THE SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE NIGERIA EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

Human trafficking has increasingly become a cog in the wheel of national development in Nigeria. The consequences are alarming as viable present and potential human resources are illegally sold as commodities into slavery, sexual exploitation, forced labour, among others. In the course of study, this paper examined among others the causes of human trafficking, the meaning of national development, government and non-governmental organisations’ preventive efforts and finally its implications for national development in Nigeria. Furthermore, the paper implored qualitative method of data gathering and was descriptively analyzed using human security as our theoretical orientation. From the findings, it was revealed that, it is the government that has made human trafficking to flourish, given her inability to minister to the basic needs of individuals. The submission of the paper is that the absence of basic human needs in turn breeds poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and hunger among others which suggest migration for a greener pasture abroad. It is this gap that human traffickers exploit to traffic victims across national borders for slavery. It was also found that the trafficking of people across national borders affect their present and potential socio-economic and political contributions to national development. Finally, it was however, recommended that for human trafficking to be eradicated or reduced to the lowest minimum, government should adopt a sound and robust human security policy predicated on the needs of the generality of people, It was also emphasized that government should embrace broad public participation in national affairs, judicious resource allocation and good resource management to discourage human trafficking in Nigeria.

Keywords: Human Persons, Trafficking, National Borders, Development, Security.
1.0 Introduction

Today human trafficking appears in the front burner as organized crime in the third world after drugs and arms. It is the illegal trade of human beings for the purpose of slavery, commercial sexual exploitation and forced labour. The issue of human and child trafficking has continued to attract the attention of international community and civil society groups especially towards the end of 19th century. The illegal trade frequently reduces the human dignity to a commodity and as such they go through difficult conditions both while they are on transit and when they are settled in the host communities. The women and children, in particular, are highly vulnerable to physical violence, hardship, isolation and discrimination. The traffickers are able to run the business through subtle deception, enticement, false promises and coercion while their ultimate purposes include prostitution, bonded labor, pornography, sex tourism and false adoptions (Saadatu, 2013:13). Trafficking in human persons, as a social disaster, has become a global business generating huge profit for traffickers and organized crime syndicates. However, internally trafficked persons in Nigeria, for example, are reported according to Saadatu (2013:14) to be deployed into domestic servants, shop attendance, catering service, head loading, hawking, prostitution, among others. Human trafficking as defined by Article 3 of the UN Protocol to the Convention on Transnational Organized Crimes cited by Alexander (2012:2) states:

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

The above as buttressed by the protocol is emphasized to prevent, punish and suppress the trafficking in persons especially women and children. The phenomenon is so alarming because of its transnational nature and global spread exacerbated by rapid globalization. According to Gimba (2007:15) the crime has assumed third in the hierarchy of organized transnational crimes after arms and drug trafficking. The victims of human trafficking are held against their will through acts of coercion and forced to work or provide services to the trafficker or others (Alexender, 2012:23). For instance, Nigeria is also a destination country as victims from West Africa sub region are found in Nigeria particularly as sexual workers and forced labourers. From the foregoing, it is pertinent to undertake a cursory study of the causes of human trafficking so as to proffer solutions to the menace.
1.1 Causes of human trafficking
The causes of human trafficking abounds as articulated by Alexender (2012:24). These are but not limited to poverty, hunger, unemployment, illiteracy, economic hardship, corrupt governance, political instability, armed conflicts, natural disasters, family pressures, global demand for cheap labour, greed, domestic violence, gender discrimination and high demand for sex workers, among others. Also Falae (2017:17) maintained that armed conflict, ignorance to human rights, greed, unemployment and poverty are the causes of human trafficking, both as victims and as perpetrators. However some of the causes shall be buttressed further with brief explanations in a thematic form below:

1.2 Views on Poverty
A viable economy is essential for the provision of employment thus, reducing poverty levels in the nation. The Third World economy in which Nigeria is inclusive and integrated has a low performance and consequently the growth rate is very low (Falae 2017:30). This has contributed to the level of poverty in Nigeria. There is inadequate generation of employment to the teeming youths in the country and as such some families with large number of children find it difficult to cater for all the needs of their children. Following this development, they end up giving out some of their children to people as maids to be trafficked either internally or across borders.

1.3 Violent conflict and instability
Nigeria is presently and predominantly engrossed with conflicts all over the place, namely: the Niger Delta issues in the south, Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) agitation in the South East, Boko Haram insurgency and herdiers/farmers violent conflicts in the north. Following the fierce environment, it is no doubt that some people would choose the option to migrate to other countries of the world. So the incessant unrest and attacks by the insurgency has created a gaping hole in the society. This has translated to increase in human trafficking in Nigeria. Examples of this can be seen with the internally displaced persons who are now cheaply deceived by traffickers into trafficking with ostensible promises of good life (Falae, 2017:31).

1.4 Domestic violence
Every child has the right to be protected from all forms of violence. This right is enshrined in the UN Convention on the rights of the Child (1989:1). Despite this, millions of children around the world particularly the Third World countries, regardless of their economic and social background, culture, religion, or ethnicity, are subjected to violence on a daily basis. According to National Survey (2014:21) violence against children includes “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.” So violence against children is not only a human rights issue but also a grave public health concern. Domestic violence can force women and children out of their matrimonial and parental homes only to find themselves being trafficked by unscrupulous persons.

1.5 Illiteracy
Education according to Ifiokobong (2017:26) is a process of learning that takes place both within and outside the school. Education is that part of learning process that bring about socialization, whereby, individual is transformed into a social being, that can respond to life
issues and take part in the society, even as he continues to learn to adapt to changes as he plays his role in the society. Education gives self-enlightenment to be aware of the dangers of trafficking and its far reaching demerits on the trafficked and traffickers in the society. Given the high level of illiteracy in Nigeria, the exploitation of human race for trafficking by inordinate traffickers for their selfish interest is very high.

**1.6 Lack of employment opportunity**
The economic system in Nigeria has left many people jobless making those that are desperate to be lured and deceived by traffickers because they want to get out of the country by all means. Nigeria is saddled with increasing unemployment despite the increasing turnover of qualified manpower from various tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Yet these teeming qualified citizens cannot find jobs therefore, they try to search somewhere else by migrating out of the shores of Nigeria in hope for a better life (Falae, 2017:34). In such circumstances, the unfortunate ones may unavoidably encounter human traffickers who are desperate to sell them as commodities into slavery.

**1.7 Disregard for human rights**
Women and children are wrongly perceived as objects that can be sold by those involved in human trafficking. Thus, they are sold into slavery and sexual exploitation or forced into marriages. On the other hand, women often resort to seeking alternative opportunities outside of their home country because of the lack of respect or discrimination. When this happens, they are more easily deceived as objects of trafficking (Falae, 2017:31).

**1.8 Demand for sex worker**
Basic economics holds that demand for a product is fundamental for market survival. Without demand for services there would be no market. From this perspective, the high demand for sex results in human trafficking in Nigeria. Demand is created by men and women but predominantly men who seek in purchasing sex or sexual entertainment from persons who have been subjected to force, fraud or coercion or who are under the age of 18 years and are involved in commercial sex (United Nations Convention Protocol, 2000:3).

**1.9 Greed**
Among other causes of human trafficking, there is also the constant search for wealth. People are often dissatisfied with what they have, even if they have perfectly decent living conditions, they still try to go out there in search of a better life. This is particularly prevalent among Nigerians, as many of them have this incessant idea of getting very rich and very fast. Therefore the excessive crave for wealth easily lead them to the hand of human traffickers (Alexender, 2012:32).

The significance of this paper is informed by the gap noticed from the causes of human trafficking advanced above. It is obvious that no comprehensive study has been made to relate human trafficking to lack of development induced by the government. In Nigeria human trafficking is generated substantially as a result of the failure of government to address human insecurity. It is on this note the paper contributes to existing knowledge. It is imperative at this juncture to create the awareness that human trafficking is induced by government for lack of human security. Human security applies to the level of individual citizen’s wellbeing.
not only the protection from harm and injury but access to portable water, food, shelter, health facilities, employment, education and other basic requisites needed for good life. It is the collectivity of those citizen needs which provide overall safety and quality of life and prevent the occurrence of social vices. The lack of means of survival and the subsequent desire to meet the basic needs of man attract family and homes into the hands of human traffickers. The absence of the means to go to school, learn vocational job by the youths or lack of employment opportunities for several years has made some of them recruits into human trafficking ventures. In fact one needs a conducive environment to be place at a competitive advantage over one (Norman, 1996:34-35). It is understandable that the lack of human security encourage human trafficking and other social vices all over the place in Nigeria. According to McNamara (1968:23-24) security is development and development is security because a country with excessive emphasis on traditional security affects economic and political stability. Trafficking in human persons is a multidimensional phenomenon as it is link to poverty, political and economic deprivations among others. Since an average woman wants all her basic needs met, she readily gives in to advances of any kind of help without considering the source and nature of help and what follows after all. On account of this she has no option rather than to offer herself to be trafficked and used for forced labour. From the foregoing, McNamara noted:

that any society that seeks to achieve adequate military security against the background of acute food shortages, population explosion, low level of productivity and per capita income, a higher rate of illiteracy, a fragile infrastructural base for technical development, inadequate and inefficient public utilities and a chronic problem of unemployment, has a false sense of security. He further made it clear that it is poverty, not the lack of military hardware that is responsible for insecurity and that security is development and without development there can be no security.

From above clarification, is it important to agree that structural problems as unequivocally buttressed above are responsible for human trafficking and other related transnational problems across the length and breadth of Nigeria. Also the imperative of economic enhancement cannot be overemphasized. This is because economic enhancement is the qualitative and quantitative changes in the economy expressed through the development of critical infrastructure. Such infrastructure is: human capital through qualitative education, health facilities, social inclusion, environmental sustainability and individual competiveness will guarantee a society free of human trafficking. Regrettably, lack of human security (development) contributes to socio-economic decay, which manifests itself in human trafficking. Following this unfortunate circumstance, Nigeria is witnessing unbearable upsurge in the numbers of young men, children and women leaving the country on the expectation for a greener pastures in Italy, Belgium, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, United States, Gabon, Ghana, Morocco, Libya among other countries. Trafficking in persons is mainly exploited by organized criminals group (cartel) because of the failure of government to minister to the basic needs of the people. Human security according to Imobighe (2001:14) refers to the satisfaction of human needs in the utilization of resources instead of pursuing excessive security aggrandizement on the façade of combating human trafficking in Nigeria. The point of emphasis is that instead of building massive and
formidable security agencies such as National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP), Nigeria Immigration Service, the Nigeria Police and other security agencies, the government can simply invest in the provision of basic human needs to stem the tide of human trafficking. This gap is being exploited by human traffickers because of lack of basic human needs which is a distortion to national development both in Nigeria and other African countries. Consequently the rate of poverty, unemployment and inequality all over the place are unprecedented and incredibly alarming. The same view was briefly expressed by President Maumoon Abdul Gayoon of Maldives cited by Imobighe (1998:15) when he said:

> economic development ... is the frontline of battle...Remove the debilitating effects of poverty, and the first - the most important – battle will be won, and quite possibly the war. It will be enough, or indeed good enough, for the small states ... to be just well defended bastions of poverty.

For development to equate with security, government should embark in policies that will minister to the basic needs of the people to prevent human trafficking. To this end, security encompasses safety from hunger, diseases, unemployment, illiteracy and poverty, among others. The neglect of these critical indices provides a veritable background for human trafficking in Nigeria. Lack of access to education and information renders somebody ignorant, unenlightened, uninformed and thus vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and deceptions and above all, being trafficked. This is pertinent as Okereke (2003:31) posited that poor and government insensitivities to the basic needs of the people are the bane of development crisis. The inability of the government to contain structural imbalances has made human trafficking uncontrollable and popular. Human trafficking is gaining attraction because of the frustrations, disillusionment and hopelessness perpetrated by various leaderships of this country. Leadership as the name implies has to do with the management of people with clear defined goals and objectives. It involves the mobilization and motivation of people for greater productivity whether at family, community, national or global levels. Leadership is one of the essential determinants of development and core ingredients in organizing, mobilizing and inspiring societal resources for the attainment of set goals. The consistent security problems arising from poverty, unemployment, hunger, inadequate health facility orchestrated by the ruling elites more often than not instigates human trafficking and other social vices (Akinterinwa, 2015:13). To this end, good leadership Bello (2010:15) aptly argues:

> .... is generally used as a tool to tackle national security. It is used as a problem-solving and solution-making tool. Issues relating to government responsibilities such as protecting the lives and property of the citizens.. Improving standard of living as well as protecting the people’s ways of life are all human security issues which the government handles and addresses

Therefore the need to address issues such as unemployment, high cost of living, poverty, corruption, high level of illiteracy amongst others should be predicated on reducing the increasing phenomenon of human trafficking in Nigeria. More importantly, in a society that is threatened by unemployment, hunger, diseases, poverty and given the unprecedented number of people suffering, disillusioned, dehydrated and frustrated by what government
does and what it fails to do encourage human trafficking as alternative standard to arrest their deteriorating situations. The failure of successive administrations in Nigeria to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among its citizens solely helped to propagate human trafficking. Also, the high level of corrupt practices in Nigeria has affected the common life of the citizens which undauntedly persuade them into human trafficking to upgrade their living standard. There is no doubt that the astronomical budget spending on military weapons for traditional security is biting hard on other critical sectors of the economy. This means resources that would have been used to minister to the basic needs of the common man are inevitably diverted to guarantee physical security which is elusively a false sense of security. In the light of Imobighe’s view (1998:23), it means investing on military hardware for protecting a country’s territorial integrity, sovereignty and national core values at the neglect of non-military threats is a false sense of security. The interest being portrayed is that human security should form the bed-rock of our national security policy and not the militaristic perception of it because it is the security of the ordinary persons that translate to national development. This is why McNamara (1968:32) clearly opines that:

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\text{there is among us an almost ineradicable tendency to think of our security problem as being exclusively a military problem and to think of military problem as being exclusively a weapons or manpower problem. We tend to conceive of national security almost solely as a state of arms readiness, a vast, awesome arsenal of weaponry. We still tend to assume that it is primarily this purely military ingredient that creates security. We are haunted by this concept of military hardware.}
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1.10 National Development

National development is the ability of a county to improve the living standard such as quality of education, potable water, transportation infrastructure, medical care, employment, food amongst others. Onosu (2009:19) postulates that any process of development should have the following features:

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\text{Development should bring change. This change should be for the better. The change should be for the benefit of the majority of the people. The process should be participatory. So, it should involve the people as closely as possible.}
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From the view of Onosu, government should gear its policies towards development because most children are out of schools roaming the streets, unemployment biting hard on Nigerian graduates, inability to access health services among others incite human migration into what has become modern slavery. In the same vein, national development according to Imoh (2009:31) is a process of social change within a society, or nation which involves a process of national integration, elite-mass integration, territorial integration and values integration. Development is only national when it is geared towards emancipating the poor from the dungeon of poverty, unemployment, hunger, environmental degradation, illiteracy, diseases amongst others. Rodney (1972:45) lucidly captured development as the capacity for self-sustaining growth with an increased capacity to produce. Derivative from this definition, human beings are agents of development and their contributions are required if a nation must be elevated from underdevelopment. From various observations, development has the
attributes of stability, human protection, comfort, happiness and the protection of values and individuals against anything that seeks to limit his dreams and aspirations such as human trafficking.

Similarly, Asen (2009:28) reassured that, development has to do with the mobilizing of all the available human and material resources of a society with the final goal of achieving quality of living standard. It is known that most victims already trafficked to Europe and other countries of the world are alienated from participating in policy making and cannot achieve quality of living standard except they are part of the policy makers. From the contribution of Igbuzor (2006:38) development requires growth and structural change, some measures of distributive equity, modernization in the social and cultural attitudes, a degree of political transformation and stability, an improvement in health and education so that population growth stabilizes and an increase in urban life and employment. In the view of Nnoli (1981:45) development is a phenomenon associated with changes in man’s inherent capacity to live better and rewarding life. This implicitly suggests that development is all-embracing and integrated to include basic human needs for a rewarding life to be attained. From the corollary of the above, Seers (1977:27) sees development in terms of a reduction in poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Therefore, from the account of the various views, Nigeria can hardly by any standard be described as taking appreciable steps in the country’s march towards development in the midst of self-centered policies, mismanagement, embezzlement, corruption amongst others. From the foregoing to talk of national development is to talk about collective improvement in the socio-economic and political life of the people to reduce poverty, inequality and unemployment that have made human trafficking popular.

1.11 The Implications of Human Trafficking for National Development
Human trafficking is one of the biggest challenges affecting Nigeria. The challenge is such that its magnitude and dimensions have continued to pose tremendous moral, socio-economic burden on Nigerian citizens. According to Saraki cited by Umoru (2017:16) human trafficking over the years has become a fundamental threat to national development in view of the bad image being created for the Nigeria and the overall security implications posed by victims of trafficking. More importantly, this has also attracted international media to project all sorts of cynical and dehumanizing comments on Nigeria. It has also been observed that the death of victims of human trafficking affects the productivity of their families, the community and the nation at large. Since human beings are agent of development, the death of a person is a colossal loss to national development as manpower or labour force of the country is depleted. This is because the importance of human resources in the management of material resources is indispensable since machines cannot operate itself. Baran (1978:56) opined that actual economic surplus and potential economic surplus are indices of development. This implies that human trafficking affect the actual and potential economic surplus of a country as people are constantly migrating from their country to another thereby affecting their generating capacity for sustainable national development. The ultimate basis of wealth of a nation revolves around the abundance of its sound and useful human resources. Therefore, a country where human trafficking is predominant, such a country is endangered with health related problems such as HIV/AIDS, pelvic inflammatory diseases and by
extension limits productivity, entrepreneurial activities and viable contribution to the economy. Furthermore, Krug, et al (2002:63) articulated that early childhood trafficking exposes them child labour and violence which can affect the brain development and thereby increases the child’s susceptibility to a range of mental and physical health problems.

1.12 Government and non-governmental organizations’ preventive efforts
A lot of efforts have been made and are still being made to combat human trafficking in Nigeria. Such endeavours as reported by Schoolmattazz (2016:112) are presented below:

1. National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP) is a governmental organisation created for the eradication of human traffic in Nigeria. The 2003 NAPTIP law enforcement and administration Act amended in 2005 to increase penalties for trafficking offenders, prohibits all forms of human trafficking. The Law’s prescribed penalties of 5 years imprisonment and/or a $670 fine with hard labour. 10 years imprisonment for trafficking of children and forced begging or hawking and 10 years imprisonment – life imprisonment for sexual enslavement are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with penalties prescribed for other crimes such as rape.


3. Woman Trafficking and Children Labour Eradication Foundation (WATCLEF) is a Non-governmental organisation which has embarked on lots of public awareness programmes and other efforts to stop human trafficking mostly on female folds who end up becoming prostitutes abroad thereby giving Nigeria a bad image abroad. WATCLEF together with NAPTIP enacted the July 2003 abolition laws of human trafficking of children under 18 years of age.

4. Idia Renaissance a non-governmental organisation established by Eki Igbinedion in Benin City, Edo state has been helping to stem the tide of human trafficking by engaging the youths in acquiring various skills and trade that will help them to be self-reliant

1.13 Conclusion
Human trafficking had reached crisis proportions in the country with severe implications for national security. The propensity is very high as thousands of young Nigerians continued to risk their lives into unnecessary slavery as they attempt to transit across the Sahara desert and the Mediterranean Sea on the false promise of a better life in Europe and beyond. The scourge and rate of the victims increase on daily basis, especially women and children who are being trafficked across international borders annually. Based on the potentially high profits, minimal risk of detection and punishment coupled with lack of human security makes trafficking for sexual exploitation and other related reasons for trafficking a tempting enterprise. Consequently, the victims are made to work under harsh conditions and some of them are violated, raped or sexed to death.

To this end, this paper however buttressed that government is principally responsible for human trafficking in Nigeria. This is derivable from its negligence in fostering human security which is a sure way of creating a conducive environment for individuals to thrive. Once the
basic needs are provided and every individual is satisfied, it will be difficult to indulge in human trafficking. This implies that if the human beings in the society are well provided for and happy, then the society will spread out with happiness to eschew migration leading to human slavery. Finally, once their basic needs are neglected and they are frustrated, then the response to it, is to lend themselves to be trafficked across national borders for purported better life.

1.14 Recommendations

1. Government should adopt a sound human security policy predicated on the needs of the generality of people instead of its excessive concentration on equipping the security agencies such as National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP), the Nigeria Immigration Service, and the Nigeria Police Force among others to wage war against human traffickers. This implies that if the human beings in the society are well provided for the society will eschew migration leading to human slavery. It was also emphasized that government should embrace broad public participation in national affairs, judicious resource allocation and good resource management to discourage human trafficking in Nigeria. The government must ensure that there is reduction in poverty, inequality, illiteracy and unemployment so as to create enabling environment to prevent people from being vulnerable and exploited through human trafficking.

2. However, the security and law enforcement agencies should avoid competing among themselves to appreciate active synergy, integrated and collaborative engagements in arresting and prosecuting barons of human traffickers.

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