HUMAN TRAFFICKING, POVERTY AND ECONOMIC DECLINE IN NIGERIA, 1984 – 2019: A RE-EXAMINATION

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ABSTRACT

Besides drugs trafficking and gun-running, human trafficking, globally, has become an international lucrative venture and yields stupendous sums in foreign currencies. Human trafficking is recognised as a modern-day slavery with various negative socio-economic, legal and health implications. Traffickers trade on human lives, subject them to demeaning and traumatic conditions for profit-making motives. Thus, human trafficking is the worst form of human rights violations, and even a gender-based violence against females who constitute the majority of the victims in the country. Regrettably, Nigeria takes the ignoble position of a raw source, transit and destination country for trafficking. In our period, the scourge had assumed complex dimensions, become more elusive, shrouded in secrecy, and with concomitant effects on the live of the country, and the polity at large. Children that are naturally of school attendant population are in this fold. The methodology adopted is historical approach consisting of the use and reconstruction of both primary and secondary sources. This paper historicises the dynamics of human trafficking in Nigeria, its concomitant sociopolitical and economic effects, alongside with some emerging trends in trafficking, and government's strategies at curbing it. The paper concludes that the fight against human trafficking would make greater impact through social change and value re-orientation of the citizenry.

Introduction

Globally, large numbers of women and girls inadvertently fall victims of human trafficking; either for domestic work, sexual exploitation, or forced labour, among other things, yet the situation has posed a heinous threat to national, regional and global peace and security in all ramifications.[33]In the West African sub-region, the trend of trafficking in persons is widespread; and the phenomenon now attaining its peak unhindered, has actually portrayed Nigeria as a nation occupying a central position as an originating state, transit and destination for victims of trafficking. There is also evidence of internal trafficking from rural zones to cities. The menace of human trafficking in Nigerian state has taken an indescribable facet in the last two decades owing to the factors of; massive unemployment, poverty, recession in the economy, conflicts, globalization, existing weak legal system, and inadequate legislation, and political will.[34]

Human trafficking is defined by the international protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons especially women and children as, the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons: by the threat or use of Kidnapping force, fraud, deception or coercion, or by the giving or receiving of unlawful payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, and for the purpose of several exploitation or forced labour.[35] Human trafficking is an extreme human rights violation that impacts all populations across the globe and is characterized by force, fraud, and coercion intended for exploitation.[36]

Currently, human trafficking research is particularly limited by non-standard terminology and a clandestine research population. While estimates of the number of trafficked persons vary widely and are notoriously unsubstantiated, we can still arrive at some conclusions regarding the overall number of trafficked persons. One low estimate suggests that in 2005, at least 2.4 million people had been trafficked into forced labor situations and approximately 12.3 million people were victims of forced labor.[37] Thus, trafficked persons may willingly travel with an "employer" based on the promise of work as a waitress, farm worker, domestic worker, or in other industries. However, upon arriving at their destination, they may be refused wages or may be forced into another job entirely. In

[33]Cann, C. A., Jack, B., &Christopher, A. 2010. Globally Impact of Human Trafficking Goes Beyond Individual Victims. York Papers, New York City News.
[34]Abiodun, F. T. et al. 2021.The State and Challenges of Human Trafficking in Nigeria: Implications for National Peace and SecurityJournal of Public Administration and Governance, 11(2), 1-25.

[35] UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). 2002, *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking*, OHCHR, 20.
[36]*United Nations. 2002. 'The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children',held at* Palermo, Italy, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.
[37] UNODC. 2009. International Framework for Action for the Implementation of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, Washington D.C. 5.

other cases, the individuals received an advance on their salary and are then told they must work for free to repay this debt, which is commonly known as debt bondage.[38] One of the underlying themes running through each of these scenarios is the desire for economic prosperity. Although existing research easily identifies the vital role of economics in human trafficking, it has failed to probe the complex relationship between poverty, discrimination, and other socio-cultural factors such as minority status.

Consequently, there is a distinct lack of research relating to traditionally disadvantaged groups and systemic discrimination within the body of human trafficking literature. One potentially significant, but often overlooked, criterion in anti-trafficking research is poverty. Poverty is not measured in terms of how much money an individual has it or how many times does he eat in a day. Most often, people associate poverty with extreme low level of income. Poverty can be seen manifestation of a state of deprivation of basic requirement for quality of life this may include deprivation of food shelter, life drinking water, employment health education and clothing among others.[39] When a person is deprived of those essential services and goods, he is thus poor and poverty-ridden. He may thus be at risk of engaging unavailable means of containment of life including human trafficking, child abuse, robbery, drug traffic and host of other social problems. Government over the years has spent billions of Naira and established agencies and units to enable it overcome the multiracial social problems of poverty human traffic, and child abuse.[40] But despite governments' concerns, investment and the huge financial expenditure, the issue of poverty trafficking and other social problems in our poverty still remains a matter of serious concern to the general public.

A major problem threatening the global environment is human trafficking or traffic in persons. It has been identified as a serious threat to human security and development (it attracts more or less the same attention as drug trafficking, money laundering, arms trafficking, global warming and climate change, refugees, environmental disasters, terrorism, etc) by governments, pressure groups and the United Nations. Recent attention to this long-standing problem of traffic in persons is only now just been acknowledged by African governments in general and Nigeria in particular. It has generated a lot of debate as to how to curb the menace which is generally perceived to be an institutionalized form of modern-day slavery.[41]

[38] Clark, M.A. 2008, 'Vulnerability, Prevention and Human Trafficking – The Need for a new Paradigm,' in UNODC, An Introduction to Human Trafficking: Vulnerability, Impact and Action. 43.

[39] Gozdziak, E. M., and Bump, M. N. 2008. Data and Research on Human Trafficking: Bibliography of Research-Based Literature, Georgetown University, Washington D.C.

[40] Gozdziak, E. M., and Bump, M. N. 2008. Data and Research on Human Trafficking…

[41] At best, the realities that exist between 'human trafficking' and 'slavery' are perceived by various

Alarmingly, human trafficking continues and appears to be on the rise worldwide. It is one of the fastest growing businesses of organised crime and no country is immune to its negative impact. Most nations are touched by it one way or the other, most especially impoverished less developed countries. Research has revealed that the phenomenon is prevalent in Eastern Europe, parts of Asia, Latin America and countries in sub-Saharan Africa.[42] Some of these countries are classified as "origin, transit and destination countries".[43] Nigeria is indeed not an exception to this classification. Interestingly, Nigeria is not the only country affected by the scourge of human trafficking nor is it the only country suffering from its negative impact. It is estimated that over 2 million people are trafficked regularly round the world for forced prostitution, agricultural bondage and other forms of identified servitude.[44]

This tragic crime has taken such an unprecedented dimension in Nigeria that the country has been tagged an endemic country in the trafficking of human beings. The victims are predominantly children, girls and women. It is for this negative reason (the illegal trade in children and females) that Nigeria is cited in an index drawn by United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNDC) as "very high" as an origin country.[45] In reaction to the negative image and the distortion of the socio-cultural setting of Nigerian society occasioned by this heinous crime to humanity, the Nigerian Government was prompted to join the global fight against human trafficking. It therefore signed and ratified the United Nations Protocol.[46] Consequently, in 2003, the Nigerian Government went on to enact the Trafficking in Persons (prohibitions) Law Enforcement and Administration Act.[47] Furthermore, the enactment of this Act laid the ground for the creation of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and other related matters (NAPTP).[48]

The prevalent economic decline existing in most African countries (including Nigeria) which has resulted in widespread poverty is by far the most important root cause of trafficking and indeed, to exploitation generally. This aggravating situation has compelled many people below the low-income bracket to escape poverty and to relocate from areas where employment is scarce. In recognition of the alarming rise of the tragic abuse of human

schools of thought to be similar hence, the term 'institutionalized modern-slavery'

[42] A. B. Callagher, 'Human Right and the New UN Protocols on Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling; A Preliminary Analysis' in *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 4, November 2002, 115.

[43] A. B. Callagher, 'Human Right and the New UN Protocols on Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling…

[44] A. B. Callagher, 'Human Right and the New UN Protocols on Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling; ...

[45] A. B. Callagher, 'Human Right and the New UN Protocols on Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling; …122.

[46] Article 39 of the UN Transitional Organized Crime Protocol (Palermo Protocol) which seeks to prevent and surprises trafficking in persons, especially women and children

[47] NAPTIP ACT 2003 Hand Book, Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette, No:69, Vol. 90, October, 2.

[48] World Bank. 2004. "Helping Combat Corruption; The Role of the World Bank", 79.

rights resulting from the lack of a clear-cut commitment on curbing this heinous crime, this paper seeks to examine the nexus between economic decline, poverty and human trafficking.

Conceptually, economic decline, poverty and human trafficking are intertwined. Poverty is a condition of incapacitation of human being to experience a moderate livelihood; his inability have access to basic essentials of life and the uncertainly of what tomorrow has for him. The World Development Indicators explained that poverty is the deprivation of common necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter and safe drinking water and may also include the deprivation of opportunities to learn, to obtain a better employment to stay out of poverty.[49] It was further explained that poverty is the inability of the individual to attain minimum standard of living. Within the context of the Nigeria society, most of its population fit into the 2004 World Bank Report and World Development Indicators operationalization of poverty.[50]

It is argued that poverty indicators go beyond an individual income or consumption pattern. Purchasing power, physical health and education play significant impact on individual life inadequate access to the attainment of such variation will make the individual to wallow in economic, political and environmental deprivation.[51] The implication for such deprivation is that the individual may not have moderate shelter and health are, how job and educational opportunities, poor and unbalanced deity food, infant mortality and low life expectancy. Our local government areas today are facing similar conditions. Most of it population hardly eat two meals in a day and those who can afford to eat two or one equal male a day, may not have the required nutritional balanced food for healthy growth. Health care is very inadequate while public school fails to provide minimum education to it population in their locality. Flood and fire outbreak has left thousands homeless as a result of poor housing condition and complete absence of drainage systems majority of our population are living in poverty.[52]

However, human trafficking has assumed alarming dimensions in the recent past, and it is now considered second only to the trafficking in drugs and guns. Human Trafficking is a crime against humanity. It involves an act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving a person through a use of force, coercion or other means, for the purpose of exploiting them. Every year, thousands of men, women and children fall into the hands of traffickers, in their own countries and abroad. Every country in the world is affected by trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit or destination for victims.

[49] World Bank. 2004. "Helping Combat Corruption; The Role of the World Bank", 79.
[50] World Bank. 2004. "Helping Combat Corruption; The Role of the World Bank", 83.
[51] Ajakaiye, D.O. and V.A. Adeyeye. 2001. The Nature of Poverty in Nigeria', *NISER Monograph Series No. 13*, Ibadan: NISER.
[52] Ajakaiye, D.O. and V.A. Adeyeye (2001) `The Nature of Poverty in Nigeria'...

UNODC, as guardian of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the Protocols thereto, assist States in their efforts to implement the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (Trafficking in Persons Protocol).[53]

Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons defines Trafficking in Persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the 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 or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a 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 the removal of organs.[54]

On the basis of the definition given in the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, it is evident that trafficking in persons has three constituent elements; Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons; Threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, or giving payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim, for the purpose of exploitation, which includes exploiting the prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices and the removal of organs.[55] To ascertain whether a particular circumstance constitutes trafficking in persons, consider the definition of trafficking in the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the constituent elements of the offense, as defined by relevant domestic legislation.

At this juncture, it is imperative to add issues pertaining to the criminalisation of human trafficking. The definition contained in article 3 of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol is meant to provide consistency and consensus around the world on the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. Article 5 therefore requires that the conduct set out in article 3 be criminalized in domestic legislation.[56] Domestic legislation does not need to follow the language of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol precisely, but should be adapted in accordance with domestic legal systems to give effect to the concepts contained in the Protocol.

[53] UNODC. 2009. International Framework for Action for the Implementation…7-9.

[54] UNODC. 2009. International Framework for Action for the Implementation…11.

[55] Odumosu, O. , A. Ajala , N.N. Twakor , E. Obioha , S. Alonge and A.O. Babatimehin 2003. `Social Perspective of Poverty in Nigeria', in D.O. Ajakaiye and A.S. Olomola (eds) Poverty in Nigeria: A Multi-Dimensional Perspective, Ibadan: New World Press, 13-22.

[56] Odumosu, O. , A. et al. 2003. `Social Perspective of Poverty in Nigeria', in D.O. Ajakaiye and A.S. Olomola (eds) Poverty in Nigeria: A Multi-Dimensional Perspective…

In addition to the criminalization of trafficking, the Trafficking in Persons Protocol requires criminalization also of: Attempts to commit a trafficking offence; Participation as an accomplice in such an offence; and Organizing or directing others to commit trafficking. National legislation should adopt the broad definition of trafficking prescribed in the Protocol. The legislative definition should be dynamic and flexible so as to empower the legislative framework to respond effectively to trafficking which: Occurs both across borders and within a country (not just cross-border); Is for a range of exploitative purposes (not just sexual exploitation); Victimizes children, women and men (Not just women, or adults, but also men and children); and Takes place with or without the involvement of organized crime groups.[57]

Origins of Human Trafficking

The root causes of trafficking are various and often differ from one country to another. Trafficking is a complex phenomenon that is often driven or influenced by social, economic, cultural and other factors. Many of these factors are specific to individual trafficking patterns and to the States in which they occur. There are, however, many factors that tend to be common to trafficking in general or found in a wide range of different regions, patterns or cases. One such factor is that the desire of potential victims to migrate is exploited by offenders to recruit and gain initial control or cooperation, only to be replaced by more coercive measures once the victims have been moved to another State or region of the country, which may not always be the one to which they had intended to migrate.[58] Some of the common factors are local conditions that make populations want to migrate in search of better conditions: poverty, oppression, lack of human rights and lack of social or economic opportunity, dangers from conflict or instability and similar conditions. Political instability, militarism, civil unrest, internal armed conflict and natural disasters may result in an increase in trafficking. The destabilization and displacement of populations increase their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse through trafficking and forced labour.[59] War and civil strife may lead to massive displacements of populations, leaving orphans and street children extremely vulnerable to trafficking.

These factors tend to exert pressures on victims that "push" them into migration and hence into the control of traffickers, but other factors that tend to "pull" potential victims can also be significant. Poverty and wealth are relative concepts which lead to both migration and trafficking patterns in which victims move from conditions of extreme poverty to conditions of less-

[57] Odumosu, O., A. et al. 2003. `Social Perspective of Poverty in Nigeria', in D.O. Ajakaiye and A.S. Olomola (eds) Poverty in Nigeria: A Multi-Dimensional Perspective…

[58] Clark, M.A.2008. 'Vulnerability, Prevention and Human Trafficking – The Need for a new Paradigm,'…

[59] Clark, M.A.2008. 'Vulnerability, Prevention and Human Trafficking – The Need for a new Paradigm,'…

extreme poverty.[60] In that context, the rapid expansion of broadcast and telecommunication media, including the Internet, across the developing world may have increased the desire to migrate to developed countries and, with it, the vulnerability of would-be migrants to traffickers. The practice of entrusting poor children to more affluent friends or relatives may create vulnerability. Some parents sell their children, not just for the money, but also in the hope that their children will escape a situation of chronic poverty and move to a place where they will have a better life and more opportunities.[61]

In some States, social or cultural practices also contribute to trafficking. For example, the devaluation of women and girls in a society makes them disproportionately vulnerable to trafficking. Added to these factors are the issues of porous borders, corrupt government officials, the involvement of international organized criminal groups or networks and limited capacity of or commitment by immigration and law enforcement officers to control borders. Lack of adequate legislation and of political will and commitment to enforce existing legislation or mandates are other factors that facilitate trafficking in persons.

The Nature and Dynamics of Human Trafficking in Nigeria

There are quite a number of causes, immediate and remote that have fuelled the problems that are associated with human trafficking in Nigeria such as widespread poverty, high level of illiteracy, unemployment, cultural factors, sparking the push-pull factor to urban centre. All these factors have one way or the other contributed to the growth of this illegal trade in Nigeria. The commercialisation of human beings in Nigeria is basically as a result of the prevailing conditions of economic decline and poverty. Suffice it to say that bad governance, corruption and mismanagement of oil revenue generated from the' oil boom' of the post-independence period laid the foundations of economic hardship. Ultimately, the economy declined drastically and so also did the living standards of Nigerians. Attempts by the government to revamp the economy through the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP) in 1986 led to the generation of economic margins.[62]

Efforts to address the resultant effect of the economic decline of this period compelled a lot of people to look for alternative means to stem the tide of economic hardship. International Labour Organisation (ILO) World Bank and United Nations Children Emergency Fund

[60] Gozdziak, E. M. and Bump, M. N. 2008. Data and Research on Human Trafficking...

[61] Gozdziak, E. M., and Bump, M. N. 2008. Data and Research on Human Trafficking...

[62] See A. O. Phillips, 'A General Overview of SAP' in A. O. Phillips and E. C. Ndekwu, eds.,*Structural Adjustment Programme in a Developing Economy; The Case of Nigeria*, Ibadan, NISERPublication, (1987), 2-4.

(UNICEF) surveys clearly depict that most trafficked children come from poverty stricken families. Thus, exploiting the poverty and low status of the people was easily achieved as they (children, girls and women) sought to overcome their state of financial and economic hopelessness because they cannot provide for their basic socio-economic needs. As such, this category of people falls victims to local and international syndicates who took advantage of their vulnerability. Also, the factor of illiteracy and the absence of socio-economic infrastructure in the rural areas fuelled human trafficking in Nigeria.

There is an active and growing market in trafficking of human beings to Europe.[63] The full nature and scope of the trade have remained unknown. However, migration and police officials throughout Europe report regularly the steady flow of women and girls entrapped and sold into prostitution. Trafficking in human beings especially the vulnerable group (children, girls and women) is indeed a very lucrative business which has transformed Nigeria into a source, transit and destination country. Like most other Third World countries, victims in Nigeria are trafficked for mainly forced labour, domestic servitude, farm labour, street hawking and sexual exploitation. Within Nigeria, these victims are trafficked from the rural areas to the urban centres and internationally, they are trafficked to some West African countries and some parts of Western Europe.[64]

According to ILO, Africa has the highest percentage of child labourers in the world. Approximately 19 percent of school children and 40 percent of street children have been trafficked for forced labour.[65] Furthermore, UNICEF estimates that about 8 million Nigerian children are employed in exploitative child labour and that 60 percent of children trafficked to Italy and America are from Nigeria.[66] The economic strategies that underline child trafficking is reflected in the fact that these traffickers take advantage of hiding under culturally accepted tradition of sending one's child to live and work with a family in the urban centre for educational and employment purposes.[67] With the increasing demand for domestic help in the urban centres, people began to lure parents and would be victims in the rural areas to give their children with the promise of a better life in the cities. In most cases however, the reverse is always the case.[68]

Obviously lack of education in most parts of the country most especially the rural areas also fuel human trafficking in Nigeria.

[63] See A. O. Phillips, 'A General Overview of SAP' in A. O. Phillips and E. C. Ndekwu, eds.,*Structural Adjustment Programme in a Developing Economy…*

[64] Nigerian girls are trafficked to Western Europe (mainly Italy, France, Spain and Netherlands),theMiddle East and other countries in Africa for the purpose of forced labour, domestic servitude and sexual exploitation.

[65] E.M. Innocent, 'Human Trafficking and its Economic Implications" in *New Nigeria*, (25th February, 2002), 9.

[66] E.M. Innocent, 'Human Trafficking and its Economic Implications" in *New Nigeria…*

[67] E.M. Innocent, 'Human Trafficking and its Economic Implications" in *New Nigeria…*

[68] E.M. Innocent, 'Human Trafficking and its Economic Implications" in *New Nigeria…*

This is evident in the fact that majority of the victims are with little or no education. Hence, they can hardly discern the type of assistance the so-called relative or friend wants to render to them. Other forms of trafficking practiced in Nigeria, includes abduction for sale by traffickers, bonded placement and trafficking as a service whereby the victim is in employment while the trafficker benefits from the wages.[69] These victims have always worked to help sustain themselves in any way possible. However, due to the increasing rate of poverty in the country, quite a large proportion of these victims most especially the children have been driven into exploitation which is dangerous to the physical, social, cognitive and moral development.

The demand for prostitutes at home and abroad is equally another factor responsible for the growth and persistence of human trafficking in the country.[70] The increase in the number of red-light zones in the urban centres in Nigeria is a pointer to the high level of internal human trafficking for sexual exploitation. Hundreds of teenage girls are brought in regularly from rural areas.[71]

The same tactics is also employed in luring unsuspecting parents and teenage girls by strangers or relatives to agree to give away their child (or the child agreeing without the consent of her parents) to going overseas. Over 10 thousand Nigerian prostitutes roam the streets of Europe and many more thousands unidentified females of Nigerian descent are equally in transit to be sold into prostitution in different parts of the developed world.[72] About 80 percent of foreign prostitutes in Italy are mainly Nigerian women who are usually from Akwa Ibom, Edo, Delta and Lagos States with an average age of between 15 and 35 years.[73]

The existence of "weak penile laws" has further aided the growth of human trafficking in Nigeria. Ineffective legal and regulatory environment has created loopholes for the criminal activity to thrive. The criminals involved in this inhuman business have continually devised means of evading the laws. This is mainly due to the fact that punitive actions have not been taken by government to curb their activities. Though government has enacted a law in 2003 called Traffic in Persons Law Enforcement Administrations Act, it culminated in the establishment of an anti-human trafficking agency known as the National Agency for the Prohibition of Human Traffic in Persons and other related matters-NAPTIP.[74] This was a bold attempt

[69] E.M. Innocent, 'Human Trafficking and its Economic Implications" in *New Nigeria*…
[70] B. K. Uzor, 2001. "Taking Women Trafficking Through Constructive Engagements" *Daily Times*, Lagos, October 8, 28.
[71] B. K. Uzor. 2001, "Taking Women Trafficking Through Constructive Engagements"…28.
[72] *Transparency International and Key Centre For Ethics, Justice and Governance*, Australian NationalIntegrity Systems Assessment, Queensland Handbook, 2001, 33-39
[73] International Centre for Economic Growth, *Causes and Effects of Corruption, (*November, 2003), 36.
[74] *World Bank*, "Helping Combat Corruption; The Role of the World Bank", (2004), p. 79.

by the government to curb the negativity of the inhuman trade.

The prevalence of human trafficking in Nigeria can also be linked to state corruption through the activities or non-action of relevant agencies such as immigration, customs and the police who, for one reason or the other have constantly turned a blind eye to the precarious situation. Unfortunately, the enforcement agencies become part of the problem when they liaise with the syndicates. For instance, in 2003, a former police officer and 50 other Nigerians were arrested in Conakry by Guinean authorities.[75] According to the Nigerian ambassador to Guinea, of the 50 detainees, 33 were young women between the ages 18-20, while the remaining 17 were men suspected to be behind the trafficking of these girls.[76]

It was disclosed further that 59 percent of those being held were from Benin, Edo State and that the former police officer among the detainees used to work with the Edo State police command. They had in their possession faked Guinean passports, fake flight tickets and American dollars.[77] In yet another incident in 2002, Nigerian immigration authorities rescued and repatriated about 400 Beninoise children enslaved in quarries in Ogun and Oshun States.[78] In a similar situation, 12 prominent businessmen suspected to have trafficked 13 Nigerian women for the purpose of prostitution abroad were intercepted at Nigeria-Binin (Seme) border. Further investigation reveals that 50 of such women were practicing prostitution in Burkina Faso and Mali, hawking their bodies.[79]

The question to ask at this point is, how do these criminals manage to accomplish their acts? The link between procurers of victims within Nigeria, the external collaborators and government, police, customs, and immigration officials, tend to facilitate the trafficking of these victims. This is also due to the fact that corruption in its endemic nature has eaten deep into all facets of society. There is no discernable commitment to address this inhuman trade, even if there is, corrupt state officials benefiting from it will want the status quo to remain as it is. Corruption is so high such that it impedes the identification and persecution of traffickers and their collaborators. How the syndicates procure travel documents and visas leaves a lot to be desired.

The point is that some collusion exists between the traffickers and certain agencies. This development is counter-productive to the efforts of government at curbing this crime against humanity. There is no doubt, that human trafficking is a very

[75] D. D. Yomi. "Ex-Police Chief, 50 Others Arrested For Human Trafficking", *The Punch,* Lagos, August 2, 2003, 36.
[76] S, T. Anita. 2002. Combating Human Trafficking, Gender and Development, 10(1), March, 60-63.
[77] T. Anita, Combating Human Trafficking, Gender and Development…
[78] The Punch, August 2nd, 2003, 38.
[79] See D. M. Hughes, *Accommodation or Abolition Solutions to the Problems of Sexual Trafficking and Slavery,* National Review Online, 2004, 26-36

lucrative business and may be one of the most difficult to combat. Its compelling effects on government have thus made it necessary for it to remedy the situation before it gets out of hand. If the socio-economic evils of poverty and economic helplessness are to be dealt with, the Nigerian government should endeavour to reduce to the barest minimum its' effect on the nation especially with regards to its officials. The Nigerian government still has a lot to do with a view to putting stern laws in place as deterrence for offenders and also doing more to help the victims of trafficking to re-integrate them back into the society.

The Impact of Human Trafficking on Nigeria

Havingdiscussed the nature and dynamics of human trafficking, it is necessary to look at how it has impacted on the Nigerian society as a whole. The current rate at which this criminal activity is growing in Nigeria has in no small way affected its socio-economic development. Human trafficking as a crime is steadily growing in Nigeria and as such, combating the complex phenomenon requires an intensive and collective effort on the part of the government at all levels. It is worthy to note that due to the prevalence of economic decline and poverty, a large proportion of the Nigerian people have become vulnerable to the ever growing desire for economic opportunities. Invariably, due to the 'push-pull' effect, they unknowingly become potential victims for traffickers which in turn has a disastrous effect on the society too. The victims may become economic migrants, political asylum seekers or individuals looking for a better way of life.[80]

Furthermore, civil conflicts and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS are dramatically increasing the number of orphans in Nigeria. For instance, the steady rise in households headed by children may create fertile grounds for traffickers. About 5 percent of the Nigerian population is orphaned, two hundred and ten thousand (210,000) have lost at least one parent to HIV/AIDS and 78,000 have lost both parents for one reason or the other. [81] The impact of human trafficking on health can hardly be overlooked. Trafficking exposes men, women and children to diseases such as HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted and other infectious diseases, violence, dangerous working conditions, poor nutrition, and drug and alcohol addiction. An ever-increasing number of prostitutes (women and girls) and street children are regularly been exposed to diseases.[82]

There is government and social acknowledgement that human trafficking is a serious issue which is eating deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society. Attempts by the authorities to curb this criminal act did not go beyond the enactment of laws, extended jail sentences and public humiliation. However, such actions were more or less focused primarily on victims

[80] B. L. Corbin, The Shadow Market in Human Beings. An Anti-Corruption Perspective, Paper presented at the Transparency International 10th International Anti-Corruption Conference, Prague, Czech. Republic October 7-11, 2001, 17-26
[81] *Daily Times*, Lagos, 14th June, 2002, p. 29
[82] B. L. Corbin, "The Shadow Market…", 11.

rather than on the traffickers. Only recently did non-governmental organisations (NGO's) begin to galvanize public interest by widespread attention through awareness campaigns. However, there are no reliable statistics to determine if theses campaigns were in anyway effective in reducing to the barest minimum the incidence of trafficking.[83]

Trafficking also deprives hundreds of Nigerians of their lives every year. An ILO survey reveals that one out of every five persons (children) trafficked dies from mishap or disease.[84] Also, many trafficked victims die from complications endured during enslavement, or refusing to submit to force labour or sexual slavery or trying to escape.[85] Forcing children to work at an early age and subjecting them to over 10 or 20 hours of work per day denies children access to education necessary to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy that makes conditions ripe for trafficking. It also denies them a healthy childhood development, both socially and physically. It is impossible for children to acquire skills necessary to compete in the labour market which translates into a labour force at the national level that is not equipped to compete in the global economy, where success is based on skilled workers.[86]

In addition, the use of forced child labour depresses wages for all resources because they do not contribute to their own country. Long-term effects of trafficking translates into a lower number of individuals left to care for an increasing number of elderly as well as social imbalances in the proportion of males to females. This goes a very long way to eroding human capital.[87] The Nigerian government still has a lot to do for the victims especially re-integrating them back into their communities and the potential effect it will have on the Nigerian society at large. It is true that many African governments do not exercise control over their territory but the operation of trafficker's thwarts governments attempt to exert authority and continues to undermine public safety, particularly the security of vulnerable populations.

Combating Trafficking in Nigeria

The Nigerian governments NGO's as well as religious bodies, being aware of the dangers associated with human trafficking have made substantial efforts at curbing the criminal activity. For the government, tackling the issue means engaging corruption directly. Whichever way one decides to look at it, the business of trafficking in humans is a well organized

[83] *Daily Champion*, Lagos, 5th April, 2003, 23
[84] ILO/IPEC. 2002. *Combating Child Trafficking for Labour Exploitation*, Lome, Togo, December 21, 36-49.
[85] ILO/IPEC, *Combating Child Trafficking for Labour Exploitation*…

[86] International Centre for Economic Growth. 1999. Information Brief, *Causes and Effects of Corruption*, Nairobi, 16.
[87] International Centre for Economic Growth, Information Brief, *Causes and Effects of Corruption*, 19.

network which colludes with government officials at all levels and has to a large extent, encouraged corruption. As a result of its corrupting effects on government and institutions, the Nigerian government has drawn inspiration from the Corrupt Practices and Economic Crime Draft Decree of 1990 to put in place a legal framework at tackling those involved in the criminal activity. For this reason, a bill called the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act was passed in 2002.[88] The bill seeks to punish and prescribe punishment for the hydra-headed corrupt practices and related offences, such as aiding and abetting human trafficking in persons.[89]

Another law was enacted by the government called the Traffic in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act No. 24 of 2003. It laid the grounds for the establishment of an anti-human trafficking agency i.e. National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in and Other Related Matters (NAPTIP).[90] The activities of the agency include investigation of issues, allegations and cases of human trafficking, arrest and persecution of officials, and the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims into society. The agency carries out its activities by collaborating with anti-human trafficking units of other security agencies, i.e. the Immigration Services, Custom Services, State Security Services (SSS), the Nigerian Police as well as National Intelligence Agency (NIA).[91] The fight against corruption as embarked upon by the government is a welcome development. However, government should endeavour to empower agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) to carry out its anti-graft duties effectively as this will go a long way to serve as deterrence to those in government and the private sector from colluding with traffickers

Furthermore, NAPTIP in conjunction with government's interest in fighting corruption on all fronts collaborates with International Organisations like UNICEF and NGOs such as the National Council of Women Societies (NCWS) and Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), Idia Renaissance and Real Women Foundation. Their activities went a long way in exposing the dimensions of this inhuman trade. No wonder, WOTCLEF initiated an anti-trafficking bill drafting Committee in June 2002.[92] Thus far, government needs to show strong commitment to combating trafficking by enhancing a comprehensive law that will cover most aspects of human trafficking

[88] The Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act, 2002 was passed into law by the then Chief Olusegun Obasanjo Administration in June 13, 2002.
[89] The Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act, 2002…
[90] NAPTIP Act 2003 Handbook, Federal Republic of Niger, Official Gazette, No.89, Vol. 90, October, 2

[91] Y. Ladejobi, 2006. *NAPTIP and War Against Trafficking*, http;/www.thetidenews.com., August, 11.
[92] The Committee has been instrumental in the drafting of a number of bills that will help harmonize existing laws, prevent trafficking, prosecute traffickers and protect the victims.

specifically by meting out severe punishment to traffickers and granting more powers to law enforcement agencies. Also, it will be necessary for the government to embark on capacity building at all levels for the eradication of human trafficking.

Since its inception, NAPTIP has achieved some degree of success in its activities. The agency has been able to conduct series of surveys on human trafficking not only in Nigeria but also in West Africa and the world at large. The findings of these surveys have played a significant role in mapping out strategies to tackle the problem, enable relevant ministries (Ministry of Labour and Productivity, Ministry of Women and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Justice) and other relevant agencies to make enabling policies that will give impetus to the fight against human trafficking. It is worthy to note that the information derived from the surveys has gone a long way in revealing the extent of this problem. Furthermore, making its findings public has generally increased public awareness on the issue.[93]

This awareness creation has equally recorded some dividends through sensitization campaigns like seminars, conferences, workshops, and has helped to enlighten the public on the negative effect of the inhuman trade. However, there are challenges of ignorance especially with the people in the rural areas, the issue of wide spread poverty and the desire of the people to alleviate their sufferings, the lack of manpower to adequately man the porous borders, have contributed immensely in hampering governments efforts at wagging war against traffickers. The Nigerian government being aware of the menace of trafficking, embarked on a number of economic reforms, introduced economic and social development strategies such as National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), the Universal Basic Education Schemer (UBE), and Poverty Alleviation Programme. As laudable as these programmes are, they are yet to achieve their goals.[94]

Finally, as a regional power, the Nigerian government has used its position to exert pressure on neighboring states and other African countries whose territories serve as source, transit and destination countries. For trafficked persons, aside from trying to tackle the issues of cross-border crimes, the Nigerian government seeks to legislate laws together with its neighbors on anti-human trafficking so as to ratify the "Palermo Protocol", set up, equip and fund the anti-human trafficking agency adequately to enable it carry out the task of combating human trafficking effectively.[95]

[93]*New Nigerian*, (25 September, 2002), 11.

[94]P. Adepelumi, 2015. "The Root Causes of Human Trafficking in Nigeria", High-level Event on the UN Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons 13th UN Crime Congress, African Center for Advocacy & Human Development, Doha, Qatar, 13th of April.

[95]P. Adepelumi, 2015. "The Root Causes of Human Trafficking in Nigeria" …

Challenges of Combating Poverty and Human Trafficking in Nigeria

In the light of the above, trafficking in persons has been identified to be a serious threat to human development and security not only by the Nigerian government, NGO's and pressure groups but also by the international community at large.[96] It is as a result of its negative effect on the society that the government has taken steps to curb this menace through the process of prevention, protection and persecution. It is worthy to note that the prevalent economic condition of the nation has failed to provide for the socio-economic needs of the citizenry, has acted as a harbinger to human trafficking. Lack of adequate legislation and of political will and commitment to enforce existing legislation or mandates are other factors that facilitate trafficking in persons.[97]

The probable causes of human trafficking as discussed above are indeed the same all over the world.[98] Nigeria in particular is a source, transit and destination country. This is true when one considers the level of trafficked women and children who are used as domestic servants, beggars, forced labourers and other forms of exploitation. In its bid to join the global fight, the Nigerian government has embarked on various programmes such as poverty alleviation, basic skills training programmes and the provision of soft loans to cushion the effect of economic tension. A major challenge the Nigerian government is facing is that of the spread of poverty and the desire of the people to alleviate their sufferings. By and large, the attempts made by government to nip this criminal act in the bud have not brought about significant change.[99] Rather, the precarious situation remained unabated and this has increased the threat to Nigeria's security and socioeconomic development.

Conclusion

Populations susceptible to trafficking are increasing in Nigeria, which pushes the supply of potential victims for traffickers and the damaging effects on all segments of Nigerian society. Some of the damaging effects have been irretrievable depletion of human capital, namely, negative effect on labour markets, denial of access to education necessary to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy that creates trafficking conditions, social demographic imbalances and loss of human resources elsewhere, to various national life's sectors. Human trafficking, also, has the potential of undermining public health, such as the exposure to sexually transmitted diseases, poor nutrition, psychological and post-traumatic experiences, addictions and sexual violence. The loss of family support network, makes trafficking easier, weakens ties of family affection and influence, and interrupts flow of cultural values and knowledge, thus

[96] Fitzgibbon, K. 2003. "Modern Day Slavery? The Scope of Trafficking in Persons in Africa" *Africa Security Review*, 12 (1), 21-35.

[97] Adepelumi, P. 2015. "The Root Causes of Human Trafficking in Nigeria" …

[98] Fitzgibbon, K. 2003. "Modern Day Slavery? The Scope of Trafficking in Persons in Africa" …27.

[99] Adepelumi, P. 2015. "The Root Causes of Human Trafficking in Nigeria" …

weakening the core of Nigerian society are also triggered by the spate of human trafficking. Trafficking in persons exacerbates links to other criminal networks, illicit possession of hard drugs, small and light weapons, thereby, generally undermining government authority, perpetuating injustice, social inequality and human rights violations.

Nevertheless, significant experiences have been made in combating the menace of human trafficking while a lot can still be done to alleviate the pace of human trafficking and as well protect the victims. Finally, it is apposite to emphasise that the Nigerian government is yet to fully adhere to the minimum principles for the eradication of trafficking in persons in the country. Thus there is the need for comprehensive implementation of formal procedures for the reintegration of victims. Moreover, the various security should be fully integrated anti-trafficking functions.