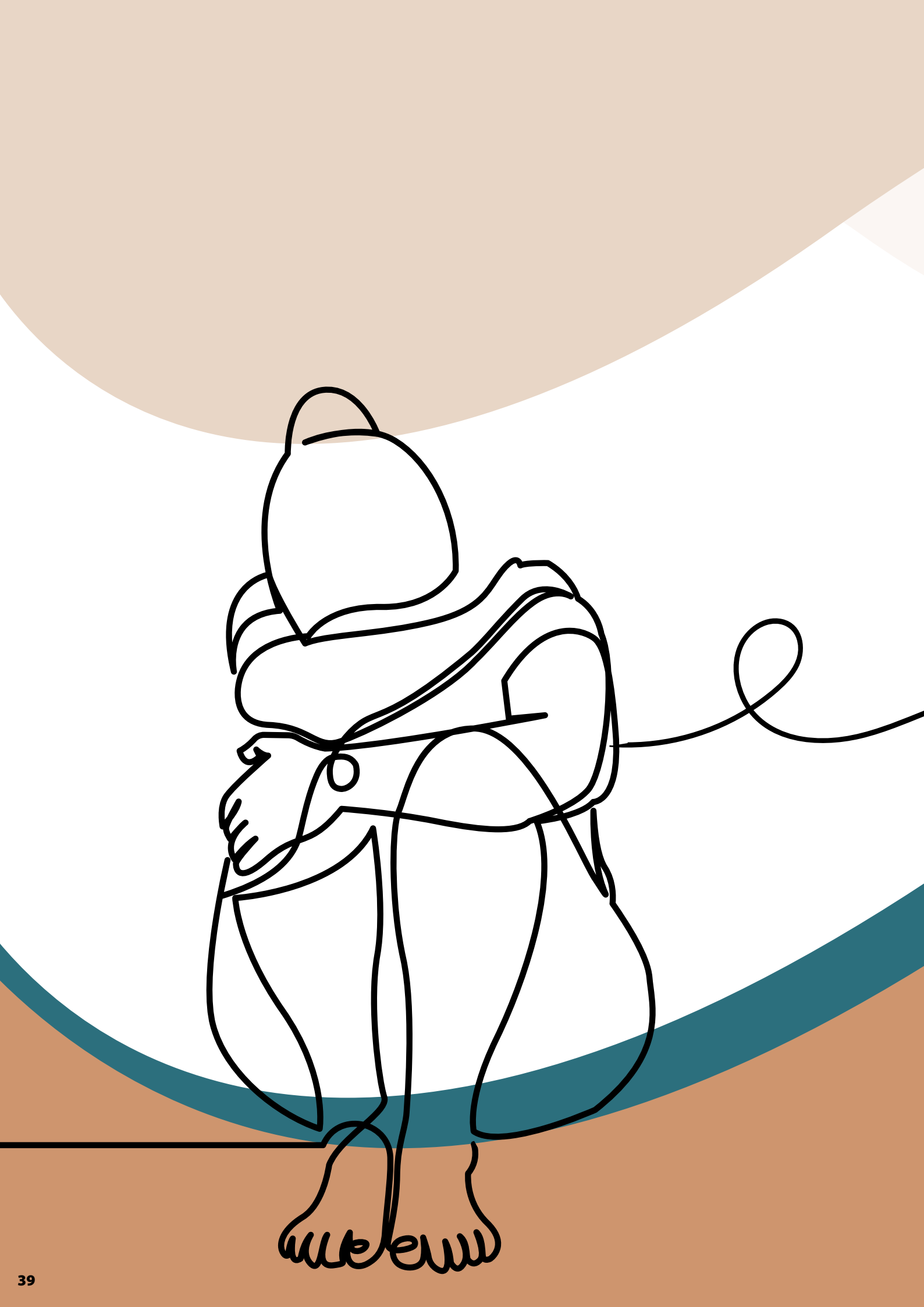
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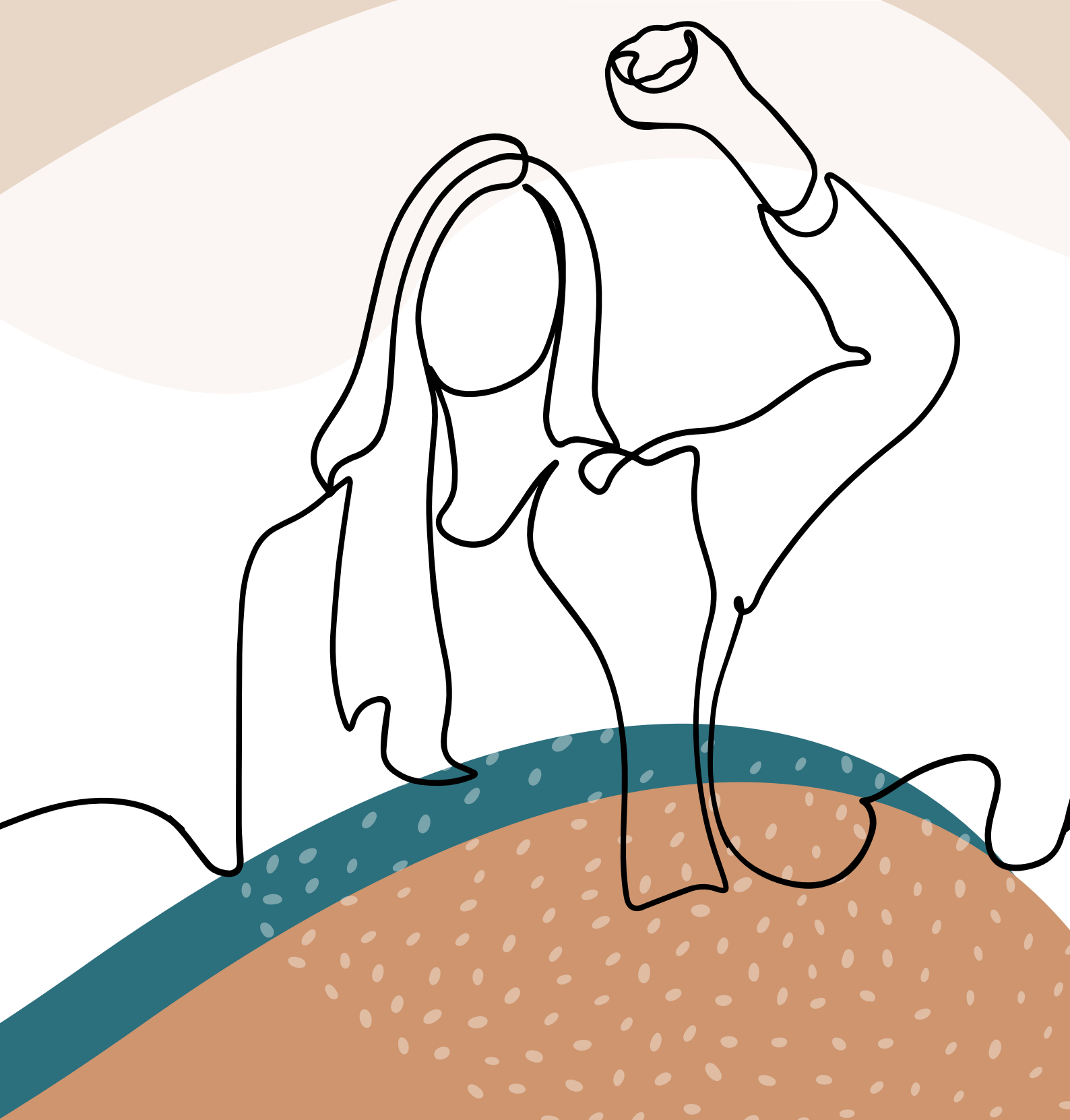
- Strengthen legal frameworks to explicitly criminalize sexual corruption.
- Improve investigation and prosecution processes.

### Institutional Change

5

- Implement workplace training and anti-harassment policies.
- Increase transparency and accountability measures in high-risk sectors.





**NO ONE  
SHOULD CHOOSE  
BETWEEN DIGNITY  
& SURVIVAL.**

# SEXUAL CORRUPTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Understanding  
prevalence and context



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