

IMPACT OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON NIGERIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: COUNSELING IMPLICATION

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Abstract

Human trafficking has become a global issue. This paper examines the impact of human trafficking on Nigeria economic development: with counseling implication. The paper reviews human trafficking, emergence of human trafficking in Nigeria, forms of human trafficking in Nigeria, causes and counseling implication. Based on the literature reviewed, it was revealed that human trafficking has caused a lot of havocs on the economic development of Nigeria; it increases the population and the rate of child abuse. Therefore, it was recommended that vigilance mechanism must be established in villages along Nigerian borders, punitive measures should be taken against traffickers, parents should be more caring for their wards, and need for the government to implement trafficking laws and regulations.

Introduction

The problem of human trafficking has become a subject of concern to the general public in recent time. Nigeria has experienced increase incidences of human trafficking, especially that of women and children. It is also a global problem of diverse dimensions which called into question the penchant for man laying claim to superior intellect and civilization. For Nigeria, the situation was so bad that the then wife of former vice president, Chief (Mrs) Titi Abubakar through her Non-Governmental Organisation- Women Trafficking and Child Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF) took it upon herself to spearhead what would eventually become a serious fight against human trafficking in Nigeria. Utilising all advantages derivable from her position: political, legal and social, she was able to kick-start a serious challenge to human trafficking and its corruption support base in

the country (Agbu, 2003).

Nigeria is seen as a source, transit and destination country for trafficking because she experiences internal and external trafficking of women and children. Internally, trafficking takes the form of recruitment and transportation of children from rural to urban centres and other forms of exploitative conditions, while the external is across the shores of Nigeria. (Arlacchi, 2000). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2006), Nigeria is one of the leaders in human trafficking among African countries. In Nigeria, persons are usually trafficked for the purposes of prostitution, begging, domestic servitude and other types of underpaid and exploited forced labour. However, In recent years, traffickers in Nigeria have also started exploiting their victims for other forms of benefit such as rituals.

The choice destination countries for trafficked Nigerian women and children include Italy, Belgium, United States, Spain and Saudi Arabia. Young Nigerian women were trafficked for prostitution in Italy, Spain, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Elderly women were trafficked to the United States and UK to work as nannies. The route traversed then emanated mainly from Edo State to Mali, Guinea, Algeria, Spain, Italy and other parts of Europe. Another route was through the West Coast of Africa to Mali, Morocco, Spain, and Libya to Saudi Arabia (Idowu, 2003; NAPTIP, 2005).

At a time, it was estimated that over 60 per cent of all immigrants working in the commercial sex industry in Italy were Nigerians, with a substantial number in the Netherlands and Spain (Idowu, 2003). Between 1999 and 2000, the Nigerian Embassy in Italy deported about 800 Nigerian women from Italy. Suffice it to note that the first mass deportation of trafficked women from Italy in March 1999 came as a surprise to the Nigerians. Also, in 2001 about 10,000 were also sent back to Nigeria (ILO, 2007) The way human being (especially young girls) are being transfer by the traffickers from one area to another region is not inspiring. The acts is seen by the public and government as an anti-democratic and illegal act which should not be encouraged. It has caused a lot of negative effects in the families, societies, regions and the country at large. This predicament therefore need urgent attention before it totally get out of hands.

Trafficking in persons commonly referred to as human-trafficking has re-emerged in recent times as a globalized and modernized form of slavery, thus recapitulating the history, mechanisms of recruitment and the socio-economic, cultural, health and educational consequences associated with the

transatlantic slave trade. Trafficking in persons, mostly children and women has become a global business that affects almost all countries and reaps enormous profits for traffickers and their criminal intermediaries. (NAPTIP, 2003)

According to the United Nations estimates, trafficking cost effect was between 5 and 7 billion US dollars operation annually (Aralacchi, 2000). Moreover, trafficking in persons is the third most profitable criminal activity in the world after drugs and arms trafficking. In its publication, Global Alliance Against Forced Labour (ILO, 2007) estimates that globally; 12.3 million people are victims of forced labour; more than 2.4 million have been trafficked; 9.8 million are exploited by private agents and 2.5 million are forced to work by the estate or by rebel military groups.

Emergence of Human Trafficking in Nigeria

Emergence of human trafficking in Nigeria specifically started in three Nigerian States: Abia, Ebonyi and Lagos. The detected cases had a similar fact pattern. Pregnant teenagers or adult women with unwanted pregnancies approach doctors, clinics, nurses or orphanages that subsequently take care of these girls and women during their pregnancies. Since 2006 “baby harvesting” in Nigeria has taken a more dangerous and complex form involving human trafficking alongside other illegal activities (UNESCO, 2006).

As a result, they are confined and forced to give birth. Some of the victims are trafficked while being pregnant; others are later impregnated by men specially hired for such purpose. Allegedly, their babies are sold for international or domestic adoption, rituals, slave labour or sexual exploitation.

Trafficking for organised begging takes place mostly in the Northern part of Nigeria where physically challenged or

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disabled persons are lured into begging to survive in major cities such as Kano and Kaduna States. Furthermore, experienced adult beggars traffic children under their custody. These children are then compelled to pilot the handicapped into organised begging, they are forced to do this for practically nothing or without any reward other than the daily meals that may be handed out to them along the streets. These trafficked children are denied access to formal education and proper social upbringing. The Northern part of Nigeria has not attracted enough attention as Edo, Cross Rivers, Delta, Ebonyi and other states from the south leading to the erroneous assumption that human trafficking is more prevalent in the south of Nigeria (Agbu,2003).

Dave-Odigie (2008) recounts that the Saudi Arabia government deported a total of 9,950 women as well as 1,231 underaged children who were virtually on their own. Further examinations reveal that many of the women deported from Saudi Arabia were from the major northern States of Kano, Adamawa, Yobe, Borno, Plateau, Nassarawa, Niger, Kebbi, Kwara, Sokoto, Zamfara, Jigawa, Gombe, Bauchi and Taraba States.

A trend of trafficking currently in the northern part of Nigeria involves the luring of young children to Saudi Arabia to be killed for blood money known as “Diya”. The method is quite simple; the trafficker, often female, takes a child trafficked to Saudi Arabia to go shopping; when she spots an affluent Arab's car, she pushes the child in the path of the car to get run over and possibly killed. There are two types of penalties for anyone who kills another human being in Saudi Arabia. The first is the death penalty; the second is offering compensation to the relatives of the dead victim, if the relatives accept (“diya”). The trafficker opts for the second option and obtains an equivalent of about 3,500,000

naira (local currency, equivalent to some US \$27,000). ILO, 2003).

The trafficker returns to Nigeria and informs the parents of the trafficked child that the child died of natural causes. The trafficker pays the parents about 100,000 naira, an equivalent (about US \$775) as the wages of the child while in Saudi Arabia. Parents do not typically probe the trafficker's story, often accepting the death of the child as the will of Allah. Many simply accept the supposed wages. There is little research on this form of trafficking, but interviews suggest that those recruited are women and children from poor family backgrounds and rural communities (UNESCO, 2006).

Forms of Human Trafficking in Nigeria

According to the United Nations (2004), these are some forms of human trafficking:

a. **Forced Labour :** Studies show that the majority of human trafficking in the world takes the form of forced labor. Forced labour and human trafficking generate significant profits and are often linked to other illegal activities such as tax evasion and social benefit fraud. (Andrees, 2008). Forced labour may result when unscrupulous employers exploit workers, made more vulnerable by high rates of unemployment, poverty, crime, discrimination, corruption, political conflict, or cultural acceptance of the practice. Immigrants are particularly vulnerable, but individuals also may be forced into labour in their own countries. Female victims of forced or bonded labour, especially women and girls in domestic servitude are often sexually exploited as well.

b. **Sex Trafficking:** Sex trafficking comprises a smaller but still very significant portion of overall human trafficking. When

an adult is coerced, forced, or deceived into prostitution or maintained in prostitution through coercion – that person is a victim of trafficking. All of those involved in recruiting, transporting, harboring, receiving, or obtaining the person for that purpose have committed a trafficking crime. Sex trafficking can also occur within debt bondage, as women and girls are forced to continue in prostitution through the use of unlawful “debt” purportedly incurred through their transportation, recruitment, or even their crude “sale,” which exploiters insist they must pay off before they can be free. However, a person's initial consent to participate in prostitution is not legally determinative: if an individual is thereafter held in service through psychological manipulation or physical force, that person is a trafficking victim.

c. Bonded Labour :One form of coercion is the use of a bond or debt, often referred to as “bonded labour” or “debt bondage,” The practice has been prohibited under the trafficking law. Workers around the world fall victim to debt bondage when traffickers or recruiters unlawfully exploit an initial debt the worker assumed as part of the terms of employment. Workers may also inherit debt in more traditional systems of bonded labor.

d. Involuntary Domestic Servitude: A unique form of forced labor is the involuntary servitude of domestic workers, whose workplace is informal, connected to their off-duty living quarters, and not often shared with other workers. Such an environment, which often socially isolates domestic workers, is conducive to nonconsensual exploitation since authorities cannot inspect private property as easily as formal workplaces. Investigators and service providers report many cases of untreated illnesses and, tragically, widespread sexual abuse, which in some cases may be symptoms of a

situation of involuntary servitude. International efforts are ongoing to ensure that not only are administrative remedies enforced but also criminal penalties are enacted against those who hold others in involuntary domestic service (United Nations, 2004).

e. Forced Child Labour: Many regions of Africa and Nigeria inclusive are linked to traditional practices of placing children in foster care with relatives in distant cities. While parents are promised education for their children, the boys and girls are often ruthlessly exploited as domestic servants in agriculture and fishing(Andrees, 2008). Most international organisations and national laws recognise children may legally engage in certain forms of work. The sale and trafficking of children and their entrapment in bonded and forced labor are among these forms of child labour. A child can be a victim of human trafficking regardless of the location of that nonconsensual exploitation. Indicators of possible forced labor of a child include situations in which the child appears to be in the custody of a non-family member who makes the child work and financially benefits someone outside the child's family and does not offer the child the option of leaving.

f. Child Sex Trafficking: According to UNICEF (2006), as many as two million children are subjected to prostitution in the global commercial sex trade. International covenants and protocols obligate criminalised the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The use of children in the commercial sex trade is prohibited under the Nigerian law as well as by legislation in countries around the world. There can be no exceptions and no cultural or socioeconomic rationalisations preventing the rescue of children from sexual servitude. Sex trafficking has devastating consequences for minors,

including long-lasting physical and psychological trauma, disease (including HIV/AIDS), drug addiction, unwanted pregnancy, malnutrition, social ostracism, and possible death.

Causes of Human Trafficking in Nigeria

Factors identified as causes of human trafficking have been situated within a complex multidimensional construct of interacting hexagonal structure (NAPTIP, 2005). This structure consists of issues relating to demography, socio-economic, educational and legal factors. These are population migration and fertility, poverty, inaccessibility to credit facilities, abuse and violation of human rights, gender discrimination, culturally-induced stereotyped traditional belief systems, wrong attitudes and perceptions, ignorance, lack of/inadequate formal educational opportunities and lack of political will to tackle the phenomenon headlong.

ILO (2007) also indicated that trafficking in persons is influenced and probably sustained by such factors as ignorance, population growth, declining standards of living resulting from the economic crisis: insufficient public investment in essential economics and social services, especially education; unemployment; war and civil strife that has displaced millions of people; the breakdown of family structures and an increase in female-headed households and the HIV/AIDS pandemic that have turned thousands of children into heads of households. The HIV/AIDS pandemic - by illness, discrimination or loss of adult breadwinners - pushes families and communities into poverty and survival through informal work. In Nigeria, the impact of globalization and trade liberalisation are making children among the principal victims. As investors set up firms and industries, with an attempt to cut

production costs in export industries children are being employed to acquire or maintain a competitive advantage in world markets.

The inflationary economy within the last twenty years dramatically increased the number of families requiring two incomes. The growing number of 'liberated' women including the number working outside the traditional homes has mandated an unprecedented increase in the demand for cheap exploitative child labour. The feminisation of poverty and discrimination by gender age, ethnicity or disability also mean that the most vulnerable and marginalized groups tend to end up being trafficked (NAPTIP,2005).

Trafficked children often come from large families. In a 2001 report on nine countries in West and Central Africa, the ILO'S International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), found that countries that have widespread poverty, low education levels and high fertility rates tend to be those from which children are trafficked. Nigeria's fertility rate tends to be relatively high. The higher the fertility rate the higher the probability of children available for trafficking especially as it has been established (that in Nigeria parents willingly gave away their children primarily because they could not cater for too many children under prevailing economic situation and in part as a result of ignorance by the parents of the consequences on the children that were being given away to traffickers (NAPTIP/ UNICEF, 2004; Ehindero, 2005).

Effects of Human Trafficking in the Society. Among the effects of human trafficking are as follows:

Human trafficking has very bad effects in our society, because it forces some children and even adults to steal in order to satisfy their daily living. Many small girls are even made to indulge in prostitution. A

recent case of child labour came into being where a 10 year old kid was beaten to death because the innocent kid was slow at things. The cruel owner went angry and threw the child across the room resulting in the most extreme punishments (Nseabasi & Abiodun, 2010).

It also negates the international convention on the rights of the child. It is indeed inhuman for anyone to engage in such money-making venture. Children are denied basic education which is another right of every child. Children who engaged in work may wear out before they actually reach the age in which they are expected to work. Some sustained life-long injuries which would hinder them from contributing meaningfully to national development (Bakare, 2012).

Generally, most of the adults and children trafficked become hawkers. Thus, motor park touts, motorcycle men and commercial vehicle operators who are very abusive and aggressive engage them in immoral acts such as touching the breasts of female hawkers, even raping them at will. Female children that hawk on the streets sometimes meet bad gang of boys or men who would entice them with money or other gifts and rape them. Some of these girls are seriously prone to sexual abuse. However, the rape cases (children sexual abuse cases) are rarely reported. Some of the sexually abused juveniles may end up contacting sexually transmitted diseases. In an interview with a patent medicine store owner, those that engaged in hawking, often come to take injections for the cure of certain sexually transmitted disease. There is therefore, the tendency for some of them to be infected with HIV/AIDS (Nseabasi & Abiodun, 2010).

Another very serious consequence of human trafficking is unwanted pregnancies. Some of the female juvenile hawkers who come around the motor parks have befriended some bad characters and

they have made them semi-prostitutes. They engage in indiscriminate sex as a result of which they sometimes become pregnant (Nseabasi & Abiodun, 2010). A number of female juvenile hawkers that became pregnant took to abortion. It is no gain saying that socially and ethically, abortion is considered an evil act by the society. These girls risk premature death when they engage in abortion. Usually, they found it difficult to identify who actually impregnated them. Even when they identified such persons, these persons deny getting the girl pregnant. Measures / Strategies against Human Trafficking in Nigeria

At the international level, Nigeria ratified the United Nations protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children in 2001. In fact, Nigeria is also one of the few African countries that passed the Child Rights Act in 2003, which deals comprehensively with the issue of child trafficking. The Child Right Acts (2003) is a comprehensive piece of legislation enacted by Nigeria to provide for the total well-being, protection and welfare of children in Nigeria. With respect to trafficking, forced labour and other practices harmful to the Nigerians especially children and adults; the Acts stipulates such:

- (i) Section 25 - Exposure of children to the use, production and trafficking in narcotic drugs. (life imprisonment)
- (ii) Section 26 – Use of children in other criminal activities (14 years imprisonment)
- (Iii) Section 27 – Abduction, removal and transfer from lawful custody (between 10 and 20 years imprisonment)
- (Iv) Section 28- Prohibition of forced or exploitative child labour (5 years imprisonment or fine of between N

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- 50,000.00 (US\$ 380) and N 250,000.00 (US\$ 1,897)
- (v) Section 29- Application of the provisions relating to young person in sections 59- 62 of the Labour Act, 1971.
 - (vi) Section 30- Prohibition of buying, selling, hiring or otherwise dealing in children for the purpose of hawking or begging for alms or prostitution. (10 years imprisonment)
 - (vii) Section 31- Unlawful sexual intercourse with a child (life imprisonment)
 - (viii) Section 32- Forms of sexual abuse and exploitation (14 years imprisonments)
 - (ix) Section 33- Other forms of exploitation prejudicial to the welfare of a child (fine of N 500,000.00 (US\$ 3794) or 5 years imprisonment or both)
 - (x) Section 34- Prohibition of recruitment of children into the armed forces (no punishment prescribed)

National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Person and other Related Matters (NAPTIP) in August 2003 Nigeria enacted the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act, commonly referred to as the Act. This law is the first attempt to develop a national legal framework to combat the menace of human trafficking in Nigeria through legislation. The Bill was initiated by Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF) a non-governmental organization founded in by the wife of the former Vice President of Nigeria, Mrs. Titi Atiku Abubakar. Prior to the passage of the Act, Nigeria depended on laws in the penal or the criminal code to deal with offences related to trafficking in humans. Trafficking

cases were dealt with under provisions of the law applicable to the offences of slave trading, forced prostitution, sexual exploitation, deprivation of liberty and forced labour.

At inception, NAPTIP faced the onerous tasks of first introducing itself to the Nigerian public, and then to explain why human trafficking was a crime, in view of the fact that most of the practices constituting the crime stemmed from traditional and accepted social norms such as fostering, travelling abroad for greener pastures, and the free choice of some women to earn a living from prostitution. In the first eight years of the agency, it adopted a strategy of massive public enlightenment, and engagement with vulnerable groups in order to provide them with information on the antics of traffickers.

Both the Nigeria immigration service and the Nigerian Police Force have been playing critical roles in checking the menace of human trafficking in the country as both para-military outfits have Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTU). However, several factors tend to serve as constraints in the course of carrying out their duties. For instance, in the case of the Nigeria Immigration Service, there are various constraints which include lack of capacity to detect victims and barons; inadequate training in the treatment of victims and barons; inadequate training in the detection of forged documents; inadequate data collection, improper documentation and lack of logistics (i.e. communication equipment, cameras, etc); Lack of technical expertise due to inadequate training of field personnel and constraints in inter-agency relations between Police and the Immigration Service. In the same vein, the Nigerian Police Force is also being confronted with the aforementioned challenges in addition to the complicity of parents and guardians in the trafficking of their minor children and

victims do not report their exploiters to the police.

Counseling Implications on Human Trafficking in Nigeria

A. Pre-Trafficking Guidance and Counseling: This is the Guidance and Counseling that are existing in attempt to curb the trafficking in Nigeria:

1. There is need for the media (such as television and radio stations) to enlighten the public on the need for the society to disallow the activities of trafficking.
2. Government agency on publicity i.e. National Orientation Agency (NOA) and others should create a nation-wide awareness through postal and hand-bills.
3. Newspapers, magazine and periodicals should have a counseling column for the purpose of informing the public on the side effects of social-ills such as human trafficking.
4. Religious bodies (churches and mosques) should educate their members more on the need to be at alert on the issue of human trafficking.
5. There is need for the parents to always counsel and guide their wards from any activities relating to crime.
6. Government through the legislature should pass appropriate bills to disallow activities of traffickers. For instance, death penalty or life imprisonment for the culprit could be legislated.
7. There should be able to offer an appropriate direction by counsel the government on how to tackle the menace of human trafficking in the society

B. Post-Trafficking Guidance and Counseling: This is the Guidance and Counseling that take place after the

activities of trafficking has taken place in Nigeria:

1. Non-Government Organisation (NGO) needs to address the psychological needs of the victims by counseling those that are set free from the activities of the trafficking.
2. Governments should provide basic needs for the victims of trafficking. i.e. make jobs for the jobless after they might have served the necessary punishment for their offence.
3. Rehabilitation and consultation programme should be in place for those that are to be assisted with total counseling services.

Conclusion

Human trafficking is widespread in Nigeria. It serves as a source and transit in a country. Children as well as adults are trafficked mainly for prostitution, forced labour, and child labour among others. Nevertheless, there has been a response from the Nigerian government towards curbing human trafficking. Nigeria has put in place a number of mechanisms to support anti-trafficking efforts including legislation, anti-trafficking agency, specialized law enforcement units, and victim shelter services among others. Government efforts are to be yielding good results owing to the successes being recorded by NAPTIP, the primary agency in charge of addressing the issue of human trafficking in the country. To better combat human trafficking in Nigeria, and the attendant damaging effects throughout Nigerian society will require a more concerted efforts, and resources of government, international organizations, NGOs and the civil society.

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Recommendations

Based on the existing trafficking problem in Nigeria, the following recommendations are made:

- To effectively prevent and combat human trafficking community vigilance group should be established in villages along the Nigerian borders, particularly in hard-to-reach areas.
- Immigration personnel should be trained on anti-trafficking mechanism to properly identify and combat trafficking and to enforce the rules of the ECOWAS agreement that had put prohibit trafficking. Cases of corruption among security personnel should be punished.
- Several offences related to sexual exploitation of children are simply considered misdemeanors: the related laws must be modified to provide for stiffer penalties as well as to classify such offences as felonies.
- Nigeria's Trafficking Law should be revised to define child trafficking in light of international standards to which Nigeria is obligated, such as the definition under the Trafficking

Protocol where force, deception or fraud are not required to constitute a case of child trafficking.

- Nigeria must urgently adopt national law that specifically defines and prohibits the creation, distribution and mere possession of child pornographic images.
- Training programmes for law enforcers on how to effectively investigate cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children, identify and assist child victims, must be urgently provided on a systematic basis - through the inclusion of such topics within the police academy curriculum and also through partnerships with international organizations for sharing of expertise
- There is a need for a comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration programme that should include the provision of mental health counseling facilities as well as half-way homes to ensure that child survivors are fully integrated. As much as possible, non-institutionalized care must be paramount in such a process.

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