

Human Trafficking Policy and Its Impact on Curbing Child Trafficking In Nigeria

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Structured Abstract

Purpose: Human tracking as become an endemic syndrome that is eating the fabric of the nation. Human traffickers are changing tactics by the day inspite of government stiff resistance on the act of human trafficking.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Currently, Nigeria is estimated in the world to be the largest human trafficking hub. Many Nigerians both the young and the old are always victims, of sexual & labor exploitation every year. Nonetheless, there have been good numbers of non-governmental & governmental organizations actively working tirelessly to stop this trade.

Findings: These organizations focused mostly on the monitoring of human trafficking in & out of Nigeria, as well as helping to rescue victims. Human trafficking denies thousands of people their basic human rights, poses a serious public health risk, and fuels organized crime around the world.

Practical implications: This is an unbearable subject and one that must be illuminated. However, the government has made allot of progress in the fight against human trafficking in Nigeria.

Originality/Value: The study concluded that government should be progressive in the fight against human trafficking as their policies and the establishment of NAPTIP as gone a long way in reducing human trafficking in Nigeria.

Keywords: Human Trafficking, Government, NAPTIP, Children

Paper Type: Research Paper

Introduction

Human tracking has become an endemic syndrome that is eating the fabric of the nation. Human traffickers are changing tactics by the day inspite of government stiff resistance on the act of human trafficking. The government has made policy to curb the act and has established an agency to take charge of enforcing the policy yet, there are pocket of human trafficking act across Nigeria. On the 14th of July 2003 by the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2003, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) was created. The Agency is the Federal Government of Nigeria's response to addressing the scourge of trafficking in persons. The agency has been on the neck of human traffickers since its establishment and as made some remarkable stride in curbing child trafficking in Nigeria. The function of NAPTIP in curbing human tracking include (1) enforce the human trafficking Law Enforcement and Administration Act (2) Adopt effective measures to prevent human trafficking (3) Investigate cases connected with human trafficking (4) Encourage people to fight slavery (5) Enhance effectiveness of law enforcement agents (6) Create public awareness. The nature of human trafficking today, especially in West Africa, has recently assumed an alarming proportions & received unprecedented attention globally.

Currently, Nigeria is estimated in the world to be the largest human trafficking hub. Many Nigerians both the young and the old are always victims. Especially, victim of sexual & labor exploitation every year. Nonetheless, there have been good number of both non-governmental & governmental organizations actively working tirelessly to stop this trade. These organizations focused mostly on the monitoring of human trafficking in & out of Nigeria, as well as helping to rescue victims. NAPTIP is one of the leading organizations

that advocates putting an end to human trafficking in Nigeria and provides resources for victims who have been rescued.

Concept of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking can be seen as The act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving a person; By means of coercion,-deception or abuse of vulnerability; For exploitation purposes, such as slavery, forced labour, and sexual harassment among others.

Human trafficking is simply a trade of human beings to be used for forced- labour, sexual-slavery, or commercial-sexual exploitation for the trafficker in particular or others. This may encompass providing a spouse in the context of forced marriage or the extraction of organs or tissues, including for surrogacy and ova removal. Trafficking of human beings can occur trans-nationally or within a country. Trafficking of human beings is a serious crime especially against the person because of the violation of the right of movement of the victim through coercion and also because of their exploitations commercially. However, Trafficking of humans is the trade of people, especially women and children, and does not necessarily involve the movement of the person from one place to another (Cho, Axel & Eric, 2019).

People's smuggling according Staff (2020) can also be known as human smuggling, migrant smuggling or a related practices that is characterized by the consent of the person being smuggled. However, the situation can descend into human trafficking characterized by coercion & exploitation. Trafficked people are held against their will through acts of coercion, and forced to work for or provide services to the trafficker or others (Staff, 2020).

Facts about Human Trafficking in Nigeria

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) reported that human trafficking in Nigeria dates back to the 15th century when European colonists started the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in the country. Though, Human trafficking still continues to exist irrespective of the banned on slave trade by the British Parliament in 1807. It eventually evolved into the human trafficking we see today, where victims are coerced or threatened into sexual and labor exploitation. Just in 2019 alone, the NAPTIP in Nigeria reported and investigated 203 cases of human trafficking. Seven hundred and one suspects were arrested, but only 25 traffickers were actually convicted. Despite the low number of reported cases and even lower number of convictions, NAPTIP rescued 1,152 victims of human trafficking in 2019. Of those victims, 18.4% were rescued from foreign travel, which

promotes prostitution. Additionally, of the victims rescued, 80.6% were female and half of them were minors. According to report that was published the International Organization for Migration in 2017 showed that unaccompanied children, young girls in Nigeria are mostly victims and they are mostly used for sexual exploitations and ritual killings.

The NAPTIP rescued victims of human trafficking, totaling about 14,688 between July 2003 & December 2019 alone. However, the total of 7,487 were the reported cases they received, and 3,935 cases were investigated while 332 were the convicted cases . Also, undercover reporters of the CNN posit that the would-be migrants traveling from Nigeria to Italy were victims in 2018. The Edo State in Nigeria was reported to be one of the largest human trafficking departure points in Africa. However, many of these victims are trapped refugees who do not have enough money to finish traveling across the Mediterranean Sea into Europe (United Nations, 2014).

Types of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking occurs in various ways. The following are some types of human trafficking as state by Louise, (2019) to include (1) Trafficking of Children (2) Sex trafficking (3) Forced marriage (4) Labour trafficking (5) Trafficking for organ trade

Children Trafficking: This involves the transportation, the transfer, the harboring, or the receipt of children for the exploitation purposes. Commercial sexual exploitation of children can take many forms, including forcing a child into prostitution or other forms of sexual activity or child pornography. Child exploitation may also involve forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, the removal of organs, illicit international adoption, trafficking for early marriage, recruitment as child soldiers, for use in begging or as athletes (such as child camel jockeys or football trafficking.)

The statistics of the IOM indicated that a significant minority of about (35%) of trafficked persons it assisted, were less than 18 years of age in 2011, roughly, it is consistent with the estimates from the previous years. Thailand & Brazil were reported and considered to have the worst of child sex trafficking records in the year 2010 (Smith, 2019).

Children traffickers sometimes take advantage of their parents' extreme poverty to penetrate. Parents however may decide to sell their children to traffickers in order to pay off certain debts or just to gain an income, or they may also be deceived through certain prospects of training proposed by the traffickers for the hope of a better life for their children. They might sell their youngsters or their children into child labour, illegal adoption, sex dealing, or illicit

appropriations, though, researchers have encouraged a nuanced comprehension and way to deal with the issue - one that glances at broader socio-economic and political contexts.

Sex trafficking: Trafficking for sexual exploitation was formerly thought of as the organized movement of people, usually women, between countries and within countries for sex work with the use of physical coercion, deception and bondage through forced debt. Nonetheless, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (US), doesn't need development for the offense. The issue becomes disagreeable when the component of pressure is taken out from the definition to join assistance of consensual contribution in prostitution. For instance, in the United Kingdom, the Sexual Offenses Act 2003 consolidated dealing for sexual abuse however didn't need those submitting the offense to utilize intimidation, trickiness or power, so it likewise incorporates any individual who enters the UK to do sex work with assent as having been "dealt. What's more, any minor associated with a business sex act in the US while younger than 18 qualifies as a dealing casualty, regardless of whether no power, extortion or coercion is involved, under the definition of "Severe Forms of Trafficking in Persons" in the US Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.

Trafficked ladies and kids are frequently guaranteed work in the domestic or services industry, yet rather are in some cases taken to brothels where they are needed to embrace sex work, while their travel papers and other distinguishing proof papers are seized. They might be pounded or locked and guaranteed their freedom solely after acquiring through prostitution, their price tag, just as their movement and visa costs.

Forced marriage: A constrained marriage is a marriage where one or the two members are hitched without their uninhibitedly given assent. Subservient marriage is characterized as a marriage affecting an individual being sold, moved or acquired into that marriage. As per ECPAT, Child dealing for constrained marriage is just another indication of dealing and isn't confined to specific identities or nations. Constrained relationships have been depicted as a type of illegal exploitation in specific circumstances and certain nations, for example, China and its Southeast Asian neighbors from which numerous ladies are moved to China, in some cases through guarantees of work, and compelled to wed Chinese men. Ethnographic research with women from Myanmar and Cambodia found that many women eventually get used to their life in China and prefer it to the one they had in their home countries. Moreover, legal researchers have noticed that transnational marriage handling was never expected to be considered trafficking by the drafters of the Palermo Protocol.

Labour trafficking: Labour trafficking is the movement of persons for the purpose of forced labour and services. It may involve bonded labour, involuntary servitude, domestic servitude, and child labour. Labour trafficking happens most often within the domain of domestic work, agriculture, construction, manufacturing and entertainment; and migrant laborers and native individuals are particularly in danger of becoming casualties. People smuggling activities are likewise known to traffic individuals for the exploitation of their labour, for instance, transporters.

Trafficking for organ trade and exchange: Trafficking in organs is a type of illegal exploitation. It can take various structures. Sometimes, the casualty is constrained into surrendering an organ. In different cases, the casualty consents to sell an organ in return of cash/merchandise, but it is not paid (or saved money). At last, the casualty might have the organ eliminated without the casualty's information (generally when the casualty is treated for another clinical issue/sickness – genuine or organized issue/disease). Migrant laborers, destitute people, and ignorant people are especially helpless against this type of abuse. Dealing of organs is a coordinated wrongdoing involving several offenders:

- the recruiter
- the transporter
- the medical staff
- the middlemen/contractors
- the buyers

Trafficking for organ trade often seeks kidneys. Organs trading is now a lucrative business since the waiting lists for patients who need transplants are very long in many countries. Some solutions have been proposed to help counter it (Olateru-Olagbegi & Ikpeme, 2019).

Human Trafficking in Nigeria

Women and children from Nigeria are trafficked across borders to parts of West and Central Africa, Europe and the Middle East. According to reports from the media, there is an active trade in child labourers, some of whom are “exported” to Cameroon, Gabon, Benin and Equatorial Guinea to work in agricultural enterprises or domestic service while others are coerced into the sex trade. Children are mostly trafficked majorly for the purpose of adopting them, including other vices that has to do with a child such as begging, mining, criminal

activities like drug dealing, and participation in armed conflict). Authorities have identified a trade route for traffickers of children for labour through Katsina and Sokoto to the Middle East and East Africa (ILO, 2004). There are also incidents of young boys trafficked to Belgium for sexual purposes on the pretext of playing football, and women who are trafficked to the United States of America and United Kingdom to work as nannies. The nation remains an objective point for the trafficking of Togolese kids to fill in as rural agricultural laborers, market merchants, kid beggars and prostitutes (UNICEF, 2014; Olateru-Olagbegi & Ikpeme, 2019).

Interior trafficking from country regions to urban communities is very common. In a study conducted in 1996, it was found that children from rural communities in Cross- Rivers, Akwa-Ibom Benue, Ebonyi, Kwara, Bayelsa, Imo and Anambra States; Shaki in Oyo State, village borders in Ogun State are trafficked for the support of domestic services to the urban areas like Lagos, Kano, Port Harcourt, Ibadan and Kaduna. Most of the domestic helps that work in the cities reported that middlemen facilitated their present jobs. Intermediaries supply children who are often less than 17 years of age to different households in exchange for their travel expenses and six months of wages. In some cases, at the expiration of six months, the employer continues to pay the girl's wages to her 'uncle or aunt' who, in reality, may not be related to her. These young children are exposed to sexual abuse from their mistress' husbands and in some cases the grown up sons of their masters (Olateru-Olagbegi & Ikpeme, 2019).

This age-old form of internal trafficking is usually confused with the traditional practice of child fostering within the extended family. Such children are no longer cared for but rather exploited through placement for different forms of labour. Also parents and guardians (mostly in the rural communities) now give away children to non-relatives for labour in exchange for money. There are also reports of children who are kidnapped by traffickers from the villages and trafficked to cities within Nigeria. Child begging is especially widespread in northern Nigeria and most of the people parading as deaf mutes at filling stations, mosques, churches and hospitals with envelopes asking for alms have been found to be victims of trafficking (WAO-Afrique, 1999).

Combating Human Trafficking in Nigeria

Trafficking of human-being has prevented thousands from getting their basic freedoms, it has

now possessed a serious health hazard, and energized coordinated wrongdoing all throughout the planet. It is a dull and awkward subject, yet one that should be illuminated. Trafficking can only be wiped out through consolidated efforts at public, local and international levels. When managing an issue of this significance and desperation, time is the very pinnacle of embodiment. The world should meet up to go about as one in such manner. The world should prevent the hoodlums and fear based oppressors from utilizing illegal exploitation as an asset, however significantly more critically, the world should stop illegal exploitation for the sake of normal conventionality. No wonder, President Bush has focused on the battle against subjugation and approached all Nations to move forward their battle.

In a September, 2003 speech made to the United Nations, President Bush called slavery, “A special evil in the abuse and exploitation of the most innocent.” He further declared: "The individuals who petronize this industry degrade themselves and deepen the wretchedness of others." Governments that endure this type of business are enduring a type of servitude. The toleration of human trafficking by any individual or government is an evil that must be erased from the face of the earth. Nothing less will suffice.

In Nigeria, government has been able to achieved a reduction in human trafficking unlike the time past. The establishment of NAPTIP has enable government to combat the evil called human trafficking. In other for government to have a continous progress in the fight against human trafficking, Government should take positive steps to provide employment opportunities for the youth, and create an enabling climate for the private sectors to contribute and expand job openings. This will incorporate infrastructures like power, water, road and communication facilities as well as modest credit.

Conclusion

Human trafficking is the act of holding someone against their wish. Human trafficking is a crime and should be taking seriously by all citizens where the offenders will be seriously dealt with according to the laws of the nation. The government should be progressive in the fight against human trafficking as their policies and the establishment of NAPTIP as gone a long way in reducing human trafficking in Nigeria. There government should do more in sensitizing the people on travelling out with individuals that are not known or trustworthy.

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