

# The State and Challenges of Human Trafficking in Nigeria: Implications for National Peace and Security

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## Abstract

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. Trafficking in person is an organized crime and a modern form of slavery. The two methods used by traffickers to get their victims are deception and through force. Human trafficking has continued to thrive in Nigeria because of shameful connivance among the Nigeria's security agencies, Embassies, airline officials and human traffickers. The study adopts Marcus Felson and Lawrence Cohen's Routine Activity and the Kevin Bales' Modern Slavery theories (1979; 1999). 500 copies of questionnaire were administered to a set of purposively selected respondents with the In-Depth Interview Guide to elicit information on the subject. The study in its findings reveals that human trafficking has continued to thrive in Nigeria because of connivance from the security, immigration, embassy, airline officials and traffickers while the menace has put Nigeria's identity black in the global system. The study therefore recommended that the Nigerian government should swiftly endeavour to address the issue of massive unemployment and poverty in the state as well as create enabling environments for entrepreneurship for the citizenry; also the national laws, international conventions and protocols that have legal potencies to curb trafficking must be implemented or strengthened; and finally, fighting human trafficking in Nigeria requires more efforts to create public awareness of the crime, organize counseling, rehabilitation and re-integration program for the victims.

**Keywords:** deception and forced labour, challenges of human trafficking, modern slavery, Nigeria

## 1. 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 purposes, yet the situation has posed a heinous threat to national, regional and global peace and security in all ramifications (UNICRI, 2004). The human and social implications of this human trafficking under discourse have compelling effects that have far reaching outcomes on humanity and the society. And in actual fact, the physical torture and abuse of victims from the emotional and psychological ordeal witnessed or gone through by victims in the hands of traffickers, and the attendant impacts on such individuals and society are evidently destructive (World Bank Development Report, 2012). Therefore, human trafficking, like illicit trade in arms, weapons and narcotics, cyber threats, financial or money laundering, advanced fee fraud, among others has become a serious concern as a present-day social dilemma worldwide (Poulin, 2004).

However in 2007, during the 200th year anniversary for the abolition of slavery, the United Nations' researchers and other experts established that nearly 800,000 persons are being trafficked across the borders globally yearly (UNHCR, 2000). Human trafficking is one the numerous forms of global crimes bedeviling our society today and it is considered among the most lucrative transnational crimes rivaled only by drug and firearms trafficking (UNHCR, 2000). Globally, it is estimated that the criminal activity produces billions of dollars yearly for sophisticated illegal clusters (Goodey, 2008). The illegal trade in human beings continues to grow at alarming rates hence the need for its attention by the international community (Goodey, 2008). Moreover, the existing data from the United Nations Office on trends of the menace indicates that over 160 countries have been identified to be affected while 127

countries were identified as states of origin, 98 as passage nations and 137 as destination states. However, there is no consensus on the number of trafficked victims annually, various intercontinental institutions and government agencies estimate that between 600,000 and 2 million people are yearly trafficked illegitimately across the globe (Albanese, 2008).

In the works of Bales (1999), human trafficking is viewed as modern-day slavery that transcends international boundaries thus posing cross border insecurity whose approach to containment call for analysis. Meanwhile, human trafficking has posed dangerous threats to the neighbouring nations' human security, hence the need for border control. In the same vein, while making an analysis of traditional security, trafficking problem calls for emphasis on stringent border control and security, migration controls, and international law enforcement cooperation (ECOWAS, 2001). However, the categories of human trafficking include child trafficking, women trafficking and at times men trafficking for purposes of monetary gains driven by sexual exploitation, forced labour and child soldiers as the key push and pull "trafficker versus client" motivations (Cann, Jack and Christopher, 2010). Based on the above, the study is poised to examine the history, trends and patterns of human trafficking in Nigeria; investigate factors aiding human trafficking in the country; examine the efforts made by the Nigerian government to checkmate human trafficking in the country; and finally interrogate the implications for national peace and security.

## 2. Conceptual Clarification

### 2.1 Human Trafficking

The concept of trafficking is defined by The Trafficking in Persons' Law Enforcement and Administration Act (2003), as all and attempted acts involved in the recruitment, transportation within or across nation's borders, purchases, sales, transfer, receipt or harbouring of a person involving the use of deception, coercion or debt bondage for the purpose of placing or holding the persons, whether for or not involuntary servitude (domestic, sexual or reproductive) in forced or bonded labour, or in slavery-like conditions. In the same vein, human trafficking according to Article 3(a) of the United Nations Palermo Protocol is conceptualized as recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, and receipt of persons, by means of threat, use of force, other forms of coercion. It also entails use of abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power in giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation (United Nations Palermo Protocol, 2000).

#### *Prevalence of Forced Labour by Region (per 1,000 inhabitants) in Year 2012*

Region	Estimates
Central and South Eastern Europe (Non-EU) and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	4.2
Africa	4.0
Middle East	3.4
Asia and the Pacific	3.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	3.1
Developed Economies and European Union	1.5

Source: ILO, 2012

Adepelumi (2015) argues that human trafficking is a transnational organized crime that impacts not only on the individual victims but the entire society. The menace is seen to have been undermining the national peace and security. However, there are two major aspects of human trafficking as a transnational organized crime. The first of this kind remains the human smuggling that includes importation of people into a state through evasion of immigration laws. This also involves bringing in illegal foreign people or aliens, unlawful transportation and illegally harbouring aliens already in a country. Second is the human trafficking aspect which entails luring of victims from their homes for sex or labour exploitation (Ogwu, 2002). The victims of lure are given false promises of getting well-paid jobs at the initial stages of luring process and thereafter coerced them into prostitution, domestic servitude, farm or factory labour or other types of forced labour. In both terms of human trafficking, the traffickers confiscate travel documents of the victims and warn them of dire consequences to them should they attempt to escape hence the categorization of the process as a transnational organized crime (Newton, 2008)

Also, UNESCO (2006) on human trafficking defined it to be a process which involves the exploitation of a vulnerable person through recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception and abuse of power. Buttressing the UN's definition, Newton (2008) observes that human trafficking has been employed to address an avalanche of crimes and human rights abuses in connection with the recruitment, movement and selling of people into exploitative conditions (Newton, 2008).

## 2.2 National Security

Concept of security as understood by all is the most important human need and its absence renders people ineffective in every sphere of life. However, Abraham Maslow in one of his classical works on human needs categorized security as second and next to physiological needs as indicated in the hierarchy of human needs (Abiodun, Oloyede, Opatoki and Adeyemo, 2019). For easy comprehension of the concept, that is the reason Wilson (2014) argues that national security encompasses some components which include; *political security* (protecting the sovereignty of the government and political system and the safety of society from unlawful internal threats and external pressures); *economic security* involves the (degree to which the government and the people are free to control their economic and financial decisions); *energy and natural resources security* (the degree to which a nation or people have access to such energy resources as oil, gas, water, and minerals); *homeland security* (includes airport and port security, border security, transportation security, immigration enforcement, and other related matters).

Also the remaining components of national security as stated by Wilson (2014) include; *cyber security* (protection of the government's and the peoples' computer and data processing infrastructure and operating systems from harmful interference, whether from outside or inside the state); *human security* (peoples' safety from hunger, disease, and repression, and harmful disruptions of daily life); and lastly *environmental security* as an of (responding to

conflicts caused by environmental problems such as water shortages, energy disruptions, or severe climate changes respectively). Customarily, security of lives and property remains an exclusive preserve of the state but the dynamics of the world today has clearly revealed that security is the responsibility of all. Security is generally all about an issue of safety, protection and preservation of core values and absence of threats to the existing values in our society. Therefore, security is highly crucial to the survival of any nation-state (Abolurin, 2012).

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

This study adopted an eclectic approach using the Routine Activity Theory and as well the Modern Slavery Theory to explain the reasons why the problems of human trafficking continue to occur in our society despite the measures put in place for its containment and also meant to deter indulgence.

#### *3.1 Routine Activity Theory*

Routine Activity theory is actually an offshoot of Crime Opportunity Theory which wholly focuses its tentacles on situations of crime in the society. This particular theory was first espoused by the great scholars: Marcus Felson and Lawrence E. Cohen (1979) who predicated their submissions on the belief that crime is relatively pushed by social causes such as poverty, inequality and unemployment (Goff, 2000). The theory therefore postulates that organization of routine activities in society creates opportunities for criminal activities; and this simply means that the daily routine activities of individuals or group of people and their socialization which include but not limited to where they work, what they do and where they live, strongly influence criminal activities in the society. According to the theorists; Felson and Cohen (1979), the reason for the upsurge increase is that the propensity of contemporary society offers more opportunities for crime to take place in all ramifications (Jasinki and Navarro, 2012).

The theory further posits that routine activities from opportunities over time and space amongst people can make crime easy and how low risk or difficult to manage or totally eliminate (Felson and Clarke, 1994). Although routine activity theory focuses on range of factors that intersect in time and space to produce criminal opportunities and in turn criminal happenings. This particular theory studies crime as an event that closely relates crime to its environment and emphasizes its ecological process, thereby diverting academic attention away from mere offenders. The theory does not vividly explain reason some people commit crime and reason others do not. It however proceeds to suggest that crime can increase as well decline without any change in the number of those involved in crime (Jasinki and Navarro, 2012). The theory identifies socio-economic cum political problems, availability of market, enabling environment and prevalence of bias in the justice system in a state as factors motivating the menace among individuals or group of people.

#### *3.2 Modern Slavery Theory*

The theory was propounded by Kelvin Bales (1999) and it however postulates varieties of theoretical submissions that relate to the trafficking process and as well provides significant

accounts in the dynamics of sending and receiving states of human trafficking. The theory therefore posits that even though every case of human trafficking is diverse and that discrepancy exists in the factors that determine human trafficking in each country, but all cases of trafficking still share related aspects. Corruption in government, economic woes, unemployment, and demographic profile cut across almost all states as some of the factors aggravating the situation (Bales, 1999). Since the study seeks to interrogate the root causes of human trafficking, nature and characteristics as well as existing prevention strategies and management measures put in place, use of the routine activity theory and the modern day slavery theory are found to be highly relevant in illustrating the existing opportunity structures that facilitate the illicit trade.

#### **4. Methodology**

The study employed both the qualitative and descriptive research designs for the social inquiry on the phenomenon under study. A qualitative research design is mainly connected to establishing responses or answers to the reasons and forms of the phenomenon in question. However, qualitative research design is actually meant to gain a richly detailed comprehension of a particular topic, phenomenon or issue based on first-hand experience (DSJ Research, 2020). This is usually attained by having a relatively small but focused sample base as gathering the data can usually be time-consuming. It is also connected to depth as opposed to quantity of findings (DSJ Research, 2020). In the same vein, descriptive research design is intended to accurately and systematically explain or describe a situation, population or phenomenon and it is deployed to investigate one or more variables (Shona, 2019). Data for the study were sourced from both the primary (in-depth interview guide and administration of questionnaire) and secondary sources.

##### *4.1 Study Context: Human Trafficking in Nigeria*

The study was conducted to examine the history, trends and patterns or forms the human trafficking has taken in Nigeria; and to investigate factors aiding human trafficking in the country; efforts made by the Nigerian government to checkmate human trafficking in the country; and finally interrogate the implications of the phenomenon for national peace and security. These investigations are pursuant to the fact that human and social implications of this phenomenon under discourse have undeniable effects that have far reaching implications on humanity and the society. The study was carefully carried out of the six (6) geo-political regions that made up Nigeria and they included; South-South, South-East, South-West, North-Central, North-West, and North-East respectively.

##### *4.2 Data Collection and Materials*

The study's data were collected through the structural questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were distributed to a small sample of participants while interviews were held with key informants in the relevant agencies on human trafficking. The final version of the questionnaires was joined together with the statement that clearly explains the purpose of the research, and letters of permission to administer them. The respondents accepted from the researchers an appointment to fill the distributed copies of questionnaire. And during the

research, the hired research assistants together with some members of staff of the various agencies, assisted by collecting the copies of questionnaires and, in turn handing them to the targeted respondents.

Five hundred questionnaires were filled and returned to us out of 550 questionnaires distributed. The study population included relevant officials of organizations in Nigeria such as: officers of the Nigeria Police, Nigeria Immigrations Service, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) under the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence, the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), National Boundary Commission (NBC) and other anti-human trafficking organizations at state level in Nigeria. The selected respondents were considered to be versed, knowledgeable and also matured enough to discuss the social phenomenon under investigation. Data were also collected from the secondary sources which included relevant publications on human trafficking; journals, magazines, internet, reports of human trafficking, among others while the findings were descriptively and content analyzed. In the same vein, socio-demographic data were presented below and they served as prime and useful tools to explain and analyse the influencing factors on social issues being discussed.

## 5. Findings and Discussion

### 5.1 Respondents' Socio-Demographic Information

#### *Gender and Age*

<b>Age of Respondents</b>	<b>Frequency (Male)</b>	<b>Frequency (Female)</b>	<b>Total Frequency</b>	<b>Age in %</b>
Below 18	3	23	26	5.2
18-25	45	48	93	18.6
26-33	62	72	134	26.8
34-41	35	64	99	19.8
42-49	16	29	45	9
50-57	15	28	43	9.6
58-65	7	24	31	7.2
66 & above	5	14	19	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100 %</b>

*Source:* Field Survey, 2019

*Marital Status*

<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Freq uency</b>	<b>Responses in (%)</b>
Married	300	60
Single	185	37
Widowed/Divorced	15	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2019

*Level of Education*

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Freq uency</b>	<b>Responses in (%)</b>
Secondary Education	169	33.8
Middle level	131	26.2
University Education	108	21.6
Primary Education	57	11.4
No formal Education	35	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2019

*Nationality*

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Frequ ency</b>	<b>Responses in (%)</b>
Nigerian	388	77.6
Non-Nigerian	112	22.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2019



*Religion*

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Response in (%)</b>
Christianity	276	55.2
Islam	204	40.8
Traditional	20	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2019

*Occupation*

<b>Sectors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Response in (%)</b>
Casual public sector	170	34
Permanent public sector	135	27
Casual private sector	140	28
Permanent private sector	65	13
Other forms	10	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2019

*Geo-political Regions and Selected States*

<b>Geopolitical Zone (location /state)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Response in (%)</b>
South-West	140	28
South-South	50	10
South-East	85	17
North-Central	65	13
North-West	105	21
North-East	55	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2019

### *5.2 Overview of the History of Human Trafficking in Nigeria*

Trafficking in Nigerian women to Europe most especially Italy began to take place in the 1980s pursuant to the demand for low-skilled labor both in agriculture, mining, construction and other services. The menace of human trafficking crops up within the Nigerian borders, in neighboring states, and in several European borders owing to the fact that they are able to convey women and children within a syndicate network in order to expand their markets. That is the reason Kara (2009) submits that Nigerian syndicates have already shipped a very large number of women into the sex markets in Italy, Netherlands and Spain. Studies and records have also shown that Italy has the largest population of Nigerians victims of human trafficking as many as over 10,000 Nigerian prostitutes in have found themselves in the country (Kara, 2009).

In all indications, Nigeria remains an originating centre, transit and as well the destination state for human trafficking where women and children are usually subjected to forced labour and forced prostitution (Mashil, 2005 and Dodo, 2012). The dynamics of human trafficking in the country are geographical in nature and involve internal and cross-border trafficking. Therefore, the cross-border aspect of human trafficking in Nigeria is revealed by syndicates that procure travel documents, transportation resources and accommodation for the victims that are much desperate to leave the country in search of greener pastures in American and European states, and others (IOM, 2002). These vulnerable young women or girls easily fall victims for the traffickers as the urge to find a gainful employment abroad, earning huge incomes following the irresistible nature of the Nigerian Naira devaluation and the abject poverty in the land. It is only on arrival at their destination that the women and girls are confronted with the harsh realities that they have been deceived, and are actually lured or coerced into commercial sex (Musikilu, 2008).

In the last three decades, trafficked Nigerian victims are usually recruited from rural areas and mostly of them, women and girls are used for various sexual exploitations, domestic servitude, and the boys among them are boys for forced labor in domestic servitude, and alms begging (Ajagun, 2012). These women, young girls and children are transported or conveyed from Nigerian societies to other West and Central African states, and most especially at times, it could be: Togo, the Gambia, Cameroon, Ghana, Chad, Benin, Niger, Burkina Faso, among others. Also, victims from West African states like Ghana, Benin, and Togo where there is easy entry protocol as stipulated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) – are usually forced to work when conveyed to Nigeria while others even are subjected to harmful jobs like in mining (NAPTIP, 2009). Meanwhile, various Nigerian women and young ladies are conveyed to the various countries in Europe, most especially Italy and Russia, the Middle East and North Africa, for forced prostitution and domestic exploitations (Field Survey, 2019).

### *5.3 The Prevalent Trends and Patterns of Human Trafficking in Nigeria*

The menace of human trafficking has been confirmed to be a modern form of slavery, an illegal trade and a social problem in all ramifications. Human trafficking is described to be a social problem as it affects the individuals and different categories of people (Okeshola,

2007). This remains a social menace because of its pattern, magnitude, and the trend has been re-occurring over the years. Moreover, this illicit business has unleashed untold hardship on numerous victims that are mostly women and children (Bales, 1999). However for most crimes to be successful, there must be a “give and a take” agreement - there must be people who would facilitate the movement and transportation of victims to a defined destination and the other group who encourage the crime who serve as the receivers (Bales, 1999).

Human trafficking as an organized crime and numerous people are involved; it is a chain of people involved in the crime performing specific responsibilities. In the organized crime, there are recruiters and these people would go to rural areas to deceive young boys and girls through their parents. To the parents, they give the impression of assisting their relations for a gainful employment and education, without knowing of what could happen to their children (Bales, 1999). These “recruiters” at times may include; in-laws, personal driver, sisters, brothers, business men and women, law enforcement officers, among others. By and large, the would-be victims proceed from one stage to another until they finally arrive at their final destinations where the victims are handed over to the “clients” - those who need their services. In the same vein, it should be borne in mind that two weapons are usually employed by these traffickers to capture their victims and strategies include: deception and force. It is also affirmed that those who indulge in trafficking persons usually emerge from family or relations, friends, neighbors and familiar people to the captured victims (Adepelumi, 2015).

The menace of human trafficking around the globe has posed a heinous violation of human rights and as well manifested a lot of social injustices in all ramifications. Recently, it was estimated that 25 million people globally have fallen victims of forced labour in the process (ILO, 2017). The victims are exploited on daily basis either in economic activities such as domestic shores, agricultural engagements, construction and manufacturing, and also in the commercial sex industry. Meanwhile, a large number of victims are trafficked in person across borders while over 42% are victimized within their own countries. Also among the victims, 28% are young ones while 71% are grown-up females (UNODC, 2016). Trafficking becomes more worsened by conflicts, natural disasters, socio-economic problems, among others, thereby pushing people to seek greener pastures or migrate to other locations for survival (Dodo, 2012). In addition, there are other macro-level reasons or factors associated with human trafficking which include: abject poverty, wars, economic injustice, globalized of the consumer markets, global sex tourism, among others while the micro-level risk factors entail: child abuse and neglect, family breakdown, poor family relations, mental illness, child homelessness, among others (Dodo, 2012).

Most especially in the South-South and South-Eastern regions of Nigeria, young girls and women are easily lured or deceived into the act. This is evident in some states of; Delta, Edo, Bayelsa, Anambra, Enugu, Imo and Cross-Rivers in Nigeria – women and young girls get deceived with monetary gifts, food items by the “dealers” in trafficking in persons (Field Survey, 2019). As soon as the parents of the would-be victims are provided with all the gift items, they easily give in by allowing their children to follow them to the “promised lands”. Therefore in this kind of organized crime, there exist the: boss, supervisor, financier, sponsor, and facilitators, accomplices or collaborators, aider and abettor, and victims that are as well

trafficked and subjected to exploitation (Field Ajagun, 2012).

The menace has continued to thrive in Nigeria owing to the fact that there is connivance among security personnel, immigration officers, airline officials and traffickers. These officials have made it their usual tradition to be taking bribes from the traffickers in exchange for facilitating smooth passage of trafficked victims across the borders. Also, the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) in its report 2015, reveals that hundreds of young girls have been trafficked, raped, sold as unpaid domestic workers in the IDP camps in Borno, Adamawa and Gombe States in northern part of the country (Field Survey, 2019).

#### *5.4 The Factors Aiding Human Trafficking Activities in Nigeria*

Sequel to its findings (2019), the study has carefully exhumed the various factors or reasons aiding and abetting the continual resurgence of human trafficking in Nigeria and they are analyzed as follows:

- a. In the first instance, victims are made to shift a base from rural areas to urban areas and this is widely known as *rural-urban trafficking*. Victims in this class are usually trafficked for farming purpose and also there could be *rural-rural trafficking* a situation where traffickers convey victims from one village or rural area to another. There is also urban-urban trafficking, a situation where traffickers move their victims from one urban area to another.
- b. Secondly, there exists the usual tradition of entrusting poor children to more comfortable relatives and this may generate exposure to human trafficking. This is very common in a situation whereby some parents would sell their own children, and it is not just for the monetary gains, but with thought or belief that their children would find their ways out of abject chronic poverty ravaging the land and move to a place where they would live a better life with more prospects.
- c. Also in Nigeria, these women and young girls usually fall victims of being trafficked from their original place of abode to another location or across the national borders having been lured, tricked or deceived that they would be gainfully employed and live an accomplished life. But at the end of the day, they actually get trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation and domestic servitude in foreign lands.
- d. Another striking factor responsible for human trafficking in Nigeria is abject poverty that has ravaged the land. Studies have revealed that over 10 million Nigerian girls and boys are being trafficked across the country's borders due to poverty. The victims are trafficked to different destinations which include; African states of Benin Republic, Mali, among others while the states in the Europe include; United Kingdom,

Spain, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany and the United Kingdom respectively.

- e. In recent time, the World Bank report indicated that over 1.8 billion people live in the various nations prone to or engulfed in violent conflict are have been trafficked abroad. So it is established that the Boko Haram, Fulani-herdsmen crisis and armed banditry remain the push factors for trafficking in persons and migration; this is evident in a situation where young male children are being trafficked and used as soldiers and militias and young girls as sex toys by the insurgents. The kidnapped young girls are sold off into slavery and forceful marriage.
- f. In addition, there is a weak legal system in place in the country; ninety percent (90%) of Nigerian borders are porous, government officials are absolutely corrupt in all ramifications, while a large number of Nigerian youths also belong to the various international organized criminal syndicates or networks while the limited capacity or commitment by immigration and law enforcement officers to control borders remain contributory factors to the menace.
- g. There also  
exists lack or absence of adequate legislation and of political will on the part of Nigerian government to enforce existing legislation or mandates, Acts, and penalties for trafficking offenders that could prohibit all forms of human trafficking (Field Survey, 2019).

### *5.5 Implications of Human Trafficking on National Peace and Security*

Security remains a major human need in a state and it is as well imperative to the extent that when absent, it renders people ineffective in spheres of life (Nwannenaya and Abiodun, 2017). Abraham Maslow in his classical work on human needs ranked safety/security as second (next to physiological needs) in the hierarchy of human needs (Abolurin, 2012). Based on this, the research findings indicated numerous implications of trafficking in persons on national peace and security:

It has become a commonplace in the society that human trafficking is fuelling terrorism (Boko Haram) in Northern Nigeria by creating a state of misery and frustration that pushes people to join Boko Haram. The Sects kidnap and abduct people, hypnotize and entice them with pecuniary gifts to take up arms against the state. The major problem in this remains the fact that, with massive poverty, illiteracy and unemployment in Nigerian state, the menace of Boko Haram and other similar security threats would be very difficult to be eliminated (Abiodun, 2016). High illiteracy in Northern Nigeria is also both a product and driver of poverty in the North. However, the greater the level of poverty makes it easier for the

traffickers to entice and get their victims; that is major reason it was entirely agreed upon that, with the acclaimed fact that a man is poor and remains unemployed in a society, it is usually a simple task making him easily brainwashed to join the killer squads. The brainwashing given to them provides a quasi-equivalent of employment and thus feels engaged in acting out what they have been brainwashed about. This is the kind of situation we find with the phenomenon in Nigeria (Abiodun, 2016).

Another effect of human trafficking in the state is child destitution and political thuggery. This pushes children to develop an anti-social behavior that acts as a psychological protection against their hostile environments. Begging seems to have become a profession most especially in the Northern Nigeria as the streets are filled up with beggars. The deported victims of human trafficking arrive back in the country, therefore turned beggars and engage in all sorts of thuggery in order to make both ends meet. The prevalence of “corporate begging” in Nigeria in whatever form is indisputably prompted by chronic and excruciating poverty which is worsened by dire consequences of human trafficking victims were involved (NAPTIP, 2009).

Moreover, it has been observed that the victims of human trafficking are not usually permitted to leave when they arrive at their states of destinations. The trafficked victims are always held against their will through all sorts of coercive actions and they harshly made or forced to work or provide services to the traffickers that are holding them - these services may be in the varieties of; forced labor or commercialized sexual engagement. In addition, the arrangement may be prearranged in such a way that the would-be victims would not be suspicious of, but made to sign a work contract which the traffickers themselves know it is with low or even without payment (Ajagun, 2012).

In addition, the activities of human traffickers are all seen as infringements on human rights of persons as clearly spelt out in the Federal Republic of Nigeria’s Constitution, 1999, 4 (30) that indicates: every Nigerian has the right to life. But this right has been obviously violated by the traffickers through the use of physical coercion which at times leads to death of their victims; deprives persons rights to personal liberty through the forced labor and rights to freedom of movement (Field Survey, 2019).

Trafficking victims from Nigeria are exposed to psychological problems such as: social alienation both in home and host countries, stigmatization, social exclusion, and intolerance to make reintegration into their local communities difficult (Field Survey, 2019). This is an aberration of the fact that every Nigerian, irrespective of his ethnic affiliation must have the rights to freedom of thought and conscience, rights to own property, rights to freedom of movements, rights to freedom of expression, rights to private and family life but trafficked victims lose all these rights in the hands of their traffickers (Field Survey, 2019).

Sex trafficking is known to be a form of violence perpetrated on girls or women and usually takes place in different settings with diverse actors. This heinous act is also an aspect of human trafficking that is becoming a plague and possibly the top human rights violation worldwide. This has caused a lot of concerns globally, most especially in Nigeria where it has become highly rampant - this is like the ancient dehumanizing slave trade (Field Survey,

2019).

Further, victims of human trafficking are usually deceived to accompany traffickers on the promise of getting them rewarding opportunities that would never be attainable in the country. People fall victims as a result of the deceits owing to the fact that there are increasing inflationary trends in Nigeria, massive unemployment, and abject poverty rate in which nearly all Nigerians at present, have found themselves in (Field Survey, 2019). It is disheartening to know that once these women (victims) reached their destinations, the women discover that they have been deceived and learn the true nature of work that they will be expected to do (Field Survey, 2019).

Human trafficking gives room for child labour which is hazardous to the physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development of children in Nigeria can interfere with their education. These are infringements to human rights of the Nigerian children who are expected to acquire free and compulsory primary education at the expense of various federal and state governments in Nigeria (Field Survey, 2019). This incident of child slavery involves the sale of persons under the age of 18 for monetary gains by the traffickers in the country; and the ugly situation conspicuously violates the Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 constitution, where it is stated that every Nigerian child has the rights to life; freedom and access to education respectively (FGN Constitution, 1999).

It breeds bonded labour or debt bondage, is the least known. It is the least known form of labour trafficking today, and yet it is the most widely used methods of enslaving people. Also, victims of human trafficking automatically become exchanged or substituted for hard labour as a means of repayment for a loan taken by the traffickers (Field Survey, 2019).

Year after year, women, men and children around the world fall preys to human traffickers whether for sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic work or other purposes, yet trafficking in persons as a crime has still not captured the attention of the public or made it to be top political discourse in Sub-Saharan Africa and more specifically in Nigeria (Ofuoku, 2010). The human and social consequences of trafficking are compelling and the resultant effects have far reaching implications. And from the physical abuse and torture of victims to the psychological and emotional trauma through to the economic and political implications of unabated crime, the impact on individuals and society is clearly destructive and unacceptable (Ogwu, 2002).

Trafficking in persons remains a major transnational threat to the national, regional, and global systems despite concerted efforts to curtail it. It is the world's fastest growing global crime with thousands of aliens smuggles or trafficked in various parts of the universe. The crime ranks the second largest source of income for organized crime generating roughly \$150.2 billion annually (Field Survey, 2019). Globally, the number of slaves currently stands at over 30 million with 80% being women and girls. In Nigeria, the number of illegal aliens finding their ways into the country major towns is on the increase with some on transit to other African countries and other parts of the world while others are determined to seek illegal settlement in Nigeria through attainment of illegal registration and work permits (Field Survey, 2019).

The institutions mandated to fight the menace include Nigeria Immigrations Service, Nigerian Police, Nigeria Airports Authority, the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and others take advantage of the desperation of aliens to aid their smuggling or trafficking. At the same time, sophisticated trafficking cartels collude with respective Government officials, employees of private airlines and organizations and the public transport sector alongside private employment organizations to undermine the fight against the trafficking in persons by increasingly developing new modus operandi to counter the insecurity both at the entry and exit points in the country (NAPTIP, 2009).

Moreover, impacts of the menace include influx of refugees/aliens, increased terror activities, circulation of counterfeit products, proliferation of small arms and light weapons and strain on the country's resources. The menace has dented the country's image in the international community (Field Survey, 2019).

### *5.6 Efforts Made by the Nigerian Government to Curtail Human Trafficking Activities in the Country*

Based on the research findings as conducted in (2019), the various efforts of government in combating the menace of human trafficking in Nigeria and its environs are as follows:

It is of good noting that Nigeria recently became one of the signatory states in the international community that ratified the Trafficking Protocol which came into force on 25 December, 2003 under the auspices of the United Nations at Palermo, Italy (Field Survey, 2019). This actual Protocol is meant to prevent, suppress and punish those found culpable in human trafficking.

Human trafficking in Nigeria is being combated through the various programs that are set up by different organizations such as; the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons' Public Enlightenment Unit partnering with Devatop Centre for African Development, and as well the Italian government to reduce and checkmate increased rates of trafficking in persons in the country.(Field Survey, 2019).

Nigeria continued its efforts to protect trafficking victims rightly from year 2009. The Nigerian and some state governments have continued to empower the security agencies; Nigeria Police, Nigeria Customs Service, Nigeria Immigration Service, and the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) officials; and these agencies have systematically employed numerous procedures to identify the victims (young women or girls) suspected to be traveling with non-family members. Notable on the measures is that the data provided by the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) recently reflected that 1,109 victims were identified and provided with supports at one of its shelters in the country (Field Survey, 2019). Up till present moment, over 624 cases of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation and 328 for labour exploitation have been identified and confirmed and different government agencies have referred trafficking victims to the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) for support and other protective aids. The Nigeria Immigration Service has referred 465; Nigeria Police referred 277; Social Services Agency also referred 192; and of the State Security Service respectively (Field



Survey, 2019).

On arrival, Shelter staff assessed the needs of victims and provided food, clothing, shelter, recreational activities, and instruction on various skills, including vocational training; psychological counseling was provided to only the most severe cases. While at the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons' shelters, 70 victims received vocational training assistance provided through government funding. In the same vein, the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) estimated the government's 2009 spending on its shelter facilities from 1999 to date to be \$666,000 (NAPTIP, 2009). The 2003 Trafficking in Persons Law Enforcement and Administration Act has also provided for ranges of treatment, protection, and non-discriminatory practices for victims. In addition, the law provided that no trafficking victim could be detained for any offense committed as a result of being trafficked (Field Survey, 2019).

Up to the present moment, both the federal and state governments have been taking steps to relocate victims' quarters to be a considerable distance from detention areas for trafficking offenders, thereby greatly reducing the possibility of traffickers from exerting undue influence over the victims. Victims were allowed to stay in government shelters for six weeks (Kara, 2009). Government officials have stepped up actions by encouraging the victims to continue to assist with the necessary information to aid investigation and prosecution of traffickers, and at several instances, victims have been made to serve as witnesses in all of the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons' successful cases (Field Survey, 2019).

Furthermore and from the research findings (2019), it was revealed that the victims of human trafficking could adequately seek redress through civil suits against traffickers, or claim funds from a Victims' Trust Fund set up in the year 2009 through in which the assets confiscated from traffickers are transferred to victims. The Trust Fund Committee is chaired by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation and the Committee meets four times annually. The government has been providing a limited legal alternative to the removal of foreign victims to nations where they face hardship.

The National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) has also been using strategic tools such as conferences, workshops and mass media campaigns, promotes awareness within the population (Field Survey, 2019). The Agency on daily basis also conducts research activities on the root causes, trends and patterns of human trafficking in Nigeria. The Organization has also been involved in activities with the aim to rehabilitate and reintegrate victims into the society. And in year 2013, a National Referral Mechanism for Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria was put in place, providing formal guidelines for law enforcement, immigration officials, and service providers to improve protection and assistance to trafficking victims (Field Survey, 2019).

The National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) is involved in the investigation of human trafficking cases, monitors cross-border movements and prosecutes trafficking cases in law courts. Nigeria was the first country in Africa to record successful anti-trafficking prosecutions, with 258 convictions between December 2004 and December

2014 (Field Survey, 2019). Also in year 2014, confirmations were made by the agency on 603 cases of human trafficking and other related matters. The NAPTIP actually carried out 509 trafficking investigations, executed 56 prosecutions, and secured 30 convictions of offenders or culprits. In the first quarter of the year 2015, the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) received a total of 130 cases of human trafficking and other related matters (Field Survey, 2019).

Lastly, the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) has also been working in partnership with other regional and international agencies to ensure significant elimination and prevention of the traffic in person in Nigeria and other neighboring countries (Field Survey, 2019).

## **6. A Brief Glance at the Global Legal Instruments in Controlling Human Trafficking**

The menace of human trafficking has been widely adjudged as crime against established laws and regulations in a state; this is true in the sense that it contravenes both natural and sacred laws. However and due to the borderless nature of the crime, thereby suppressing the existing laws in a state and international community, a number of protocols, laws, treaties, conventions and protocols have been put in place to deal decisively with and bring the culprits to justice (Jasinki and Navarro, 2012). And it remains a real fact that some of these legal instruments may not specifically address trafficking, therefore, it is expedient to observe that the legal instruments indicated that trafficking in persons has always been viewed not quite dissimilar from slavery, being primarily for forced labor and sexual exploitation (Goliath, 2008).

Meanwhile at the global arena, there exist a number of laws, protocols, treaties, and conventions that Nigeria remains a signatory to, and major among these are: the United Nations Convention on the Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979); the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); the International Labor Organization Convention on Forced Labor and Minimum Wage (1999); the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, that is made to address the Sales of a Child, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2002); and the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (2000). Others include the African Charter on Human Rights (1980); the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (1981); Africa Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), and the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) submission and that of the Action against Trafficking in Persons (2001) respectively. At the national level, the 1999 constitution provides for the respect and dignity of human persons. It provides in section 34(1) that no person shall be subjected to torture, in human or degrading treatment or held in slavery or required to perform all kinds of compulsory labour (Ajagun, 2012; Adepelumi, 2015).

## **7. Highlights of the Anti-Human Trafficking Organizations in Nigeria**

Based on the research findings (2019), the various anti-human trafficking organizations in the war against the menace in Nigeria include:

- a. Devatop Centre for Africa Development (DCAD): this is a non-profit organization focusing on combating human trafficking, gender-based violence, child abuse; and providing educational supports to vulnerable children. It is a youth-led organization and has been at the forefront of combating the menace and other related matters for over a decade now (Field Survey, 2019).
- b. Women Trafficking and Child Labor Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF): this is a non-profit organization that has taken strong position against women trafficking and child labor in the country. It is also on record that the body, WOTCLEF advocated for the establishment of NAPTIP in Nigeria (Field Survey, 2019).
- c. There also exists a Pathfinders Justice Initiative, a leading NGO warring against human trafficking in Nigeria and it seeks to eradicate sex trafficking and the sexual exploitation of women and girls in Nigeria. The Organization was founded by Evon Benson-Idahosa, a legal practitioner and an expert on sex trafficking and a consultant to the UK Home Office, and also the UN Rapporteur on Human Trafficking to Nigeria's National Assembly (Field Survey, 2019).
- d. We also have the Edo State Taskforce against Human Trafficking (ETAHT) that was put up on August 15, 2017, by the Executive Governor of Edo State, Mr. Godwin Obaseki as an active response to the high rate of human trafficking and irregular migration in the State. The institution was put in place to totally eradicate the menace of human trafficking in Edo State and Nigeria at large. The Body is currently being chaired by the Attorney General of the State and Commissioner for Justice in the person of Prof. Yinka Omorogbe (Field Survey, 2019).
- e. There are other bodies fighting against the menace of trafficking in person in the country: Women's Consortium of Nigeria; and Coalition against Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children (Field Survey, 2019).
- f. Lastly, there is another one known as the Viable Knowledge Masters (VKM), this one is a research and consulting firm which has extensively worked on identification and detection of baby factories most especially in South-East, Nigeria together with the trafficking in infants and young women taking place in the region (Field Survey, 2019).

## **8. Limitations to the Study**

The nature of this study and the study area posed a great constraint to it on account of sensitivity of the data that were sought and as well its perceived security effects. The point that the study involved a process that was still ongoing, the means and process of gathering data posed a serious challenge. In addition, the need to interview the security agencies that had taken part in dealing with the criminals was seen to have affected the researchers' security while the in-depth interviewees both within the security agencies and government institutions proved a bit difficult due to the nature of their professions. There was also issue

of time constraint that impacted negatively on the process respectively.

## 9. Conclusion

As indicated that the Government has made a significant progress in arresting the menace, more can still be achieved to prevent human trafficking and as well protect the victims. From the study, it is equally observed that the Nigerian government is yet to fully adhere to the minimum principles for the eradication of trafficking in persons in the country. There is the need for hasty implementation of formal procedures for the return and re-integration of victims back to the society and to also ensure adequate care for them upon their return to Nigeria; taking proactive measures to investigate and prosecute government officials found culpable in trafficking-related offenses. The various security agencies and government institutions (Nigerian Police Force, Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Customs Service, and the Ministries of Labour and that of Interior) should be fully integrated anti-trafficking functions. It is of good noting that the factors aiding the menace such as: poverty, limited educational opportunity, limited access to media, high rates of orphans in the country, prevalence of child labour and fostering, and discrimination against women should be adequately addressed by both federal and state governments. The research finally submits that sustainable legislations and policies should be enacted while adequate security architecture must be put in place to checkmate the menace.

## 10. Recommendations

Based on the research findings, it is therefore, recommended that the Nigeria government should put the following actions in place:

- i. governments both at the federal and state levels should first of all address the problems of poverty and massive unemployment in Nigeria;
- ii. legislations on human trafficking in the country should be strict and severe to offenders;
- iii. there is need for the Nigerian government to create enabling environments for entrepreneurship for the citizenry;
- iv. there is dire need for increased security surveillance at the Nigerian borders and enforcement of existing laws on human trafficking;
- v. the clamour for the adoption of community policing in the country should be made a reality in Nigeria;

- vi. in the same vein, government at all levels should embark on various programs geared towards mobilizing state and non-state actors in eradicating all forms of human trafficking by reducing the exposure of potential victims and exploitation;
- vii. there is a need to intensify adequate protection through security intelligence on the menace and support given to the victims of human trafficking, and government should swiftly give a nod to the efficient prosecution of the criminals involved;
- viii. the need to robustly pursue blockage of arms and weapons influx into the country, trafficking investigations, prosecutions of trafficking offenders, and adequate sentence for the convicted ones;
- ix. government at all levels must ensure that the activities of the NAPTIP receive sufficient funding for all its efforts towards eradicating the menace;
- x. there must be continual deployment of drones for additional surveillance, intelligence collaboration and regular training to the security personnel, police and immigration officials warring against trafficking in persons in Nigeria; and lastly give sustainable aid to the woman and girl survivors of the menace.

## 11. Suggestion for Future Research

Furthermore, the findings indicated that this study was conducted in a developing country, Nigeria, with diverse socio-political contexts. Knowing that political will remains crucial in driving strategic management for logical implementation of the above recommendations to curtail the thrives of human trafficking in developing nations like Nigeria with explicit features like lack of political will, poor leadership, weak bureaucracy with dearth of resources, and security intelligence. Therefore, this our study opens the way to other research that could be interested in containing the threats of trafficking in persons in other developing states in Africa and other parts of the world.

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