

Human Trafficking: A Global Challenge Reflection on the Challenges in Nigeria

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Abstract

Human Trafficking; A Global Challenge Reflection on the Challenges in Nigeria was investigated. The investigation revealed that Nigeria has a lot of challenges as it concerns the trafficking of women and children which shows that the men are usually smuggled across borders. This is as a result of Nigeria's economic and peculiar social-cultural activities which have become apparent. Trafficking in women focus is targeted at the international markets of both the West and North Africa including Europe, Asia and the Middle East in particular for sexual exploitation for organ harvesting for profit. In the case of those victims forced into prostitution, their earnings are kept by their traffickers/sponsors until they are able to pay back their "debts. There are also known fact that girls are usually used for domestic service or street trading as including commercial sexual exploitation. Also, more boys work on plantations, and on constructions sites, including quarries/mines. Most often, the traffickers made it a usual to collect their wages. The researchers therefore recommend that there is need for a further amendment of the trafficking in persons (prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act, 2003 which was Amended in 2004 to allow N.G.Os and other volunteers to be paid for whistle-blowing with regards to reporting the act of human trafficking and that such persons should be paid by government in order to perform their jobs effectively. Furthermore, a special court should be established to try offenders of human trafficking. This would afford the delay in prosecution and trial of offenders in this regard.

Key Words: Human Trafficking, Prosecution, Sexual Exploitation, Organ Harvesting, Prohibition

Introduction

There is no doubt that Nigeria has a lot of challenges as it concerns the trafficking of women and children which shows that the men are usually smuggled across borders while very number of young men were said to have been trafficked to Europe for exploitation¹ in the sex trade² Nigeria finds itself officially labeled as a transit outlet and destination country for victims of human trafficking by the United Nations and its agencies³. In Nigeria, the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) looked at the affected states where the victims are procured and the destination states involving such victims, which usually depend on their ultimate destinations. Trafficking in women focus is targeted at the international markets of both the West and North Africa including Europe, Asia and the^{4a} Middle East in particular for sexual exploitation, act of trafficking in children concentrate its activities by focusing at the domestic and regional levels through exploitation and labour. Recent event shows that children continued to be trafficked for adoption purposes which are both (local and international) including for ritual activities⁴.

As a result of Nigeria's economic and peculiar social-cultural activities which has become apparent, there is no creation of atmosphere breeding trafficking in humans. The businessmen who are into this act find themselves in wealth to the social, moral, psychological and physical degradation of the defected victims. Just as it affects other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, traditionally the act of fostering children is no longer of blessing but

¹ There are always young men paid by rich older women kept as lovers. There are also pimps in the prostitution businesses who recruits young men and children to provide sexual services to homosexual and female customers as well as paedophiles.

² See Okojie et al, **Trafficking of Nigerian Girls to Italy**, Piedmont Italy: UNCRI, 2004, p. 96

³ See also IPEC, **Summary of individual Country Programmes – Nigeria** Geneva.

^{4a} Prof. A. Amuda-Kannike (SAN) "assessment of the modes and dimensions of global humans trafficking" in a book in honour of Chief B. M. Wifa (SAN), CON.

⁴ See Okijie et al, Supra n 2 at p. 122.

a curse. The historical link upon which rural and economically poorer families found themselves create the situation of sending children to urban relatives, friends and acquaintances to assist in improving their chances of acquisition of education, skills and employment have become veritable advantages where unrepentant dangerous middlemen or “employment agencies” make huge gains through the sweat, blood and labour of children; some who are as young as four years old.¹ The traditional act of fostering has eventually become the platform upon which use of “house help” on the individual houses who are not use to the children and their families emerged but who are expected to educate or train the children in different skills which will in turn lead to the domestic services rendered by the children upon an agreed period of time. There exist also the fact that Middlemen known to both families independently of each other are involved in these arrangements.

It could be seen that in the last two decades the ever-increasing demands for domestic helps has brought about the attention of organized criminal groups or “agents” who have changed these informal and mutually beneficial arrangements into exploitative commercial platform with heavy profits and financial gains. Of recent, children are seen in exploitative labour activities inside and outside private homes in and outside Nigeria as a direct reaction to the self-centred ingenious manipulations of traffickers who come from various backgrounds, which includes anything from the uneducated rural person to diplomats in Nigeria’s foreign embassies. It often common to see minor buy exploited in different untoward activities, among which are stealing, begging, drug peddling, street trading, illegal international syndicate for adoptions and there are fears that they may also participate in pornographic activities and in the organ trading activities etc.

Furthermore, one of the important effects of economic difficulties experienced in Nigeria in the last two and a half decades is centred around the migration in great numbers of not only young girls who mistakenly becomes victims of the vicious prostitution syndicate, but also of young men who looks for greener pastures.

It is the misfortune that traffickers cashed on. The unprecedented hunger led the youths into migration base on Nigeria’s increasingly declining economic fortunes. This situation eventually lured and still luring young women into sexual and labour exploitation within and outside the shores of Nigeria. This terrible new slave trade in young Nigerians commenced about the second half of the 1980s as a result of serious economic problems occasioned by the structural adjustment programmes of the Nigerian Government on the recommendation of the International Monetary Fund.² Nigerians leaving the country as a result of false promises of reasonable and tempting paying jobs in Europe, United States, the Saudi Arabia including other countries in places such as farms, factories and offices. It is important to state that most of this Nigerians who are involved (especially of the Edo extraction) get to their destinations to discover that they have been sold into sexual slavery and bonded labour which means they must to pay off debts’ allegedly incurred on their behalf while being “assisted” to get to get there. The young men could not easily be manipulated, a significant number of the young women were made to work in terrible work conditions and they ended up as the “madams” who were eventually made to permanently remain in the trade and to become the exploiters of their own fellow country women.³ The reality on the ground today is that trafficking of young women into Europe for sexual exploitation can be described as a vicious circle involving “graduates” of sexual exploitation, since the existing traffickers participate in also recruiting other young women to fill the space created by their exit and gaining back all loses. Nigeria is also a collecting point for victims of sexual exploitation brought in from other West African countries including Philippines.⁴

The situation of Trafficking in Nigeria

There are very little data about the level of activities in human trafficking around the world due to the criminal and secret nature of trafficking and just like in other countries, only few data can be seen as to the volume of trafficking in humans.

¹ About the periods between September and October 2003, the Nigerian Police gave Beninois authorities over 200 Beninois children between aged 4 and 13 year s , rescued from about seven slave centres found in Ogun, Osun and Oyo States of Nigeria. See also Toye Olori, Nigeria/Benin: Joint Forces to Fight Child Trafficking” Inter Press Service (IPS) report of Wednesday, October 8, 2003.

² See Aghatise, E., “Trafficking for Prostitution in Italy: Concept Paper” being a paper delivered at then Expert Group Meeting on *Trafficking in Women and Girls* which was held at the Harrison Conference Centre, Glen Cove, New York from 18-22 November 2002, p. 4.

³ Ibid

⁴ See Thomas, D., “The Untouchable Human Trafficking: Foreign Countries Petition Federal Government” *The Week Magazine*, March 15, 2004, p. 12.

As a result of lack of data has been seen as the after-math of the secret and illegal nature of trafficking; there is the lack of anti-trafficking legislation in many countries; the reluctance of victims to report their experiences to the authorities; and the lack of government priority given to data collection and research.¹ The circumstance presented in the case of Nigeria is worsened by societal and institutional mind-set and attitudes to the trafficking menace. Therefore, it can be seen that most available data on human trafficking in Nigeria are produced on the basis of estimates by various researcher including those NGOs working on the issue in and outside Nigeria. It is also a fact that majority of the information on trafficking in Nigeria are usually seen on the pages of newspapers vis-à-vis electronic media where reports of arrests of traffickers or repatriation of victims are recorded,² for people to be aware of the situation.

The initial popular surveys of human trafficking in Nigeria were conducted by UNICEF (1998),³ ILO (2000)⁴ the Women's Health and Action Research Centre (WHARC) and Girls' Power Initiative (GPI) both NGOs based in Benin City in 2002.⁵ The studies carried out including several other researches on this field vis-à-vis other creative bodies and organizations such as United Nations Agencies, shows ultimately that there exist the prevalence of trafficking in women and children in Nigeria as presently found at both the domestic and international levels for labour and sexual exploitation including other sundry reasons. A close scrutiny of two major researches conducted by researchers in Nigeria on the directive of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) vis-à-vis the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 2003 and 2004 respectively.⁶

Shows the following findings;

- i. The field research shows earlier findings that Nigeria is a major source of trade in human beings, particularly women and children. Findings reveal that substantial number of Nigerian women are taken to European particularly to Spain, Italy, Netherlands including France. The Nigerian women are also taken to West African countries such as Cote d'Ivoire, Benin and Mali. There are lots of women who are also being trafficked via the airports such as the Amiu Kano International Airport en route the Middle East, especially to Saudi Arabia, under the pretence of performing the holy pilgrimage to Mecca or Lesser Hajj.
- ii. The research equally revealed that Nigeria is a centre of trafficking in children^{14a} as far as West Africa is concerned. The fact is that children are trafficked both in and out of Nigeria, meanwhile the country is seen as a source, destination and transit point for child trafficking activities. Children are also found to be trafficked to Cameroon, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. The transit point for children trafficked from Togo en route to Gabon is Nigeria and usually seen as a destination point for young children from nearby West

¹ See Loconto, A., "The Trafficking of Nigerian Women into Italy" *TED Case Studies*, Number 656, January, 2002 available online at <http://www.american.ed/TED/italian-trafficking.htm> (last accessed 8/01/2017).

² The Guardian Newspaper of January 17, 2001 reported that at least 1,116 trafficking girls were sent back from various countries in 2000. The Punch of October 19, 2001, stated that Calabar, the Cross River State capital, had become a major transit point for traffickers. The Newswatch Magazine of July 26, 1999, also reported about girls being trafficked for prostitution abroad etc.

³ UNICEF went into a research in 1989 on the child trafficking situation in the Southern border towns of Calabar, Uyo, Owerri, Port Harcourt and Lagos and found that 40% of Nigerian children in the streets in these towns were trafficked into exploitation labour.

⁴ The ILO conducted a research in 1999, with the result confirmed the existence of domestic and international trafficking in Nigeria. See generally ILO, "Combating Trafficking in Children for Labour Exploitation in West and Central Africa – synthesis Report Based on Studies of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Togo" (2001).

⁵ The WHARC went through a community-based research to estimate the extent of sexual trafficking Benin City, the Edo State capital and found that there was a high level of sexual trafficking in Edo State of Nigeria. Also, GPI examined sex trafficking in four states: Edo, Delta, Akwa Ibo and Cross River States of Nigeria and found out that girls were easily lured to international trafficking for several reasons.

⁶ The field researches (hereinafter "UNICRI study" and "UNODC study" respectively) were undertaken in Nigeria to "provide relevant data to guide the programme of action against trafficking in minors and women from Nigeria to Italy for sexual exploitation" which forms the three-country study of "Measures to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in Benin, Nigeria and Togo". The main aim of the second research was to create an in-depth assessment of trafficking in human beings and responses to the problem in Nigeria. In order to overcome the menace and criminal activities of the traffickers.

^{14a} "The Nation" Newspaper of Sunday February, 5, 2017 shows how the police in Nigeria especially the Abia State Police command, smashed a car and child trafficking syndicate operating in the state. The state police commissioner Leye Oyebade said his men were able to effect the arrest in collaboration with a vigilante group in the area at Ogbor Hill area of Aba in Abia State of Nigeria. The suspect took the police to the house of one Joy who is a large and who incidentally gave out the little girl for sale and two pregnant teenage girls.

- African countries, particularly Benin Republic. There is also substantial number of child trafficking within the country. The research shows that Nigerian children are now being taken to Saudi Arabia for child labour and to Europe for adoption and organ harvesting for profit.
- iii. The research equally revealed that travel papers used mainly by adult victims of trafficking are usually false and the child victims hardly make use of any travel documents, in actual fact.
 - iv. Those victims who are adults and trafficked to Europe travel either by air, land and sea, often times across the Sahara Desert and through the Mediterranean Sea into Europe. In the case of those victims forced into prostitution, their earnings are kept by their traffickers/sponsors until they are able to pay back their “debts”. In the case of children, victims are trafficked through land borders or across the sea (especially in crude and old boats) via the West African coastline either to or from Gabon or to Cameroon – an important destination – or between cities by road when it has to do with internal trafficking.
 - v. There are also known fact that girls are usually used for domestic service or street trading as including commercial sexual exploitation. Also, more boys work on plantations, and on constructions sites, including quarries/mines. Most often, the traffickers made it a usual to collect their wages. Child victims go through various physical abuse; culminating in severe beatings, underfeeding including being overworked, for up to 16 hours a day with little food to eat, while they slept on bare floors.

One of the perfectly organized crimes is trafficking and they take advantage of the already institutionalized corruption system in Nigeria to perpetuate their activities. It is a known fact that corrupt law enforcement agents including several government officials often connive with traffickers to perfect trafficking activities.

The recruitment are usually done by the local people of the community it has to do with women, the former victims of trafficking who are now free usually return to their home country/town to recruit young girls or employ local agents and usually members of their own families to join in recruiting. Those victims of trafficking or at least one member of their families will be used to their recruiters. These recruiters are either relations or people who have benefitted from their friends and members of their families earlier. The first recruitment always begins in the victim’s known places such as the home, workplace or school. The act of child trafficking also occurs through personal and familial network including through perfectly organized international criminal networks. Those traffickers use various means, especially fraud and deception for recruiting their victims. The traffickers use the most vulnerable and gullible women vis-à-vis children whose level of vulnerability is compromised by social-cultural and economic difficulties of the time.

A carefully analysis of existing laws including some selected documented case files dealing with trafficking in Nigeria revealed that only recently, that we have specific laws in Nigeria, dealing with the prohibition of trafficking in humans. Those cases dealing with human trafficking were prosecuted under the two existing principal criminal codes applicable in Nigeria. However, in July 2003 provisions were made called *Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition_) Law Enforcement and Administration Act, 2003* which was signed into law. Equally was the composition of an agency called the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) set up pursuant to the Act. It is a fact that Nigeria is also a signatory to the various international conventions and protocols dealing with trafficking in women and children including child labour.

A critical examination of the research work on oral interviews with law enforcement and intelligence agencies including case files worked upon revealed that the agencies responsible for investigating and prosecuting crimes do not see the seriousness involved in the act of human trafficking. The police on their own part know little or nothing as far as organized crime activities in human trafficking are concerned.

Factors Promoting Trafficking in Nigeria

It is not in doubt that our country Nigeria is a federating multi-cultural society with different ethnic and religious backgrounds, which have brought out serious constitutional activism engineering to take of the interest of the federating units in the country. The constitution of Nigeria identified the sanctity of the various cultures and religions of the people except in situation where they offend state policies or are in breach of the fundamental rights of the citizens as provided for in chapter IV of the 1999 constitution.¹ Nigeria can be said to have a population above 120 million as at the last census count of 1991 and has very rich natural resources however it is ranked as the 19th poorest country in the world with a GDP per capital income of \$900.² The

¹ See specifically, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Promulgation) Act 199, Cap. C 23 LFN, 2004.

² See Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), **World Factbook** Washington DC: CIA, 2004 available at:

records further show that over 60 percent of the population are living below the poverty level while the women and children especially those of them living in rural areas constitute a large proportion of the poor.¹ There are large families, unable to withstand the high costs of education and who ultimately are forced to withdraw their children, most especially the girls from school. Therefore, the high rate of illiterate women increased. What this meant is that there is feminization of poverty in Nigeria because most women and their children are majorly affected. The effect of this harsh situation is that notwithstanding the fact that women and children contribute to Nigeria's domestic economy as petty traders, farmers, domestic workers and homemaker, their activities in this regard can be seen as grossly undervalued and poorly rewarded. This is aggravated because they have no direct link to credit facilities as a result of low income and lack of collateral to present. The problem of lack of or inadequate formal training for majority of this poor persons shows that they are not able to have other opportunities available in the highly paid employment areas of the Nigerian economy.²

It can therefore be seen that women and children have become serious targets of recruiters whose stock in trade is human trafficking for various illegal markets both in Nigeria and in foreign countries. Within a period of three and half decades, it can be seen that Nigeria has degenerated from the period of a stable economic boom to great and unimaginable gloom. There is the known fact Nigeria is one of the big examples of developing countries which started off on the path of great development, however, crashes came down halfway without attaining any important level in terms of infrastructure, services and resource base which may have assisted to cushion the failure of its development plans and projects. The situation here is directly traceable to political instability, bad leadership, lack of foresight, serious and endemic corruption in both government and civil society, nepotism and tribal divisions and the refusal to create a sense of national identity.³ The military government especially with its dictatorships, coupled with the even more terrible corrupt civilian government propelled the country to be ranked presently as one of the poorest countries in the world. Those periods of economic boom, from Nigeria's petrol dollars did actually left behind an unfortunately legacy – the legacy of a people that are involved in a taste for a high standard of living, a consumer society that no longer has the means to satisfy its high taste but is not ready to admit or accept it.

The country Nigeria is a country that has not been able to lay the foundation for a sustainable good standard of living for its citizens notwithstanding its great human and mineral resources. The bad omen of Nigeria's developmental aim including the real economic hardships brought on by the fall of fuel cost, the heavy indebtedness left behind by years of mismanagement and corruption, the subsequently imposed IMF conditions for the restructuring of Nigeria's indebtedness have brought the people to the level of hopelessness. The increasing rate of inflation and weakness of the Naira has caused difficulty for the majority of Nigerians. Nigeria's economic hardship and difficult political life gave rise to a breakdown of family and social settings. This financial hardship have really affected social services, such as health care, education, and other public services. The children are always removed from schools by parents, who cannot pay school fees. It is an undeniable fact that crime rates continue to increase and the general informal social reliable and informal welfare system of self-help has failed.

The family has failed in its roles as a reference point and a culture of money being the running value with its usual "get rich quick" attitude, has replaced traditional values.⁴ The lack of good moral upbringing of children as at today is a major problem in the Nigerian society with the most noticeable roles models for youths being superficial money serving icons, which give the idea that money is to be made at all cost. In such a situation, it is not surprising that social cohesion has become almost impossible to sustain herein.

As at the last few decades in Nigeria, a growing number of men see it as extremely difficult to look up to the task of taking care of their families and have accordingly abandoned their duties to their women. There are number of them who are jobless and there are even those who have jobs but do not earn enough to take care of the needs of the whole family. This situation has led women who have to take care of their children. A typical polygamous family settings patriarchal structures generate continuous conflict and unhealthy competition. The wives are in perpetual struggle among themselves for importance and for a share of the family resources for

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/rankorder/2001rank.html> (last accessed 09/06/2016).

¹ See Federal Office of Statistics, **Poverty Profile for Nigeria, 1980-1996** (Lagos: FOS, 1999) p. 6.

² See Hodges, A. (ed.) **Children' and Women's Right in Nigeria: A Wake-up Call** Abuja: National Planning Commission & UNICEF Nigeria, 2001) pp. 177-181.

³ Aghastise Supra n 6 at p. 8.

⁴ See Oluruntimehim O., "Trafficking of Women and Girls for Prostitution in West Africa:

The case of Nigeria " in Fagbohunge, T., (ed.) **The Rape of the Innocents – Evolving an African Initiative Against Human Trafficking** Abuja: WOTCLEF

themselves and their children. This constant conflict is usually shared by the children who are usually forced into a permanent struggles for a part within the family and to have share of the family resources. A look at the situation revealed that the females are at the tail end of this power struggle, because they are the weaker link in the family arrangement or family tree.

Later on young women soon found out that using their bodies is a quicker and better means to earn a living either for themselves or for their families, who rely on them as dependents.

On a serious note, unemployment and poverty out of other societal several vices and problems are the main push factors leading to trafficking in Nigeria. A good example in this regard is that individual and focus group interviews held with child and adult victims according to UNICRSI/UNODC research findings shows that frustration arising out of harsh economic situation is a serious push factor for the youths and parents or guardians of children to look for better economic conditions somewhere else. According to most of the victims, they unanimously claimed that the main reason, which allowed them and other youths having similar experiences proceed abroad, was because they are seriously in need of money and jobs were usually not available. It is also a fact that even when some got jobs, the incomes from such jobs are insufficient and no better and suitable jobs or sufficient money for higher education is available. Accordingly, the need to travel outside the country or urban centres within the country to look for greener pastures continued unabated. The fact is that because most youths preferred to travel abroad and were seen to be relatively doing well, they too preferred to leave their present environment or country to change environment. There are many stakeholders who agree with trafficking victims on the basis that poverty is a primary motivating factor in the trafficking of women and children.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) stated that:

Trafficking is inextricably linked to poverty. Wherever deprivation and economic hardship prevail, there will be those destitute and desperate enough to enter into the fraudulent employment schemes that are the most common intake systems in the world of trafficking¹

There is also a perfect explanation by an erstwhile Deputy Controller-General in the Nigerian Immigration Service who stated thus;

From our intelligence report and analyses, the major factor that pushes Nigerian girls and boys into prostitution and hard labour is poverty. Most of the girls deported from Europe and the rest of the world left Nigeria due to poor economic backgrounds.²

There also exist a major push factor in the changing situation of family life in Nigeria where more mothers are responsible for taking care of children. Furthermore, lots of women are now being placed in a position of being the only breadwinner in families where the men have fallen into the class of unemployment and are not able to get jobs because of the bad economic circumstances. There is now a new trend for women and young children to be responsible for or to contribute to the economic survival of the whole family and to sought new avenue of financial resources. Accordingly, parents/guardians knowingly or unknowingly, directly or indirectly encourage or consent to the trafficking of their children with the aim that they would be able to have a better living condition and remit money in any manner to their family background. Furthermore, the socio-political situation of women is found to be deteriorating. The level of violence against women, the contradiction between their very low position in the family and their duties for the family well being, lack of control in public/political life and including their exclusion from decision-making processes, are the forces behind the speed at which women are now more vulnerable to trafficking because they look at life outside their immediate environment as an escape from the oppressive socio-political climate in the country. It is pertinent to state that the situation is also compounded by domestic violence, perceived marriage opportunities and forceful acts from parents, colleagues, friends and acquaintances.

There is also another important major push factor for trafficking in woman which comes up because of the low level of education or lack equal educational advantages for girls in some parts of the country. There are other children whether male or female who suffers from the evil side of polygamy practices with big family sizes leading to additional poverty in Nigeria's present-day economic situation. The low educational levels and lack of vocational training for women and children gave rise to the informal economy that ultimately has to with

¹ See USAID Office of Women in Development, Gender Reach Project (1999) *Gender Matters Quarterly* No. 1, p. 5.

² See also Mahuta, U., "Nigeria Among Top 20 countries in Human Trafficking", quoted by *Xinhua News Agency*, October 17, 2001

various private practices such as organized crime among other criminal activities as the only options, left to utilize. Taking a look again, in this regard is also the pull factors of which the globalizations the world economy is going through including the two factors mentioned in many ways destroyed the usual traditional social and economic activities which bound the Nigerian people together and have attracted those who are majorly vulnerable to move to other places ultimately leading to the risk of being used as it pleased the traffickers. A close look at the pull factors based on demand are related to urbanization and industrialization which leads to high migration of unaccompanied or single male workers who left rural areas to the urban centres in search of greener pasture on the other hand in the case of trans-boundary migration the country where they migrated to as most often, there are few places for recreation and entertainment for such workers to ease out the pleasure of work since, more often than not, this workers do not go home to see their families for long period leading to an astronomical need for commercial sex workers or demand for the services of the commercial sex¹. Another factor related to this situation is what is described as sex tourism that has also played a part in creating demand. This is aided and abetted by access to internet which has also led to a substantial part in linking victims to the clients through traffickers², who have device no means in this unholy activities. Pull factor could also occur in a situation where women and young girls are encouraged to have travelling abroad for their collective economic advancement but in order to have a different lifestyles, which women and young girls usually look forward to. The present economic hardship and the prevailing traditional duties of women in society and family are among the many other causes, which leads young women to look for a better life elsewhere through migration. In whatever many, it will take without due regards to morality, we should note that countries have very restrictive migration policies particularly for Nigerian nationals³. Because Nigerians have become notorious in trafficking which has made it difficult for intending young migrants to use safe channels of migration, to travel abroad. The young girls and women migrants who always have financial difficulties use safe, even if illegal, routes for migration. This migrants equally rely on traffickers who promise to create safe movement and jobs in exchange for substantial part of their future wages once they arrived at their destination looking at Edo State of Nigeria as an example, there are many young girls and women extra-ordinarily desperate and willing to take the risk of meeting with the trafficker to “sponsor” them abroad⁴, whether it will succeed or not.

The related pull factors among other examples could be seen from the mindset of the victims to travel abroad to work because of poor socio-economic conditions and lack of jobs opportunities in Nigeria and also by the assumption of good financial advantage especially with the rate of exchange of foreign currencies to Naira. This false idea leads to unrealistic expectations which the traffickers usually use to lure young women. The destination countries also require cheap, unprotected labour in various areas of their economy which includes entertainment, domestic servitude, factories, farms, etc.

A close look at the push and pull factors creating the platform for trafficking in Nigeria, requires mentioning the role being played by corruption in this regard. Several researches shows that corruption is related to trafficking and Nigeria is a country with a serious bad record of enormous proportions in corrupt acts and practices in most areas of life which includes trafficking in humans. There are Experts findings showing that trafficking can be linked to state corruption through the activities or activities of law enforcement agencies such as the Police, Customs, Immigration; it also involves banking officials who perpetrate monumental frauds even for politicians and kidnappers⁵. According to Agbu:

Sometime, law enforcement officers become part of the syndicate ... it has been revealed that the Nigerian Police, instead of counseling and enhancing the rehabilitation of the victims, further aggravate the predicament of these women by subjecting them to persecution and extortion while they are in holding cells ... These point to the fact some collusion exists between the traffickers and certain government agencies; how else could the women have successfully traversed the various borders without being detected. The volume of human trafficking correlates, I would suggest, with the level of corruption in the agencies that directly deal with immigration and organized crime.⁶

¹ See Manohar, S., “Trafficking in Women and Girls” being a paper presented at the Expert Group Meeting on Trafficking in Women and Girls held at the Harrison Conference Centre, Glen Cove, New York from 18-22 November 2002, p. 19.

² Ibid

³ Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) broadcast in its Network News of April 26 2005 that the National Assembly was probing the resent British Embassy policy of refusing Nigerian Youths of 18-35 years visas to travel to Britain.

⁴ Okojie et al, *Supra* n 2 at p. 66.

⁵ See Agbu, O., “Corruption and Human Trafficking: The Nigerian Case” (2003) *West Africa Review*, 6

⁶ Ibid

The position of the Learned Scholar, Agbu, above shows that Nigeria is a really a trafficking haven if we rely on data coming from police investigations and various field reports of research activities carried out in Nigeria in the last few years.¹ In the UNICRI/UNODC studies, the agencies responsible for enforcement of law in Nigeria such as the Police and immigration were found to be engaged in corrupt practices in relation to trafficking either by directly aiding and abetting traffickers or omitting to do their statutory duties bestowed on them in enforcing the criminal and immigration laws just as it was stated that:

There is a high incidence of corruption among public officials who collude with traffickers to escape arrest or to facilitate procurement of visas and passports respectively. The shoddy investigations done by Police in some cases ensure that offenders escape punishment. Some corrupt Immigration officials (in collusion with officials of airlines and other security agencies at the airports) are alleged to have assisted victims to board planes using invalid or forged passports and visas.²

One can easily look at the relationship between corruptions and trafficking in humans could be measured with instruments. For example Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and the United States Trafficking in Persons List (TIP) were instruments used to measure such indexes. All over the world, the instruments of CPI and TIP allow one to see the extent to which a country directly or indirectly allow trafficking in or through its country and the percentage to which it is corrupt. The yardstick expected for calculation under TIP among others are:

- (a) National laws prohibiting and punishing acts of trafficking;
- (b) Laws prescribing commensurate punishment for "grave crimes" (such as trafficking involving rape, kidnapping or murder);
- (c) Action sufficiently deterrent to prevent trafficking; and
- (d) Serious and sustained efforts to eliminate trafficking.

The research available shows that the country Nigeria was categorized in tier 2 of the Trafficking in Persons Country List for 2001 as compiled by the United States government and the Transparency International. The lists revealed those countries/states that do not meet minimum standards of combating human trafficking but are recognized to be making efforts to do so. TIP and CPI studies conducted by the U.S. government revealed that corruption and trafficking seriously related.

The United States of America's Anti-Trafficking Act categorically state "trafficking in persons is often aided by official corruption in countries of origin, transit and destination, thereby threatening the rule of law".³

Summing up the situation at stake, a number of push and pull factors have been identified to be responsible for trafficking in women and children in Nigeria. A look at the poor economic conditions and imbalances in the social, economic and political advantage made available to Nigerians including the idea that to work abroad is the only available means of survival or economic upliftments have been seen as the major push factors which is convincing most individual women and families of children in order to seek a better life outside the country or in urban areas for their members, the push for better-paying opportunities in the demand markets including the restrictive migration activities of destination countries act as terrible pull factors against trafficking victims. It has been observed that poor moral foundation, breakdown in cultural and societal values, complicity of traditional rulers, get-rich-quick activities among the youths, the destroying effects of uncensored access to information on the web and television including the influence of foreign cultures, poverty, etc. are factors responsible for the promotion of trafficking in Nigeria. There is the obvious link between the intention to migrate, the financial and visa problems, and the need for assistance vis-à-vis consequent dependence on intermediaries in the act of migration, ultimately creating avenues for traffickers to carry out their activities. The criminal rings have merely taken advantage of the usual migration movements which have existed for a longtime now. The circumstance is compromised by corruption in local authorities including the presence of organized criminal groups in Nigeria who lend support to traffickers.

¹ See also Nigerian Police Force, "Trafficking in Human Beings: Nigerian Law Enforcement Perspective" being a paper delivered on behalf of the Nigerian Police at an international conference organized by the center for International Crime Prevention of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute on *New frontiers of Crime: The Trafficking of Human Beings and New forms of Slavery* held in Verona, Italy from 22-23 October, 1999, p. 3.

² Okojie et al. *Supra* n 2 at p. 133.

³ S. 102 (8) Trafficking Victims Protection Act, 2000, U.S. PUBLIC LAW 106-386 OCT. 28, 2000

Domestic Trafficking

In the area of domestic trafficking, the situation, it is the movement of persons from one place to another (especially from rural to urban) within the sphere of a country. It is pertinent to state that it is an act that is widespread within Nigeria, but is unresearched. This practice has no much publicity compare to the international dimension of trafficking of Nigerian women to Europe as countries. It is said that majority of the victims of trafficking are internally from states of the Southeast. Nigeria also receives trafficked persons who are from surrounding countries, which includes Togo, Benin, Niger and Chad.¹ The victims in this regard are majorly children and the reasons for this kind of trafficking among others are; domestic work or baby-sitting, plantain or farm labour, sweat shop labour or shop hands, street begging and street hawking, mining, ritual sacrifices and organ removal. Fully matured women are usually not trafficked within the country. This is because the traffickers find them highly profitable in the sex industry across borders in a situation where control and exploitation of the women are easier than in their own familiar environment or location.

As a result of the African traditional practice of fostering and socialization of children where the child is placed with family members and acquaintances, there is the need to differentiate between children at work who are within this custom, in contradistinction with children that are trafficked for labour exploitation and sexual activities. In discussing the issue of what makes transfer of children to be qualified as trafficking, the United Nations agency, UNICEF, that there must be the fact of a conclusive transaction which must occur through the intervention of an intermediary with the intention to exploit the children.

The term “transaction” refers to “any institution or practice upon which young persons below the age of 18 are given out by either or both parent, or by a person in-locus parentis which could be on the basis of an agreed fees or not, with the intention to exploit the person or the job of the young person”.² The situation does not require any payment to be made in exchange for the child given out. What will bring the meaning of the word into existence is that the fact of the existence of an economic gain, i.e. cheap labour for one party and a paltry sum or periodic payments for the other party (parents or intermediaries) are enough to make the act to come under the definition of transaction. The children who as a matter of daily activities assist in taking care of house work or other activities for their families or the families they found themselves with in the course of their social activities and formal or informal learning are not within the purview of the definition of trafficking. The UNICEF research identified six key situations with respect to children which includes abduction, bonded placement, placement as service placement as sale, placement as embezzlement and temporary placement.³

Aside from labour exploitation of trafficked children irrespective of which any of the above six modes of placement is adopted. It is notwithstanding to state that child prostitution and child sexual abuse are now apparent in different cities of Nigeria.⁴ Several number of children used as domestics servants have been identified and reported in the media several times to have been sexually harassed and violated by the same set of people who were supposed to protect them.

Further cases of children who are ostensibly employed in the local hospitality industry such as hotels, brothels, and drinking joints are required to render sexual services to the male clients of such establishments have been reported. There is a UNODC Report which states that:

A female child victim, who was trafficked twice at age 13 and 15 years, was asked during her second trip to work as a barmaid. Later she was asked to attend to the male customers' needs behind closed doors. She was then informed that her wages would be paid from this activity. While her “master” kept most of the proceeds from prostitution, she was given just barely enough to buy a meal for the day. She was never paid the wages due to her. Members of the survey team were taken to a plantation in Akwa Ibom where trafficked children are used as labourers. The female victims are sexually

¹ See Nwogu, V., “Trafficking of Persons to Europe: the Perspective of Nigeria as a Sending Country” being a paper delivered at ASI & OIKOS Conference on: *Trafficking and Migration: a Human Rights Approach* by the British Council in Lisbon, Portugal from 4th – 5th March 2005, p. 2.

² See Article 1 (d) of the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Slavery-like Institutions and Practices, 1956.

³ See UNICEF, “The Issue of Child Domestic Labour and Trafficking in West and Central Africa” 1998, pp

⁴ See also United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000* Washington DC: USDOS, 2001 at Section 6d.

*violated by other male victims and supervisors. Some of the female victims were already mothers.*¹

The act of homosexuality is on the increase in the north where paedophiles give poor parents peanuts, bringing their children to the towns under the guise of skill acquisition thereby using them as sex slaves. A good example is Borno State where most of the underage Shu-Arabs are taken from Chad, to Kano and force to work as sex slaves under the guise of being concubines. There are girls as young as 9 years who are forcefully married in most states of the northern Nigeria without their consent and are later abandoned, immediately it is discovered that they contract the inevitable Vesico Vaginal Fistula (a medical disease associated with teenage mothers in Africa). Those victims who are able to escape forced marriages end up in prostitution industry/ies².

International Markets Trafficking

The international act of human trafficking in Nigeria involves mostly the women except for the children that are taken along the West African sub-region into forced labour by the traffickers. Also within Africa, Nigeria is the largest singly means of trafficking women to Europe and Asia including the Middle East. The Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) statistical data incorporated into the UNICR/UNODC research³ shows that higher percentage of repatriations from Europe in the last six years are women arrested on the streets of Europe which involves countries such as Italy, Netherlands, Germany and Spain. It was discovered also that substantial numbers involved are found in the sex industry.

The fact is that the most popular country in this act is Italy which gain notoriety in Nigeria as the major destination country for traffickers and their victims for the sex trade with the title "ITALO". The major sources of these victims are Delta, Lagos and Edo States in Nigeria. The movement of the women to Italy started around the late 1980s, when Italy was importing lots of immigrant labourers to sustain its booming informal economy. The Nigerian women find their way to the central Italian region of Campania to harvest tomatoes. Their involvement in this act attracted them to large cities of Rome, Naples and Florence, where they found a lot of demand for their charms. From this moment, the trade has increase and traffickers took advantage of the poverty and collapse of socio-political and economic structures and consequent structural adjustment programmes that bedeviled the military government in Nigeria.⁴ The rush to Italy by Nigerian prostitutes increase seriously, that the then Italian Ambassador to Nigeria, Dr. Giovanni Germano had to give illustration that the magnitude of the problem is that Nigeria girls constitute over 60% (an estimated 10,000 Nigerian women) out of all the prostitutes in the sex trade in Italy, many who are linked to the traffickers.⁵

It has also been said that there are trafficked Nigerian women in a number of other African countries where they have been taken to such as Benin Republic, Mali and Burkina Faso who are said to be used in the sex industry⁶ in those countries. Those that are recruited and trafficked to foreign countries, especially women/young girls also tried to resist the prostitution market are usually beaten, seriously gang-raped and continually kept under guard until they submit to what the traffickers requires. Furthermore, the traffickers usually threaten to hand the women over to police knowing fully well that they have no proper documents for their stay in those countries. They also threaten to kill the family members if they failed to cooperate with the request of the traffickers. It is also on record that the traffickers usually sell their victims several times over even as the victims are at the point of completing the payment of what was agreed. The fact remains that escape is difficult, and even if they escaped, once they are caught, the victims are usually not willing to go home after 'falling' to meet up with the condition of contracts and there is also the fear of reprisals from both the traffickers and their families.⁷

Looking at the issue of children in Nigeria, the country is a destination country for children from Benin Republic also Nigerian Children are trafficked specifically from the Southeastern are of Nigeria of Cameroon, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea for labour exploitation in those areas. There are children who are trafficked

¹ See Okojie et al, Report of Field Survey in Nigeria in *Measures to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in Benin, Nigeria and Togo*, UNODC, August 2004, p.54.

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³ Okojie et al, supra n 2 at pp. 57-60.

⁴ Nwogu, supra n 32 at p.6.

⁵ See Germano G., 2001, "Human Trafficking as a Transnational Problem, the Responses of Destination Countries" in Fagbohunbe, T., (ed.) *The Rape of the Innocents – Evolving an African Inclusive Against Human Trafficking*, Abuja: WOTCLEF Publications, 2001, pp. 117-127.

⁶ ILO, supra n. 12, id at p.10.

⁷ See Fitzgibbon, K., "Modern-day Slavery? The Scope of Trafficking in Persons in Africa" (2003) Vol.12 No.1, *African Security Review*, p.7.

through Nigeria in transit from Togo, Cote-D'voire, and Benin Republic to Cameroon.¹ As at today, the United Kingdom has also become an important destination for traffickers of Nigerian children for miscellaneous matters such as domestic service to ritual killings.² There are some Nigerian children who engaged in begging and other activities in the Middle East countries and Saudi-Arabia.³

Detail Knowledge of Victims and Traffickers

There are very few data on the level and activities in human trafficking as far as Nigeria is concerned. There are however some field research around the country carried out by some interest groups upon which the general activities of which push and pull factors exist. There also exist demographic information on victims and recruiters including other necessary information emerged. The information on the reason behind trafficking deduced from case files examination and from responses to questionnaires given to children and Adult victims from various researches undertaken by the appropriate United Nations agencies shows that⁴.

The victims of trafficking in Nigeria are of both sexes and mostly between the ages of four and fifteen years when trafficked and are usually from Akwa-Ibom (Ibibio and Annang extractions) and Cross-River in South Eastern part of Nigeria, Abia, Imo and Ebonyi State, there are also Eastern Nigeria. Kano, Kaduna and Niger States in the Northern Nigeria, Ogun and Uyo States in Western Nigeria. Those Child victims who are trafficked into Nigeria are of the same age group and are usually brought in from Togo and Benin Republic in the same vein, a large proportion of trafficked children from the South Eastern part of Nigeria are taken to Gabon, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea.

The victims of trafficking, especially the Child victims are often from being families of between 5 and 25 years of age. Those Children from smaller families usually born by widows, the tendency is that this child victims usually have no formal education or they belong to the class of primary school dropouts whose parents or guardians cannot afford to enroll them in school. This set of children mostly lack any form of vocational training as at the time of their being trafficked. The parents of those children themselves in majority of cases are without education or poorly educated and suffer from serious poverty. These persons are involved in small scale business like; farming, fishing, petty trading, weaving including other occupations that shows the poverty status in the Nigerian socio-economic class arrangement.

There are victims who are old, being females within the ages of sixteen and thirty-five years as at the time of being trafficked, notwithstanding that the girls between the ages of seventeen and twenty years are in majority. These persons trafficked divorced or widows, even the married women are trafficked either with their husband consent or without consent. There is the fact that usually most of the victims are okay, good looking with no physical disability or defects because those who are good looking without physical disability will be necessary for sexual exploitation industry.

Majority of the adult female victims trafficked are from Delta and Edo States of Nigeria. When interviewed most victims of trafficking in the UNICRI/UNODC research shows that they were from Edo State and the population of Edo State in the trafficking activities is well known in Nigeria as a whole and all over the world. This does not mean that there are no little number of trafficked persons from Lagos, Cross-River, Akwa-Ibom, Kano, Borno, Ondo, Delta and Oyo States including places in the Northern part of Nigeria, such as Niger, Adamawa and Kaduna States.

Those victims who are Adult mostly have secondary school education which could be junior or senior school certificate, some small percentage have higher educational study/ certificate at the point of recruitment. Less fewer victims have at least primary education training with little or no training in a skill⁵a, such as beauticians, dressmakers or hairdressers.

¹ ILO, *supra* n. 12.

² Nwogu, *supra* n. 32 at p.5

³ Okojie et al, *supra* n. 2 at p.69.

⁴ See generally Okojie et al, *supra* n. 36

⁵ See the Nation of Saturday, February 25, 2017 page 42, where it was stated specifically "How Nigerian girls are sold into slavery in Libya" Delta State girl called Gift Peters said she embarked upon the journey with the believe that her life would change for the better. Unfortunately, upon arrival at Libya, contrary to her expectation, even after travelling through the desert in a tortuous journey, she was sold into slavery. Gift was one of the 171 Nigerians that were deported from Libya, a week before the publication in the Nation Newspaper. Gift and others sold into slavery were kept in confinement under lock and keys. Infact she was sold for 3,500 Dirhams and was supposed to pay twice that amount of money to free herself just like

There are so many adult victims who are usually unemployed as at the time recruitment or those who are either engaged in small trading, apprenticeship in fashion designing and hairdressing businesses.

There is the fact also that lots of the victims-children and adults – from Southern Nigeria (except for the odd one or two) are mostly Christians, usually belonging to Pentecostal Churches, but victims from the Northern part of the country are predominantly Muslims. Therefore, all adult victims from South eventually end up in pro-Christian counties of West and Central Africa including Europe, all adult victims from the North eventually end up in pro-Muslims countries in North Africa and Middle East counties.

The traffickers themselves are mostly between the ages of twenty to sixty-five years. They are usually from the same ethnic group or are related to the accomplices of the same ethnic group of the victims trafficked. The Akwa-Ibom, Cross-River and Rivers States haven for children traffickers and the traffickers of women are of Edo State origin. The traffickers are also of the Christian or Muslim religious background. There are facts showing also that.

Some traffickers are individuals or small groups that traffic people for particular reason. They already have networks structured, organized, well funded, and perform the act by over-coming the enforcement. The are situations of the involvement of husband and trafficking of women to Europe especially Italy for sexual activities and they are kept in slavery for years. There have been reports from arrest in 1999 of a particular Italian national and his Nigerian wife who used the wife's international passport to traffic seven girls to Italy for prostitution in 1999 alone¹. This is a dastardly behaviour.

There are many persons being trafficking and the traffickers are often friends, family members, neighbours, business or even Traditional rulers. The 2004 UNODC research revealed thus;

*In Akwa-Ibom State, the survey team was informed by a respondent that some Islands between Akwa-Ibom state and Cameroon were inhabited by Nigerians from Bayelsa and Cross-River States. Akwa-Ibom State children from Oron and the coastal villages constitute 85% of population of these Islands. Rings exist consisting of traditional rulers in the islands in league with middlemen in Nigeria. The children are recruited through various means and sold to these traditional rulers, they take oaths of secrecy to some idols, and vow not to divulge any information about the activities of the traffickers, as a result, this operation has been shrouded in secrecy. The children now provide domestic labour for Cameroonian homes and used for all kinds of labour*²

Methods and Practices of recruitment

The commencement at which the issue of trafficking and the exploitation of human beings started is in the area of the recruitment of the victims of exploitation. From our earlier discussion, the situation which forms the basis for both smuggling and trafficking of persons at least as they have happened in Nigeria of recent has to do with immigration; there exist the need to emigrate and the migratory push from a lot of persons in the country, is the basis for traffickers who are in the need to satisfy this demand. The traffickers are ready to manage by breaking the laws to exploit it and turn the situation to their advantage in the quest for the act of trafficking there by transforming the smuggling of “migrants” into different forms of trafficking in human beings, in an arranged form of circle using sorts of violence and coercion. It was also discovered from oral interviews with both child³ and adult victims of trafficking that recruitment methods and practices of human traffickers in Nigeria are of different ways. This different ways or forms of recruitment of victims being in different forms depends on the modus operadi of the traffickers and their gangs. In most cases, the victims or member (s) of his family or acquaintance in a lot of situation are aware of the trafficker or recruiter and in other cases the trafficker (sponsor) or recruiter is a part of the victims family. The traffickers aim is to exploit the need for a better living standard and this made them to pay attention women and children who are desirous of new opportunities abroad or domestically in urban areas of the country on the basis of harsh economic and social conditions at home. There are extreme cases where a small number of women are adequately aware that they are likely to work as

others. Men come to this place called “connection house” to sleep with the girls.

¹ See also the Nigerian Police Force, Supra n. 29 at pp 9-10

² Okojie et al, supra n. 36 at p. 51.

³ About the year 1999, the International Labour Organization (ILO) commissioned National research in nine West and Central African countries for operational reviews on trafficking in children in those countries. In Nigeria, 1400 school children and 700 street children were interviewed.

prostitutes but are not aware of the extent the act of prostitution will make them to be indebted, intimidated, controlled and exploited.

The traffickers are known to usually make use a wide range of methods to move their victims to places they are to be trafficked to as there exist hype use word-of-mouth and personal connections to lure people who want to move abroad to find better job opportunities. There are others who relied on perceived “affluence” of those who had gone abroad before. As far as the children are concerned, the recruitment commence, there are different recruitment methods with the promise of a better life which includes schooling, skill acquisition, and regular finance from good employment. The parents or guardians are taken in the children are convinced once they have moved out of their houses with various sorts of things of excitement. The children in this regard are forced into moving away from their parents or guardians.

In some situation, a person who is known to the family or village makes a promise to the provide employment and education for the child. It is found that powerful agents, who control an approximate 30-60% of ‘placement’ situations, are deeply perverting and corrupting the practice¹. It becomes often difficult for parents to have conditions and long hours of work which their children nor the intermediary immediately the child leaves the parental home.

A lot of children ultimately find themselves as slaves under very harsh conditions and long hours of work which deprived them of being educated and endanger their health. Children toil day and night under the control of foremen, touts, marketers and pimps in the open streets and marketplaces found in big urban areas, where they are exposed at a tender age to a lot of physical and sexual abuses of different grades.

As usual, a number of participants which includes the recruiters, intermediaries, employers of brothel/inn operators, mine and quarry operators, transporters, plantation managers including families participates in the trafficking and exploitation of the children. Looking at Akwa-Ibom State, for example, the recruiter or the intermediary (who in most instances is a well-known person in the community) enjoy the parents trust by offering a little amount of money or yards of wax clothe, thereby convinces them to give their child to him. He further describes his proposal of taking their child a way as a way of improving the living conditions of the whole family, and promises to properly take care of victim, including finding a job for the child. This method of recruitment is popular in all the endemic states in this country Nigeria with little variant; and traffickers mostly use it to place children with potential employer who pay the entire salaries of the placed children to the traffickers². There are cases, where parents even pay traffickers in order to place their children in employment. It is important to mention the ILO reports that in the 1999 Nigeria country study, 33% of the children interviewed stated that the recruiting agent had given them some money, while 46% declared that their parents had taken money from the agent. Also a parent was said to say ; “if the child is going to work for the person, I receive money from the person. If the person helps to send the child out, I pay money for the job”³.

Aside from voluntarily handing over children to traffickers or their agents, the other method of recruitment of traffickers vis-à-vis their agents is to abduct children from their homes or from their neighbourhoods. We have stated above that the cases of kidnapping of children have been reported, several times such as; in Sokoto State, where the children are bought by businessmen for some of money from ₦100,000 to ₦2,000,000 to be utilized for labour or ritual or sex⁴. Recently there exist a new activities in the recruitment of child victims through the use of adoption method especially by conniving with trafficking gangs to take children especially of Edo State origin to European countries.

A critically analysis of trafficking in women including the recruitment of women can be seen in two different dimensions. Usually the traffickers or their agents commence the early link with victims which may either directly or through intermediaries who are their friends, colleagues, family members and schoolmates.

Quite substantial numbers of cases where the women owned look for the traffickers.⁵ Various ways exist for recruitment with deception method being the best among traffickers. Most often women are promised secured jobs with the promise of high financial returns worth millions of Naira in relation to foreign exchange dictates.

¹ See also Singh, S., “poverty: The Root Cause of Child Labour” south-North Development Monitor,4372 (Third World Network Features), 1999 cited in Fitzgibbon, K., supra n. 42 at p. 5.

² ILO Synthesis Report, supra n 12

³ Ibid.

⁴ See Ebigbo, P. O., **Child Trafficking in Nigeria: The State of the Art** Geneva: ILO, 2000, P. 24.

⁵ Okojie et al, supra n 2 at p. 49.

There are situations where desperate traffickers use monetary inducement to convince younger women to move in order to get paid high salaries from which the basis of which the victims can pay off all expenses they run in being taken abroad by the traffickers.

The recruitment process usually commence when a recruiter need a women or girl, usually between the ages of 15 and 24 years proposing to him or her to go abroad to work.¹ The fact is that most of the recruiters are known in the area they could even be friends of the victim, or are family members on their own. The parents are usually a part of the accomplish circle because they put pressures on their daughters into the trade to repatriate financial gain to the family as a result of the aim of acquisition of wealth and prosperity arising through material acquisition seen from what was seen through television, radio or lavish displays of wealth by those women who have travelled out 56. Usually the source of the wealth, regardless of how acquired is important to the women. There are families who give money to traffickers to ensure overseas jobs for their daughters. Therefore, the women are made to undergo traditional rituals to be sure they will co-operate in not disclosing information about the syndicate. It is when recruitment goes through, that the girls see themselves as being in problem especially when they are given out or sold to other trafficker who transport them to Europe, especially Spain, Netherlands and Italy where they are now made to go into prostitution. Those women who are recruited by way of deceptive are made to believe that they can travel to Europe and earn high financial returns within a short space of time, or get established when married. These women are usually convinced because their aim is to make it big and the only way for them and their families to avoid poverty is to travel out. The said deceptive employment offers various jobs such as domestic work and childcare, hairdressing, farm work, factories, shops, offices and hotels.

Many women trafficked into and out of Nigeria usually become prostitutes. As at pre-1996 most of the women taken to Europe do not have idea of the fact that they are going into prostitution, however, about the last few years, substantial number of trafficked women are aware that they are most likely going into prostitution without being aware of all its difficulties.² The manner of recruiting and luring of women into prostitution is not different in nature from those lured for forced labour. Those women usually are lured through being promised of a good job in another country especially Western Europe. Because those trafficked usually lack basic necessities of life, they agree to travel. As soon as they arrived at their destination country, they are handed over to the employer. In a bizarre situation, no control over the nature or place of work or the terms or condition of employment is in the hands of the person trafficked. There are victims who are aware of the fact that they are being recruited into the sex trade and equally aware that they have to work to repay back huge recruitment and transportation expenses yet they are lured into their conditions of work.³ There was an interview conducted among social workers working with prostitutes (this involves also the Nigerian women) who are resident in Italy, most of this social workers stated the huge gaps existing between what the girls look forward to and the actual reality of dependency, coercion and in some issue the real slavery where most of those trafficked met themselves⁴.

A cursory look at the issue of sexual trafficking shows that recruitment usually occurs in situation where there exists a continuum of conditioning factors. These continuum conditions include the act of force where there is maximum conditioning used by way of either psychological hypnotization (especially where women are made to administer the oath of secrecy and loyalty using “juju”).

The victims of trafficking concede to going through the hazardous journey and being involved in prostitution because of many reasons which are multi-various in outlook and they are;

- Deceit and hypnotization; this is a situation where the trafficker(s) or the syndicate create a story which looks a reality but which is a lie and in the process the victim believe the story fabricated as true which makes the victim to believe the facts given as;
- Acceptable Social Condition; This is a situation where they see economic freedom and possible wealth of the victim’s age group.
- The situation of Degradation and Relativity of a Deprived Condition : it is well known that outlet and other means of communication relates to globalization seeing clearer the differences between local realities and

¹ See Afonja, S., **Assessment of Trafficking in Persons in Nigeria**, IOM, November 2001, p. 6.

² Aghatise, supra n 6 at p. 4.

³ Okojie et al, supra n 2 at p. 36.

⁴ Giuseppe Roma, “Trafficking of Human Beings: Methods and Measures for Defending and Supporting the victims” being a paper presented at the European Conference on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings: Global Challenge For The Century held in Brussels, Belgium for September 18-20, 2002, p. 4.

the expectations from Europe with better or more advanced economy, thereby giving rise to the easier luring of the victims.

Routes of Traffickers within and outside Nigeria

In the last few years, a lot of increase in the activities of traffickers within and outside Nigeria took place with important awareness of the international community to the issue of trafficking including serious border control and immigration restrictions, there exist many more difficult routes created by the traffickers in order to avoid those difficult restrictions and control utilized by the security agencies to the deterring measures put in place by some countries. The traffickers on their own continued to find new routes for the purpose of beating security on the existing trafficking routes. The activities of traffickers together within their collaborators have become a high level syndicate supported by developed Global Satellite Mobile (GSM) system information technology, highly modernized.

This issue of human trafficking networks are high sophisticated worldwide which usually change according to the climate of the existing environment. The most serious trafficking syndicates are seen in the developing countries found in Asia, America, including Africa. The activities dealing with trafficking usually originates from developing countries crossing down to developed nations of the world or those developing economies. The said trafficking syndicate can take place within geographical areas of the nation or continents, or it may have to do with the transport of victims through the seas or oceans, to various countries. There is no gainsaying that trafficking occurs in countries going through serious social and economic hardship like former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. There are no single routes and patterns of trafficking takes place in these wide regions. The situation herein is said to be dynamic and seriously changing its dimensions depending on the economic and political situations, including the forces of market economics, and global changes occurring as far as modern technology is concerned.

It is important to state that as far as trafficking flows and routes which are not in Nigeria are concerned, most of those victims of international trafficking (women and children) comes from Delta, Edo, Akwa Ibom, Lagos, Cross River, Kaduna, Kano and Kwara States of Nigeria. There is no gain saying that the most popular and major transit and destination countries for these victims are Spain, Netherland, Italy, Gabon, Saudi Arabia, Togo, Burkina-Faso, Cameroon, Guinea, Ghana, Libya, Netherlands, Belgium. South-Africa and Republic of Benin. The victims involved are moved through the land borders of Ogun, Lagos, Akwa Ibom, Coss River, Borno, Yobe, Taraba, Sokoto States of Nigeria to the West African sub-region and for beyond the shores of Africa. The traffickers and victims involved across the borders of West African countries such as Togo, Ghana and Cote d'voire moving through countries located around the Shara Desert down to North Africa. Thereafter they also move either by land or air base on the resources at their disposal and the agreement usually reached with each of the victims or their potential boss/bosses who may be madams. The period of time used from the time of departure to arrival in the country of destination usually vary with each particular group of victims and the resources on ground. The traffickers usually make use of hotels and some safe places controlled by nominal members of the organization in countries which are situates along the trafficking routes.

It is necessary to state that travelling by road usually involves travelling lot of days in the Sahara Desert in seriously packed jeeps involved about twenty or more victims or m male and female to secret places along the route. There are journeys which could also be undertaken by road through difficult and long trek under the harsh sun assisted through spatially with the help of camel runners at an exorbitant fee. This kind of movement usually takes between 2 months to 1 year because the traffickers have to wait along the way to arrange for fake travel documents or determine a better period to continue the secret journey. The victims involved are then made to cross from Morocco or Algeria through the sea in small boats with up to 20 or more persons on board. The act of crossings at night in order to avoid Spanish maritime patrol officers. On arrival at Spain, an agent meets and escorts them to their destination either by air or through train. As far as trafficking syndicate is concerned, it flows from rural to urban areas and its peak period is during the dry season. There exist close to about 83% of child victims for domestic trafficking who were sourced from Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria the other trafficking states are put at the ratio of 17%.¹ The children from Akwa Ibom are taken to most of the states of Nigeria, (especially the domestic service sector and the cocoa plantations of Ondo, Osun and Ogun States) as well as to Cameroon and Gabon for sexual and labour exploitation.² There exist also an indication of the fact that other Southeastern states such as Cross River, Ebonyi, Bayelsa, Imo and Enugu States are the suppliers of child labour

¹ Okojie, et al, supra n 2 at pp.68-71

² Okojir et al, supra n 36 at p.58.

victims to urban centres. Also Kano is noted for the presence of high percentage of Al Majiris including child beggars).¹

Conclusion and Recommendations

The issue of human trafficking is not just a problem of Nigeria alone because it has been seen from our discussion that it is a global challenge which need to be quickly curtailed before it get out of control. There are lots of actors which have aided the menace of trafficking in Nigeria, especially women and child trafficking among which are poverty, level of education, the crazy aims of getting rich quickly with the believe that it is only when one travel abroad, that he can make it financially in life. The victims of human trafficking suffer a lot in the hands of the traffickers and their collaborators. However, there is the need to find a lasting solution to the said human trafficking.

There is the need for Nigeria to ratify more international convention and international agreement with both neighbouring African countries which are transit point and western nations who are trafficking destination on more better ways of curbing human trafficking. There should be better domestic laws which are consisted with the United Nations Charter and there should be more effective policing of the Nigerian borders. The government should provide more developmental initiative so that citizens of Nigeria would not see too far.

There is the need for a further amendment of the trafficking in persons (prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act, 2003 which was Amended in 2004 to allow N.G.Os. and other volunteers to be paid for whistle-blowing with regards to reporting the act of human trafficking and that such persons should be paid by government in order to perform their jobs effectively.

Furthermore, a special court should be established to try offenders of human trafficking. This would afford the delay in prosecution and trial of offenders in this regard.

¹ Ebigbo, supra n. 53.