

Students' Perception of the Relative Causes of Human Trafficking In Nigeria

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Abstract *The problem of human trafficking is a social problem among youth in some parts of Nigeria and many factors have been adduced as the probable causes. The paper seeks to validate some of the proposed causes. A survey design using ex-post facto method was employed to carry out the study. A cross section of six hundred undergraduate students randomly selected from three universities in southwestern Nigeria was used as the study sample. A self-constructed, validated questionnaire was administered and analysed using simple percentage to determine the relative causes and degree of effect of each of the causes identified.*

Key Words: *Perception, Human Trafficking, Poverty, Curriculum, Social Problems*

1. Background to the Study

1.1. Meaning of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking has become a social menace in our society. It has gone beyond a local problem, but has assumed a status of global threat and lay credence to the saying that all crimes have international implications and consequences. Human trafficking is a fraudulent recruitment, transfer or harbouring of persons by means of threat or deceit for exploitative purpose, which could be for prostitution, forced labour, ritual, among others. It is a form of modern day slavery that involves abduction, coercion, violence and exploitation in the most reprehensible ways (Loar 1999, Essien 2001).

The United States President Interagency on Trafficking defined human trafficking as the recruitment, transport, harboring, transfer, sale of receipt of person through coercion, fraud or deception in order to set people in a situation such as forced prostitution, domestic servitude, sweatshop labour or other kinds of work to pay off debts.

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) (1999) states the following as all acts that could be referred to as human trafficking;

1. all acts involved in the recruitment, abduction, transport (within or across boards), sale, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons by threat or use of force, deceptions, coercion (including abuse of authority) or debt bondage;
2. for the purpose of placing or holding such a person, whether for pay or not in involuntary servitude, forced or bounded labour or in slavery like conditions (including forced prostitution);
3. in a community other than the one in which the person lived at the time of the original deception, coercion or debt bondage;

1.2. Magnitude of Human Trafficking

There is no accurate statistics on the magnitude due to the following factors.

1. The likelihood that the majority of people who are smuggled or trafficked are never detected by immigration authorities.
2. Lack of systems to collect data on people who are intercepted, and or turned around at airports.
3. Lack of incentive for migrants who have been smuggled or trafficked to divulge information about whether they are part of a larger organized activity, if they are intercepted;
4. The use of different definitions of smuggling and trafficking between countries and between international agencies (UN, 2000).

The available records, however, shows an awesome and thrilling degree of its occurrence. Benzi (2001) noted that Nigerian girls in Italy are about twenty thousand (20,000) and about one hundred and sixteen (116) of them have been killed between 1994 and 1998. Essien (2001) observed that as many as five hundred thousand persons are trafficked into Western Europe each year. According to the United Nations (UN) estimates as stressed by Wijers (1998), seven billion

dollars are being realized annually from trafficking. Wijers (1998) stressed further that out of 95% of the unemployed in Russian Federation, 75% were woman. In Norway, about 150 women cross border on weekly basis. Prostitution in Lithuania is about 1,000-5,000 part of which 20% - 50% were believed to be minors. In 1990, there were 2 million migrants in Asia, 12 million each in North America and Europe, and 7 million in Africa, in which Nigeria and Ethiopia are the leading countries (Wijers, 1998). Loy (2000) estimates that over 700,000 women and children are being trafficked annually and about 45,000 – 50,000 are trafficked annually into the United States. In Kyrgyzstan, about 4,000 women were trafficked in 1999. In Italy, International Organization on Migration (IOM) (2001) observed that there are 20,000-30,000 regular female migrants who entered the sex industry each year, out of which 10%-20% (2,000-6,000) are trafficked.

2. Statement of the Problem

Human trafficking has become a social problem of significant magnitude in Nigeria. Many writers on the subject have suggested some probable causes of this problem. There is an urgent need to determine the veracity of some of the identified causes through empirical investigation.

2.1. Research Questions

1. What are the causes of human trafficking?
2. What is the degree of contribution of each of the causes identified to the problem of human trafficking?

3. Methodology

The research adopted a descriptive survey design using ex-post factor design. Education students from three universities in Southwestern Nigeria were used for the study. A questionnaire was constructed to seek opinion of students in the causes of human trafficking, and the degree of each of identified causes to the problem, using a three options of disagree, undecided and agree, and a rating scale of one to seven (1 -7) scores to rank the identified causes of human trafficking.

Six hundred students from three higher institutions such as Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, the University of Ibadan and the University of Ado-Ekiti; were randomly selected, two hundred from each of the three universities. The study sample consists of both males and females, with age range from 20-30years from various levels of socio-economic status and educational background.

The questionnaires were administered on a one to one basis to the students. Some were given in their classrooms while some in their halls of residence. Most of the questionnaires were collected in the spot. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods- simple percentage.

4. Findings and Discussions

Research question 1

Table 1 The Respondents' Perception of the Causes of Human Trafficking

Items/Variables	Response Options		
	Disagree	Undecided	Agree
Unemployment	22	6	88
Insatiable desire for wealth	6	6	78
Poverty	8	12	80
Discrimination against women	49	21	30
Inadequate curriculum planning	45	29	28
Lack of relevant textbooks in human trafficking	49	46	5
Lack of adequate teacher to teach human trafficking	48	45	10

The data gathered confirmed the above listed factors as causes of human trafficking with varying degree of support by the respondents.

Causes of human trafficking are many, interwoven and complex. Opinion differs among writers and scholars. Raymond et.al. (2002) highlighted the following as the causes of human trafficking.

1. Gender based social and economic inequality in all areas of the globe, assuring supply of them in especially from developing countries and the New Independent State (NIS) in European Union.
2. Male desire and demand for sex prostitution and related sexual entertainment. Macro economic policies promoted by international leading organizations that mandate "structural adjustment" in many developing regions of the world, pushing certain countries (e.g the Philippines) to export women for labour, making them vulnerable to trafficking or to develop economic based on tourism (e.g. Thailand) including sex-tourism.
3. Expansion of trans-national sex industries and increasingly sophisticated predatory recruitment techniques and network.
4. Globalisation of capital and information technology.
5. Armed conflict, military occupation and concentration of military and militia bases in various parts of the world.

According to Tazeen (2002) the causes of human trafficking involve urbanization and the disintegration of rural communities leading to the poverty of already destitute, attitude towards women and question of dowry, polygamy, marital problems, illicit sexual relations and women ostracized on score of chastity, the status of women, institutionalizations of exploitative practices, etc.

The report of a Comparative Study of Woman Trafficked in the Migration Process in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Venezuela, and the United States reports that "by the mid 1990s, women constitute the two-thirds of those unemployed in Russia,... and female unemployment was exacerbated by active government support of male employment and increased sex discrimination and sexual harassment of women".

Santos (2002) listed six factors as responsible for trafficking and prostitution among Filipinos. They are:

- i. poverty and lack of economic opportunities;
- ii. low levels of education and lack of information about the process of recruitment;
- iii. history of sexual abuse;
- iv. family pressure;
- v. aspiration of the women, often accompanied by the growing sense of personal and economic autonomy;
- vi. alleged success stories of those who migrated for income abroad.

Oloruntimehin (2001) outlined the following as the causes of human trafficking;

- i. unprecedented high level of poverty;
- ii. ineffectiveness of societal norms and values;
- iii. low level of education and inadequate training and education opportunities;
- iv. a strong desire to migrate to search for economic and social well being;
- v. a high demand for trafficked persons in Asia and Europe;

Table 2 Trafficking flows from African Countries

Origin Countries	Destination Countries
Ghana	Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Lebanon, Libya, USA.
Nigeria	Italy, Belgium, Netherlands.
Ethiopia	Middle East, Gulf States
Mali	Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria (children), Saudi Arabia, Kuwait (domestic Labour)

Sources: IOM Quarterly Bulletin, April 2001, p2

Table 3: Trafficking flows within Southeast Asia

From	To	Purpose
VIET Nam (Northern Regions)	China	Marriage
Viet Nam	Taiwan	Marriage
Cambodia	Cambodia	Sex industry
Cambodia (N, N, W)	Internal	Sex industry
Cambodia	Thailand (Children & Women)	Primary begging, also sex industry and domestic labour
Thailand	Taiwan, Singapore Internal	Sex industry, domestic

Sources: IOM Quarterly bulletin, April 2001, P3

Table 4: Trafficking flows in South Asia

From	To	Type	Scale
Nepal	India	Sex industry	5,000-7,000 women and girls/year of 500,000 prostitutes in India.
Bangladesh	India	Sex industry	It is estimated that 13,500 are Bangladeshi 4,500 women & children
Bangladesh Total Bangladeshis Trafficked	Pakistan Middle East Internal	Sex industry Children begging, labour, Sex industry, child soldiers. Some sex industry domestic	200,000 women & children (1963 boys in last 10 years)
Sri Lanka Sri Lanka		labour	Affects 100, 000 children in Sri Lanka under age of 16. 2,000-3,000 children / year

Sources: IOM Quarterly Bulletin, April 2001, PS

Grayer (2000) observed that crave for exotic sex is a strong factor responsible for increase in human trafficking. He argued that for a large number of people, someone else looks better. A Somali will perceive an Egyptian as looking "petty good". To an Egyptian living in Egypt, a Greek is looking prettier. To a Greek in Greece, a Belgium looks "Pretty good". It is not out of place for a Caucasian wanting to have a 'taste' of Negroid, a Mongoloid wanting to have a sexual 'taste' of an African, a black wanting a sexual 'taste' of Asian and vice-versa.

The economic gains from human trafficking are another motivating factor responsible for its continuous expansion. Hajdinjak (2002) noted that the business of illegal trafficking is exceptionally fast growing because of the following reasons;

- I. the profits are incomparably higher than the risk involved;
- II. unlike other forms of trafficking, illegal human trafficking is considered a minor offence in some countries;
- III. no special equipment is needed just as organized network of distribution is absolutely inessential;
- IV. when possibility of danger is noticed, traffickers can easily abandon their victims;
- V. the existence of organized groups and syndicates previously engaging in drug peddling and weapon smuggling that can easily diverts to human trafficking; and
- VI. lastly, the financial gains from human trafficking are awesome.

Research question II

What is the degree of contribution of each of the causes identified to the problem of human trafficking?

Table 5: Respondents Ranking of Variable in Order of Contribution to Human Trafficking

Variables	Scores	Percentage	Position
Poverty	949	91.6	1 st
Unemployment	844	81.47	2 nd
Crave for wealth	788	76.1	3 rd
Discrimination against women	446	43.5	4 th
Inadequate teacher	419	40	5 th
Lack of textbooks	397	38.32	6 th
Inadequate curriculum planning	394	38	7 th

4.1. Poverty

The causes are multi-dimensional and multi-faceted. There is a direct link between poverty and crime (Quinney, 1980). Fadeyomi posited that the poor are constrained to obtain their needs through institutionalized means and actually resort to anomic as a means of fulfilling aspirations. Poverty according to them, contributes to social deviation such as delinquency, drug addiction and general criminology. Seventy-two percent (72%) of the respondents agreed that human trafficking was caused by poverty and ranked first in the ranking other. Poverty in Nigeria is alarming. As of 1978, World Bank ranking showed Nigeria as middle income country with a per capita income of about 1,000 US Dollar, and enjoyed an exchange rate of 2 US Dollars to 1 Naira and 2 Naira to 1 UK Pounds Sterling. Over years, the country has negatively slide down the scale. As at 1990, the per capita income was 290 US Dollars and now 17th poorest country in the world.

There is a wide gap between the rich and the poor. The highest ten percent earn more than the forty percent of the gross income.

4.2. Unemployment

Unemployment ranked second by the respondents as a factor causing human trafficking. Aina (1998) agreed that women make up only about thirty six (36%) percent of the total labour force. According to a study on Public Policy conducted in Thailand by the Chulalongkorn University Political Economy, prostitution was the largest underground business. This sector of the economy represents about 15%-18% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) (Raymond, et al, 2002). There are lots of inconsistencies in the real of education and curriculum that have stereotyped women and limit their scope in employment industry. Girls drop out of school at early age due to factors such as cultural beliefs, unwanted pregnancies, early marriage, and heavy demands of household chores.

4.3. Crave for Wealth

Another factor rated high is propensity to acquire wealth regardless of the legality and morality of the source. Previous 'success' of some trafficked women lured some others into trafficking, unfortunately sources of those 'successes' are unknown until they become victim of prostitution. On coming back home, they were able to acquire land, buy houses, luxurious objects such as gold, necklaces, etc which they would not have been able to afford if they had remained in their villages. The education implication of this among students is hydra-headed. In a society where education is solely perceived as a means of acquiring financial freedom through paid employment or government jobs, school enrolment may likely reduce. This is predicated on the fact that there is unconventional ways of acquiring wealth. Curriculum should be design to cater for this subtle negative trend

The table below shows the monetary values of expected income from human trafficking.

Table 6 : Monetary Value of Trafficking in US \$

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Monetary Values in US \$</i>
<i>Australia</i>	<i>2,500</i>
<i>South East & Eastern Europe</i>	<i>2,500</i>
<i>China</i>	<i>24,000</i>
<i>Central & South Asia</i>	<i>11,000</i>
<i>Albania</i>	<i>950</i>
<i>Montenegrin</i>	<i>1,250</i>
<i>Middle East</i>	<i>7,500</i>
<i>Balkan States</i>	<i>1,500</i>
<i>Italian Mafia</i>	<i>3,000</i>
<i>Philippine</i>	<i>1,650</i>

Compiled from: *Smuggling in Southeast Europe* by Hajdinjak (2002)

4.4. Discrimination against Women

Women and children constitute the victim of human trafficking. It is pertinent to ask- why women trafficking and not men trafficking? Put in other way, why the victims of human trafficking are overwhelmingly women and not men? Wish to argue that there are fundamental factors that work negatively against women interest and subject them recipients of all sorts of injustice oppression and discrimination.

Alao (1998) highlighted inconsistencies that characterized women education. Girls drop out more often from school due to pregnancies, early marriage, heavy demands to perform household tasks, and economic reasons because of limited occupational choices. The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports on human trafficking shows that prostitution is a symbol of men's ability to execute power over women as a consequence of the structural sub-ordinate of women in society (IOM, 1997). Loy (2000) remarked that the low status of women in many countries contributed as well. Children and girls particular are pulled out of school early enhancing the likelihood that they will end up in the hands of traffickers.

4.5. Educational Implication and Policy Option

From the foregoing, fundamental bane of women disadvantages position could be attributed to their educational attainment, imbalance policy statement and patriarchal structure that naturally put men over men. International Organization on Migration (IOM, 1997) observed that migration inhibit women's education prospects, and girls were disadvantaged in terms of the quality, relevance and appropriateness of education. Akande (1998) observed that religion, folklore, norms and cultural values impress on the female that the more educated she is the more careful she must be in order to be regarded as "stable" for the home and the society. Alao (1998) pointed out that textbooks are full of materials that reinforce gender discrimination and sex stereotyping. School system subtly but loudly encourage male child to be a rugged engineer or a medical doctor while encouraging the female child to become a gentle nurse or primary pupils teacher.

To address this imbalance, the following recommendations are suggested as basis of policy formulation.

- I. Compulsory free education for girl child up to senior secondary school level. Non-compliance to the rule by public members should attract punitive measures on the parents of such a girl child. This will put parents or red alert to ensure that their wards are in the school, they are not given out in marriage at school age and are not subject of street hawking and abuses.
- II. Provision of scholarship for a substantial percentage of girls in higher institution. Criteria for selection should be clearly defined to avoid favoritism.
- III. Private and public organization should be compelled by legislation to devote a certain quota of available jobs to qualified women. A respected percentage of forty five percent (45%) may be prescribed.
- IV. Heavy punishment should be meted on anybody caught engaging in human trafficking.
- V. School curriculum should embedded skill acquisition, entrepreneurship and skill application. This is meant to reduce the spate of unemployment in the society.
- VI. School should also endeavor to train students on interpersonal development skill. Teachers could foster this by;
 - i. communicating that own beliefs, feelings and convictions.
 - ii. self-monitor that thinking process.
 - iii. select an appropriate strategy to resolve international conflict.
 - iv. recognize and demonstrate mutual respect between/ among human beings.
 - v. encourage mutual dependence
 - vi. teaching of egalitarian concept.
 - vii. recognition and teaching of worth of human values above material possession.

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