



ABSTRACT

Human trafficking is a serious problem in Nigeria, with women and children often being the primary victims.

Understanding the dynamics and motivations behind both the victims and offenders is crucial for combating this issue effectively. Victims of human trafficking in Nigeria are often vulnerable individuals who are targeted due to their socioeconomic conditions, lack of education, and limited opportunities. Poverty is a major driving factor, as traffickers exploit the desperation of individuals and promise them better lives abroad. Victims may also be from

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA: UNDERSTANDING THE VICTIMS AND OFFENDERS

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Introduction

Trafficking in human beings especially in women and children, for the purpose of sexual exploitation has become an issue of major concern globally because of the rapid growth in recent years. The phenomenon of human trafficking has become more transnational in scope (Hodge, 2008). Traffickers recruit, transport and initiate victims from around the world into the sex industry in Europe and America. Okojie` (2009) noted that an important feature of the increase in human trafficking has been the growing involvement of criminal organisations who exploit the urge to migrate felt by those who live in the world's poorer nations. According to Cho, Dreher and Neumayer (2013) Western Europe and America are the major destinations of trafficked women and children.

Nigeria is regarded as both a source, transit and destination country to this illicit trade. Although statistics on the number of Nigerians involved, mostly as victims, vary widely, it was reported by the Nigeria Police Force that 80% of foreign prostitute in Italy were Nigerian women and children (Carling, 2006). It is very difficult for the average Nigerian to obtain a visa to travel Italy, so the question that has to be addressed is the one about routes used and the organisation of the trips.

Trafficking of human is regarded as a modern form of slavery, is an affront to human dignity, often involving psychological factor and physical violence (Carling, 2006). In fact, human trafficking encompasses many issues such as human rights and rule of law, of law enforcement and crime control, corruption, economic deprivation and migration. It is possible to argue that the definition of trafficking used in the West may not appreciate all the



broken families, have experienced abuse or neglect, or lack support systems, making them more susceptible to traffickers' manipulation. Another significant factor contributing to human trafficking in Nigeria is the demand for cheap labor and the sex industry. Victims are lured under false pretenses, such as promises of legitimate employment or marriage opportunities, only to be coerced into forced labor or sexual exploitation.

Keywords: Trafficking, Victims, offenders, Sexual Abuse

complexities involved. The result of this is the lack of understanding of prevention of human trafficking.

Understanding the legislative Context of the issue of Human trafficking (brief overview of legislation) in Nigeria

This study aims to illustrate the early views on trafficking of human beings. This is done through an examination of the key international treaties on the phenomenon which were adopted in the first part of the twentieth Century. The most important development in modern times is the adoption of the Trafficking Protocol. This is because, Nigeria being a signatory to this Convention, adopted its anti-trafficking laws based on some of these provisions.

Early Views on trafficking: International Conventions from 1904 – 1949

Trafficking of human beings in the first part of the twentieth Century was understood to take place for the purpose of prostitution and sexual exploitation (Papastergiadis, 2013). This becomes clear in analyzing five international instruments adopted during this period of 1904-1949.

International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic 1904

The first international legal instrument directly related to the subject matter was the International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic 1904 (1904 Agreement). According to Ekberg (2004) this Agreement was adopted mainly due to the stagnant economic conditions in Europe which led to the sale of women into prostitution, and thirteen European States saw the necessity to suppress such a practice.

The term “white slave traffic” merits further explanation. Ekberg (2004) argues that the term was used to describe trafficking in the first instance, as the process itself resembled that of the traditional form of slavery and the slave trade. However, this term has a different meaning. The term “white slave”, however, has its origin in describing female factory workers in England and was later used to describe slavery of white women in Europe for the purpose of prostitution (Papastergiadis, 2013). Therefore, the 1904 Agreement was inapplicable, firstly, to men and boys, and secondly, to women and girls of races other than whites.

Despite differences between the traditional form of slavery and white slave traffic, an examination of the provisions of the 1904 Agreement reveals that slavery, the slave trade, and trafficking share many characteristics. Under Article 1 of the Agreement, the act of trafficking was described as the



“procuring of women or girls for immoral purposes abroad’ Obokata, (2006). Here, the term “procure” in an ordinary sense means “obtaining” or “acquiring” and is therefore in conformity with the definition of the slave trade described above. The element of subsequent exploitation is also evident, as women and girls were to be trafficked for immoral purposes. In addition, Obokata (2006) concluded that the term “abroad” suggests international movement of women and girls. Other treaties related to trafficking also include these elements.

The 1904 Agreement, however, did not contribute much to the suppression of white slave traffic, as provisions on law enforcement were non-existent (Papastergiadis, 2013). While the 1904 Agreement obliged States to adopt measures in the areas of information exchange, identification of victims and supervision of employment agencies, no provision touched upon enhancement of law enforcement (Bullock, 1994). Consequently, trafficking continued to flourish (Papastergiadis, 2013).

International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic 1910

The International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic 1910 (1910 Convention) was adopted in order to strengthen the law enforcement aspect which hitherto nonexistent in the 1904 agreement. The scope of application was the same as the 1904 Agreement, as the link between trafficking and prostitution and/or sexual exploitation of white women was maintained. According to Sassen (2003) the major difference between 1904 and 1910 Conventions was that the 1910 Convention urged States to suppress the act and punish those responsible in stronger terms. Article 1 of the Convention provided:

“whoever, in order to gratify the passions of another person, has procured, enticed, or led away, even with her consent, a woman or girl under age, for immoral purposes, shall be punished, notwithstanding that the various acts constituting the offence may have been committed in different countries”

The International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children 1921 and the international Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age 1933

After World War I, the League of Nations regarded the problem of trafficking as serious and decided to include a provision on trafficking in the text of the Covenant of the League of Nations Ekberg (2004). Under the auspices of the League of Nations, two more international agreements on trafficking were adopted. The first was the International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children 1921 (1921 Convention). According to Ekberg (2004) this Convention endorsed the description of trafficking under the 1910 Convention. Therefore, prostitution and sexual exploitation were treated as an important part of trafficking. However, there are some differences in comparison with previous instruments. For instance, the term “white slave” was omitted from the title of the Convention (Papastergiadis, 2013). This is important as it shows the recognition by the international community that women and children of any race could be subjected to trafficking Obokata (2006). Furthermore, the 1921 Convention applies to children of both sexes, unlike previous instruments which only applied to girls (Ibid).

The second instrument was the international convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age 1933 (1933 Convention). Trafficking was described in a similar language as the 1910 and 1921 Conventions with the main focus once again placed upon prostitution and sexual



exploitation Ekberg (2004). In addition, the 1933 Convention retained the international character of trafficking, as it covered acts carried out in another State. According to Sassen (2003), these two treaties adopted by the League of Nations were also ineffective, mainly because they continued to treat prostitution as a matter of domestic concern and therefore did not oblige States to abolish the practice. The League of Nations recognized the fact that one of the contributing factors to the expansion of trafficking was the existence of brothels (Sassen, 2003). There was also a growing awareness that prostitution should not merely be a matter of domestic jurisdiction (Bullock, 1994). As a result, Bullock (1994) maintained that in order to promote international action for abolition of brothels, the prosecution and punishment of people managing them, the League of Nations prepared a draft Convention in 1937 which was to be concluded in 1940. The convention was never adopted due to the outbreak of World War II.

After World War II, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in resolution 43 (IV) (1947), requested the Secretary-general to restart the study of the League of Nations draft convention of 1937, make any amendments, and introduce necessary improvements (Ekberg, 2004). This eventually led to the adoption of the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others 1949 (1949 Convention). This instrument was a consolidated version of all of the treaties mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, the 1949 Convention was different from earlier treaties, in some respects. For instance, it made an explicit connection between trafficking and exploitations of prostitution, as can be seen from the title of the Convention. This also is an instrument which is neutral in gender, and therefore, recognizes that men and boys can be trafficked for prostitution (Obokata, 2006). In addition, the 1949 Convention covers trafficking that takes place both within and across national borders (Raymond, 2002). The 1949 Convention has been criticized on several grounds. According to Raymond (2002) it urged States parties to suppress trafficking and to punish those who owned brothels. Nevertheless, it did not specifically require States to prohibit prostitution itself.

Contemporary Views on Trafficking: Organised Crime Convention and Trafficking and Smuggling Protocols Palermo 2000

The Palermo 2000 Convention views on trafficking of human being mark a departure from earlier views. As knowledge of the subject matter developed, a wide variety of views on, and definitions of trafficking have been advanced by different actors. Trafficking in modern times is commonly regarded as a “contemporary form of slavery” (Aronowitz, 2009). The term denotes that it is different from the old or traditional form of slavery described above. While there is internationally accepted definition of the “contemporary form of slavery”, there is a set of characteristics which separate it from the traditional form of slavery. For instance, legal ownership of people is not a defining attribute under the contemporary form of slavery (Blagbrough, 2008). Blagbrough (2008) further argues that under the traditional form of slavery, the ownership of slaves was legally registered to allow owners to protect their investments. However, it has been maintained that legal ownership has become less important in modern times because slaves can be replaced easily (Bales, 2012). It is also the case that the contemporary form of slavery is less permanent (Bales, 2012). In addition, racial bias is one of the key justifications for enslavement under the contemporary form of slavery. According to Blagbrough (2008) while “ethnic and racial differences were used in the past



to explain and excuse slavery,” the profit to be made from slavery and the slave trade has become a more important consideration in modern times.

Alongside this notion to trafficking as the contemporary form of slavery, the most important development in relation to trafficking is the adoption of the trafficking protocol. The drafting of this Protocol was set in motion when the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing an Ad Hoc Committee to develop instruments on organized crime, including trafficking in 1999 (Hodge and Lietz, 2007). Not only Countries, but also other actors such as NGOs played an important part in developing these instruments (Obokata, 2006). After a series of a sessions, the Committee finalized the Organized Crime Convention and trafficking and Smuggling Protocols, which were subsequently adopted in Palermo, Italy in December 2000. Article 3 of the Trafficking Protocol stipulates that:

- (a) *“Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments of benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation, Exploitation shall include, at the minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or removal of organs;*
- (b) *The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in the subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in the subparagraph (a) have been used;*
- (c) *The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article.*
- (d) *“Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.*

According to Hodge and Lietz (2007) the adoption of this definition is an important development because it provides a common guidance to various factors, such as scholars, governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and IGOs to examine and respond to trafficking issue.

This definition reflects different views held by human trafficking actors at the national, regional and international levels. Some actions particularly states, maintain a strong link between trafficking and illegal immigration, while others, such as feminist groups, focus their attention on prostitution as a form of subsequent exploitation inherent in the practice (Geddes, 2005). Despite these differences in views, they held one thing in common. They generally agree that the trafficking of human beings is a problem to both source and destination countries (Okojie, 2009). He explains that many of these trafficked women and girls are coerced or deceived into the process and experience acts amounting to slavery and forced labour once they reached their destinations, as the protocol definition clearly suggests. Therefore, it is easy to regard trafficking as a crime against humanity.

However, addressing the problem of human trafficking has proven to be difficult because the activities of key IGOs, such as UN focus predominantly on the supply side of trafficking in countries



of origin, and do not adequately deal with the demand for trafficked people and other pertinent issues in countries of destination (Adepoju, 2005; Campana, 2015). In other words, the IGOs have so far failed to take a holistic approach which addresses wider issues surrounding the phenomenon. For instance, the first stage was mainly concerned about suppression of prostitution and punishing those responsible for it but there was no clear legislation prohibiting the prostitution itself. Also the main idea of the second stage is that the Palermo conventions put more emphasis on exploitation and consent of victims rather than the act itself. In addition, some actors particularly states, maintain a strong link between trafficking and illegal immigration, while others, such as feminist groups, focus their attention on prostitution as a form of subsequent exploitation inherent in the practice.

The first and second stages of legislative developments of human trafficking have given us a clear insight of the international conventions and treaties on trafficking. This further clarifies our understanding of how the international community approached the issue of human trafficking.

Nigeria's Views on Human Trafficking

The first European legal instrument on trafficking came in 1904 as a response to mainly due to the stagnant economic conditions in Europe which led to the sale of women into prostitution that saw the necessity to suppress such a practice. Interestingly, in Nigeria the first legal response to trafficking came in the 21st century as a fulfillment of the country's international obligation under the Trafficking in Persons Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Transnational Organized Crime Convention (UNTOC).

According to Adesina (2014) Nigeria became a signatory to the Transnational organized Crime Convention and its Trafficking in Persons Protocol on 13th December, 2000. Article 5 of the Trafficking Protocol enjoins States Parties to criminalize practices and conduct that subject human beings to all forms of exploitation which includes in the minimum sexual and labour exploitation (Adesina, 2014). Okojie (2009) views that the law which is operational throughout the country created The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) as a specific multi-disciplinary crime-fighting Agency and the nation's focal institution to fight the scourge of trafficking in persons in the country using the four pronged approach of Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership. According to Onuoha (2014) the anti-trafficking law was amended in 2005 and the senate passed a bill in March 2014 to give prosecutors more authority and limit the ability of judges to fine traffickers in lieu of issuing prison sentences. The Article I of NAPTIP Act 2003 provides:

Relation with the United Nations Convention against transnational organized crime

1. This Protocol supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational organized crime. It shall be interpreted together with the Convention.
2. The provisions of the Convention shall apply, mutatis, mutandis, to this protocol unless otherwise provided herein.
3. The offences established in accordance with article 5 of this protocol shall be regarded as offences established in accordance with the Convention.



While the Article 3 defines the NAPTIP Act as:

“Trafficking includes all acts and attempted acts involved in the recruitment, transportation within or across Nigerian borders, purchase, sale, transfer, receipt or harbouring of a person involving the use of deception, coercion or debt bondage for the purpose of placing or holding the person, either for or not in involuntary servitude (domestic, sexual or reproductive) in forced or bonded labour or in slavery-like conditions”.

In a nutshell the Nigeria’s anti-trafficking law is an offshoot of the protocol Act 2000 which subsequently ratified by the member countries. NAPTIP Act is particular to trafficking and is one of the first such laws in Sub-Saharan Africa (Okojie, 2009). This definition has moved beyond the Palermo Protocol definition in some features. The addition of the phrase such as ‘attempted acts’ makes it at ease to prosecute offenders who are apprehended in the act of trafficking without having completed the transaction. Additionally, the definition includes trafficking transactions involving outside the country, thus recognizing internal trafficking as well.

However, there are some weaknesses in the definition contained in the NAPTIP Act 2003 which include the exclusion of trafficking for the “removal of body organs” as specified in the U Protocol and which has limited the application of the law to the level that people are trafficked for this purpose. The act also limits sanction for the entire act of ‘Trafficking’ but rather for many acts like exportation and importation of persons, sheltering and transportation.

When taking into consideration the NAPTIP Act 2003 as a whole, it could be argued that the legislation is focused more concerning the trial of traffickers than to the prevention of trafficking and protection of trafficked persons. Another major weakness is that the offences set up by the NAPTIP act focus on trafficking for sexual purposes to the neglect of offences relating to trafficking for other purposes.

Human Trafficking and International Migration

According to Aronowitz (2009) although, illegal migration may be one aspect of trafficking, it is not an accurate illustration of the phenomenon. To begin with, in some cases traffickers arrange authentic travel documents and visas, and migrants enter into a country legally (Carling, 2005). Many countries recently recognized that confining trafficking to illegal international movement limits the understanding of the phenomenon, and have accordingly adopted a wider definition (Onuoha, 2014). For example, the Council of Europe Recommendation (2000) on action against trafficking. However, the scope of the definition is constrained by Article 4 of the trafficking protocol. It provides that the offence of trafficking must be transnational in nature (Obokata, 2006). Under Article 3 of the Organised Crime Convention, trafficking can be regarded as transnational in nature if:

- (a) It is committed in more than one state,
- (b) It is committed in one state but a substantial part of its preparation, planning, direction, or control takes place in another state,
- (c) It is committed in one state but involves an organized criminal group that engages in criminal activities in more than one states; or



(d) It is committed in one state but has substantial effects in another state.

This Article excludes certain forms of trafficking which take place within national borders. For instance, when the preparation and planning are conducted in within a state, internal transportation cannot be considered as trafficking under organised crime convention (Shelley, 2010). Sub-paragraph(c) also suggests that an act is not within the ambit of the protocol definition if it is carried out by individual traffickers and when activities of the organized criminal group do no extent beyond national borders.

Another important element of trafficking and migration in coercion. This element in the definition under the trafficking protocol makes it clear that people cannot be trafficked voluntarily, and some commentators also support this view. However meaning of coercion can be complex. For instance, the scope of coercion is broad in that it can be physical or psychological and terms such as threat or use of force, violence and abuse of authority in the definition under the trafficking protocol do not necessarily have distinctions (Carling, 2005). A question has been raised as to whether or not deception forms part of coercion.

Although, the definition of trafficking suggests that coercion or deception are used by traffickers when they are recruiting and transporting people from countries of origin to destination, however, some casual factors behind trafficking should also be interpreted as coercive (Hodge and Lietz, 2007). In addition to economic hardship in their countries of origin, which is one of the major causes of trafficking, many escape from persecution by states, armed conflict and terrorism (Oslender, 2008). Although, traffickers may not be directly responsible for triggering these causes of trafficking, they do take advantage and profit from them (Oslender, 2008). It has been argued in this regard that the definition of trafficking under the trafficking protocol is broad enough to include these casual factors.

Moreover, with respect to the distinction between trafficking and smuggling, coercion attached to trafficking risks portraying those smuggled as willing participants (Carling, 2005). This can be problematic, as many people experience coercion during the process of smuggling. According to Oslender (2008) many of them are placed under harsh conditions and are subjected to torture and other inhuman treatments during their journey. For instance the overcrowded ship with smuggle migrants on board that sank off the coast of Libya where not less than 700 people died (BBC News, 2013). Such cases of fatalities have been reported prior to this period by America, Niger and United Kingdom (Obokata, 2006).

Also of relevant to the element of coercion is the lack of consent. Sub-paragraph (b), Article 3 of the trafficking protocol definition stipulates that consent is irrelevant if any of the means to achieve trafficking described in paragraph (a) are used. This widens the scope of protection of individuals (Hodge and Lietz, 2007). According to Kelly (2004) not only those who are forcibly trafficked, not also those who give their initial consent but later withdraw it can be included. Nevertheless, the element of consent also raises conceptual difficulties.

Conclusion

This chapter analysed the development of human trafficking legislation. This is important because it gives us a clear understanding of the issues involved. For instance, although the practice of



‘(white) slavery’ or contemporary slavery has existed for several centuries (Jordan and Walsh, 2007), the 2000 Protocol represented the first global effort to develop an even definition of trafficking in persons. Just as indicated in the protocol, the main intention behind providing the definition is to enable meeting in national approaches by which to create domestic criminal offences that would support efficient international supporting investigating and prosecuting human trafficking offences. It is also important because the international community has begun to mobilize itself in a effort to combat human trafficking, whether offending states are countries of destination, origin or transit for this criminal activity.

It is also important to acknowledge the debates around migration. Illegal migration and trafficking legislation. It is important to understand that not all cases of human trafficking have to do with trans-border migration, but most do cross borders. Again, no country appears to be safe to trafficking irrespective of its unique economic, social and political conditions. As with any initiatives to combat a crime that normally go beyond borders, there are various practical issues like coercion and consent that need to be addressed first at local and national level and then within the global community. Furthermore, as a result of the transnational nature of trafficking in persons and forced labour, the fight has extended beyond the corridor or national legislation and strategies to the establishment of trans-border agreements.

Therefore, the human trafficking issue in Nigeria cannot be sufficiently addressed without making reference to the trafficking situation in the neighbouring countries and the most commonly used destination countries in Europe and other parts of the world.

Nigerian Government Responses to Human Trafficking

Nigerian government responded to the issue of human trafficking by introducing legislation and poverty alleviation programme, it is possible to discuss these from the following perspectives.

Legal Response

Firstly, Nigeria ratified the UN protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children in 2001. To comply with the UN Protocol 2000, Nigeria is one of the few African countries to pass the Child Rights Act in 2003, which deals comprehensively with the issue of child trafficking (Okojie, 2009). Secondly, Nigeria has also signed some bi-lateral agreements on human trafficking with other transit and destination countries such as Niger, Morocco, Cameroon, Republic of Benin, Gabon Spain and United Kingdom, France , the Netherlands and Norway (Okojie, 2009).

Thirdly, Nigeria passed the national law against human trafficking entitled ‘Trafficking in persons (prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act 2003’. This act was amended in 2005 and the Senate passed a bill in March 2014 to give prosecutors more authority and restrict the ability of judges to fine traffickers in lieu of issuing prison sentences. Since its establishment in 2003, the anti-trafficking agency (NAPTIP) has assisted over 7,500 victims of trafficking convicted 218 traffickers and sensitized the public and other stakeholders about the dangers of human trafficking in Nigeria (Gnot, 2015). Various legislations concerning human trafficking are being recognized in the country, however, what matters is the aspect of its enforcement.



Enforcement of Legislation

Most of the law enforcement agencies have been accused of non-preparedness on enforcing laws regarding women and child trafficking in the country because of corruption and other related problems. This development presents serious challenges to law enforcement agencies. The section four (4) of the NAPTIP Act 2003 empowers the agency to address trafficking in persons with its associated problems by liaising with other law enforcement agencies such as Nigerian police and immigration service to reduce the incidence in the country (NAPTIP, 2015). However, the political will to enforce it has been non-existent. Various allegations have been considered as instrumental to that. The allegations levelled against the enforcement agencies and its personnel, include arbitrariness of power, corruption, distortion of justice and delays in the administration of justice due to nepotism, ethnic affiliation and other primordial sentiments (Agbu, 2009).

Poverty Alleviation Programmes

In addition to these legal frameworks, poverty alleviation programme called National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) have been introduced to address the problem of human trafficking in the country. Anyanwu (2014) claims that the NAPTIP is the current Programme which focuses on the provision of strategies for the eradication of poverty in Nigeria. This programme has three (3) activities: the first is Youth Empowerment Scheme (IYE) which deals with capacity acquisition such as credit delivery, enterprise promotion and technology development, the second is Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS) which deals with the provision of potable and irrigation water, transportation, rural energy and power support; while the third is Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS) which primarily deals with special education, primary healthcare services, establishment and maintenance of recreational centres, food security provisions, rural telecommunications facilities, micro and macro credits facilities (Howes, 2009; Anyanwu, 2014). As Aigbokhan (2008) observes, the programme is seen as an improvement over the previous Nigerian government poverty eradication programmes. Since inception the programme has been able to train 130,000 youths and engaged 216,000 people. However, the programme has been politicized. Howes (2009) argues that most of programmes were not targeted towards the vulnerable poor, rather majority of the beneficiaries were non-poor and has political linkage to the ruling government.

The Local NGOs, IGOs and International Organizations' Response to Human Trafficking in Nigeria

NGOs in Nigeria are involved in a number of activities that include social programmes such as humanitarian aid, the promotion of human rights, literacy training, development assistance and sensitization programmes to prevent child trafficking in the country. According to Yamagata (2008) Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON) has concluded awareness creation and sensitization campaign at many places, receiving and transit states for human trafficking notable amongst which are Lagos, Edo, Oyo, Delta and Ogun with support from ILO, UNICEF, UNECO and U.S. Embassy in Nigeria. WOCON's activities for trafficked victims include programmes for the withdrawal and rescue of trafficked persons and their rehabilitation and or reintegration with family members. Such activities include the withdrawal in Lagos State of 800 children in



prostitution and domestic labour in 2005 with backing from ILO reintegrated through provision or formal education, skills acquisition, legal and medical assistance (Yamagat, 2008).

Since year 2000, European Union in collaboration with local NGOs and individual, IM and NAPTIP have been rescuing trafficked victims and receiving of deportee trafficked victims at airports and making necessary recommendation for reintegration and reunion with their family members. Notable among is the rescue of trafficked victims from Spain, Belgium, Italy, U.K. and North Africa under the 'Alima Project' in 2004 (Reuter, 2012).

Government in collaboration with local NGOs also engaged in resettlement and rehabilitation of victims. According to Nwogu (2014) NAPTIP has built shelters for victims of trafficking in some cities like Abuja, Lagos, Kano, Benin City, Enugu, Sokoto and Uyo. In these centres, victims receive counseling medical treatment and skills acquisition programmes. The shelter centres are run in collaboration with other stakeholders like local NGOs and international organizations (Nwogu, 2014).

In a bid to protect immigrants against exploitation, and supporting the fight against trafficking in humans, other countries have also donated substantial amounts of money through multilateral donations through UN agencies or funds. For example, in 2010 alone, U.S. State Department spent about USD 16 million in Africa in which Nigeria was a major stake holder (Nwogu, 2014). Additionally, EU under its Migration and Asylum Thematic Programmes initiative, committed USD 466.32 million from 2007 to 2011 to Africa (Hughes, 2014). Furthermore, the REU Migration and Asylum Thematic programmes initiative usually issues a call for proposals to identify possible initiatives to fund in yearly basis. As Esterly and Esterly (2006) argue, however, the local NGOs, UN representatives and government institutions that apply have no say in these objectives and tend to adjust or abandon whatever strategic objectives they may have set for themselves in order to pursue the available funds. This is because most often the indigenous depend on the developed countries for their funds. Therefore, this has a significant impact not only on funding decisions, but they also often line up with donor country priorities (Esterly and Esterly, 2006).

Additionally, migration questions are highly political, and the nature of anti-trafficking funding has often silently advanced a foreign policy of curtailing flows towards donor countries. For instance, US State Department's funding of anti-trafficking efforts has been heavily criticized for ties to US foreign policy agenda (Moyo, 2012). Similarly, Nwogu (2014) argues that the United Nations office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Nigeria decisions on distribution of its funding mostly depends on donor's priority areas or interest. Therefore, it could be argued that the anti-trafficking funding decisions in Nigeria is not only often top to bottom, even the funding itself seems to be focused on diversionary efforts partially promoting the politics of foreign donors, dodging around the real issues and avoiding concrete solutions.

The major reason why funding does not always meet the ends of its intended beneficiaries lies in the policy of the donor agencies. For instance, funding decisions are most often made at the apex of bureaucracies in donor countries, and then passed down to foreign aid agencies most often in developing countries like Nigeria, in the form of a principal-agent relationship (Moyo, 2012). In a nutshell the donor agencies or the rich countries and their representatives are the ones who choose the actions and programmes of the foreign aid agency.



New Recommendations for Sustainable Anti-trafficking Strategies in Nigeria

The available literature shows that there is a general consensus among scholars that government's response to human trafficking is reactionary rather than proactive. Those who share this idea argue that Nigeria government responses in most cases are more of rehabilitative than preventive. This means the government projects should focus or seek to prevent harm from happening in the first place, instead of focusing on more high-profile rescue and rehabilitation type operations often visible under the anti-trafficking policies and programmes. Therefore, government is reluctant in addressing the problems of poverty, unemployment, corruption, education and religious stereotype. Despite the fact that Nigeria has spent some reasonable amount of money, the government's anti-trafficking strategies is yet to yield the desired results (Nwogu, 2014).

The sustainable counter-response or strategies are much more than only rehabilitation, resettlement and reintegration of trafficked victims with their family members, it should also include some long-term initiatives or strategies that should be anchored on addressing the problems of poverty, unemployment, education, corruption and stereotypes. Moyo (2012) argues that human trafficking counter-response strategies should address things like preventing the individuals from becoming vulnerable to their preys.

In fact, every human trafficking problem is environmentally determined and diverse in nature. Therefore, applying other countries strategies may not be feasible in Nigeria's case. Perhaps this may partly explain why the government of Nigeria has not been able to address the problem of human trafficking in the country. Similarly, many critics of foreign aid in Nigeria strongly emphasize on creating dependency series, closing of local growth, limiting the ability of organisations to fund raise locally, creating a lack of local identity or weak link with the people NGOs claim to help, and even corruption (Moyo, 2012). Summing up from this, therefore, the way forward to sustainable counter-response strategies to human trafficking in Nigeria may be achieved through the following six ways:

- 1) **Poverty alleviation:** The major strategy in reducing the problem of human trafficking in Nigeria is through providing the dividends of democracy most especially poverty alleviation programs aimed at job creation, the establishment of recreational centres and entrepreneurial development programs. The government should prioritize agricultural production since the country is having a fertile land for farming. This may make them self-reliant and cushion the effect of poverty among youths. The proliferation of awareness raising campaign will do nothing to stop a young person from migrating or a family from giving away their children when they are in distressed economic conditions.
- 2) **Fighting corruption:** Another area of concern in building a sustainable anti-trafficking strategy in the country is that effort must be made by the government to minimize corruption in all sectors of country so that the resources available are judiciously distributed.
- 3) **Introducing decentralization:** Also, the donor agencies on their own should make stringent measures against the high propensity for corruption and aid diversion if channeled through bureaucracies. Alternatively, decentralization that backs local innovation, abandonment of the one-size fits-all grand plans, and increase focus on accountability.



- 4) Improving research: The issue of human trafficking will require a lot of finances and good planning to undertake. There is a need for funding of research organisations looking into the details information on human trafficking in the country. For research processes to succeed and stand the tests of time through all imminent changes, local and international funding is also necessary. Non-governmental as well as governmental organisations need to be supported at all levels in their efforts in addressing problem of human trafficking.
- 5) Intelligence gathering: Although human trafficking problems are mostly linked to the high rate of poverty, low level of education, corruption and social injustice, government must ensure that intelligence gathering and information sharing is given special consideration among the source, transit and destination countries for mutual benefits. As argues by Siemens (2014) bilateral communication increases interdependence between participants, reduces uncertainty and may bring about positive end.
- 6) Fundraising locally: To ensure their independence, anti-grafting organisations in Nigeria should also raise their funds locally to meet their specific needs and targets. The efforts on how to stop human trafficking may still be a daunting task to major stake holders without considering the local decision especially of the source and transit countries. However, with support from all affected sectors and complete interest in helping at the grassroot level particularly of the source and transit nations, solutions may be found to this menace. As this may help in some areas, such as overall economic growth with the potential to reduce poverty.

General Conclusion

The four key issues to be concluded are: government of Nigeria, cultural perceptions with harsh economic conditions, organised criminal network group ad international community. The effectiveness of every government is measured by its ability to improve the living standard of its citizens. Unfortunately, this became a big issue. Nigerian government lost the chance to invest properly the oil money on its people, as such, it created a signifying disillusion to the state fr its ability to keep peace and conflict. Therefore, poverty, corruption, low level of education, unemployment and cultural stereotypes became the order of the day. Furthermore, the volatile political environment in some countries of the world such as Mali, Libya and Syria coupled with the current EU policy on immigratiuon seeking to prevent further loses of life and to improve conditions for those seeking protection in Europe have also opened up new opportunities for traffickers to exploit (Open Society Foundations, 2015). This growing number of problems are making more people vulnerable to both labour and sex trafficking, boosting the supply side of human trafficking business around the globe.

Te considerable desire for people to emigrate in the country as a result of cultural stereotypes, coupled with harsh economic conditions has created networks of criminals. These Nigerian organized criminal networks are opportunists with special skills who easily lure their targets into the trafficking business through different contacts and are often very efficient (Carling, 206). The trafficking networks have been able to offer young women the opportunity to travel to abroad and such offers are always full of fraud. Yet, these victims risk everything to battle their way hazardously to rich countries of the world with the assistance of pimps ad bogus agencies, in



search of the deceptive greener pasture. Although, a considerable number of the trafficked victims are aware that they will be working as prostitutes, they are often not aware of the extent in which they will be engaged in this criminal act.

These young women and children are transported by road, air and water with the help of smugglers and document forgers in violation of international immigration law. Consequently, many were exposed to harsh condition and thousands lost their lives.

In addition, to understand the dynamics of human trafficking in Nigeria, the position of the voodoo pact is obviously important as a means of coercion. This emigration pact is considered as a strongly binding agreement between two parties. The position of the pact is obviously fortified by the fact that, despite the exploitation, deception and problems along the way, it is normally respected in its entirety. It is binding until the travel expenses (debt) incurred is paid back.

The international community have recognized the significance of a comprehensive legal framework as a primary step towards combating trafficking, and Nigeria in recognition of this brought about the enactment the NAPTIP Act 2003. Nigeria also has many international and regional agreements that adequately cover the issue of human trafficking and forced labour in the country. However, few criminals are convicted and the majority of trafficked victims never receive assistance.

In Nigeria, the anti-trafficking strategies are still not given the desired attention, particularly for victim support services. International donors are dictators of policies rather than facilitators of the anti-trafficking efforts in the country. Master-servant decision making in funding process has not helped the situation. Therefore, the human trafficking business still flourishes in Nigeria.

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