

YOUTH TRAFFICKING: ITS EFFECTS AND SOLUTIONS

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Abstract

Human trafficking involves recruitment, harbouring or transporting people into a situation of exploitation through the use of violence, deception or coercion and forced to work against their will. Human traffickers are different from smugglers, even though it could equally be attributed as one of the forms of trafficking, because sometimes its result is unfavourable. Smugglers collect money from those concerned and smuggle them across borders, once they are crossed, they are free, while human trafficking is basically exploitation of people. In human trafficking, the victims operate both internally and externally. It is a global phenomenon. What this means is that it can be happening around you, in your village or community, state or country. This is one of the worst evils happening to humanity, it is man's inhumanity to man. Even though efforts are being made to eradicate it, but the efforts need to be increased. This work therefore joins many other voices in the world to bring to the awareness of Nigerian youths precisely that this evil is going on everyday and its implications are not what wishing an enemy. This paper has discovered that the victimization of poor and vulnerable masses has excluded them from the human race and commodified them like animals and vegetables in the market. The right and access to justice has no significant meaning and worth for them. The paper therefore calls for vigilance and solicit for the help of everyone to assist the world in eliminating this evil.

Keywords: Human Trafficking, Smuggling, Migration, Human Dignity

Introduction

Trafficking according to Cambridge Dictionary means, "the act of buying or selling goods illegally, for example, arms/drugs trafficking or the act of buying or selling people or making money from work they are forced to do, such as hard labour, sex work"¹ etc. The second definition is the concern of this paper. Youth/human trafficking therefore becomes the action or practice of illegally transporting people from one country or area to another, typically for the purposes of forced labour or sexual exploitation. Furthermore, "Human trafficking involves recruitment, harbouring or transporting people into a situation of exploitation through the use of violence, deception or coercion and forced to work against their will."² Human traffickers are different from

¹ Cambridge Dictionary

² Anti -Slavery International/ Registered Charity 1049160. Available at <http://www.antislavery.org>> slavery-today>human-trafficking. Sourced 9/11/2019

smugglers, even though it could equally be attributed as one of the forms of trafficking, because sometimes its result is unfavourable. Smugglers collect money from those concerned and smuggle them across borders, once they are crossed, they are free, while human trafficking is basically exploitation of people. In human trafficking, the victims operate both internally and externally. It is a global phenomenon. What this means is that it can be happening around you, in your village or community, state or country. This is one of the worst evils happening to humanity, it is man's inhumanity to man. Even though efforts are being made to eradicate it, but the efforts need to be increased. This work therefore joins many other voices in the world to bring to the awareness of Nigerian youths precisely that this evil is going on everyday and its implications are not what wishing an enemy.

Forms of Youth/Human Trafficking

There are different types of human trafficking, few of them will be discussed in this paper.

1. Trafficking for forced labour, which is “basically exploiting someone for the purpose of labor and services.”³ The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) defines labor trafficking as: “The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery.”⁴ In most cases, they are recruited and trafficked using deception, lies and other forms of coercion and find themselves held in conditions of slavery in a variety of jobs in many industries. They are forced to work against their will. Sometimes they make them work round the clock without pay and most times with meager payment. The common types of labor trafficking include people forced to work in homes as domestic servitudes, farmworkers that is agricultural coerced through violence as they harvest crops, or factory workers, such as construction works, mining and fisheries. These are held in inhumane conditions with little or no pay. Many Nigerian youths are victims of these in Dubai and other parts of the world. About eight of them were sent back to Nigeria in February this year 2019 by a company because they complained about the treatment being

³ Brendan Reynolds, (2019). “Identifying the types of human trafficking”. Available at <https://www.localdvm.com/infocus-2/identifying-the-types-of-human-t...> Sourced 9/11/2019

⁴ National Human Trafficking Hotline. “Labor Trafficking”. Available at <http://humantraffickinghotline.org/type-trafficking/labor-trafficking>

given to them by the managers of the construction company they were working for.

2. Trafficking for forced criminal activities: Many youths are involved in this type of crime. Most often, they are introduced to this crime by the criminal rich men and women in the society, promising to help them. Sometimes some of them are aware of the nature of the business, while most times they are used unknowingly. These can include theft or arm robbery, drug cultivation, selling counterfeit goods, or forced begging. Victims often have quotas and can face severe punishment if they do not perform as expected by their masters.
3. Trafficking in women for sexual exploitation:

This refers to the recruitment and transportation of women across national or international borders either voluntarily or involuntarily, for sexual or domestic purposes. It also includes the purchase, sale, transfer, receipt or harboring of young girls and women through deception for the purpose of subjecting the women and girls to involuntary servitude.⁵

Female youths and children are the most vulnerable of this evil especially those of them from developing countries. They are easily lured into this business through making of promises by the traffickers of decent employment into leaving their homes and travelling to what they consider will be a better life. They are often provided with false travel documents and an organized network is used to transport them to the destination country. Reaching there, they find themselves forced into sexual exploitation and held in inhumane conditions and constant terror without any opportunity to refuse. Refusal most often had led to the death of many.

4. Trafficking for the removal of organs: this is another lucrative crime going on in the world today. There are many people in different parts of the world who are in need of kidney transplant or any other organ of the body. They have money but no spare organ. Hospitals have promised of such transplants when available. So, there is a long waiting list. Criminals in different parts of the world have seized this opportunity to exploit the desperation of patients and potential donors. Thus, many youths have fallen victims to this. They promised them of giving them jobs, sometimes, they pay for their travel

⁵ Linus Akor, (2011). "Trafficking of Women in Nigeria: Causes, Consequences and the Way Forward", in *Corvinus Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* Vol.2. pg. 94.

expenses, when they arrive to their destinations, they are made to donate their organs. Many of them lose their lives in the process.

4. **Forced marriage:** I once witnessed in Italy a Nigerian couple whose age difference between the man and the girl was alarming, when I was opportune to teach marriage course in one parish. I thought that the girl was the man's daughter, she was below 18 years while the man was above 50 years. During counselling, the girl was lamenting how she was deceived into marrying her father's age mate. Her story was so pathetic. This is happening everyday both locally and abroad.
5. **Domestic servitude:** many children or youths are also victims of domestic servitude. In Nigeria today, many boys have served "rich men" in order to learn trading from them and ended up leaving their masters frustrated and ruined. There is always an agreement between their masters and the family members to settle them with money or begin a business of their own after the years of service. But the stories most times is unbelievable. The slave boys will be doing well until the last year of their service, the story changes, that most times, they are sent back to their homes with allegations, which most times are frameup stories. Similar to that are the "housemaids" who go through different kinds of torture in the mistress's or master's house. They deny them access to school or leaning of hand works, no good meals and wears. They work without rest and receive beating over any slightest mistake.

Causes of Youth/Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a heart-breaking plague that has so much affected our society. It is a reality too hard to believe but it is living with us and is happening every day in different parts of the world. Anyone can become victim of this plague especially the youths. It affects the youths more because of some of the factors discussed in this paper. They are: traffickers, poverty, unemployment, lack of education, displacement, broken families, greediness etc.

1. Traffickers

Indeed, as presented by Richmond, "the root cause of human trafficking is traffickers"⁶ Traffickers are not among the poor in the society. To be a trafficker, you must have the means, which means that it is some of the rich people that are involved in this business. As earlier mentioned, this is a new

⁶ John Cotton Richmond, (2017). "The Root Cause of Trafficking is Traffickers". The Human Trafficking Institute. Available at <https://www.traffickinginstitute.org>the-root-cause-oftrafficking-is-traffi...> Sourced 15/11/2019

version of slave trade, which was condemned as inhuman treatment against humanity. Some persons use the opportunity of hardship in Nigeria and many parts of the world to take advantage of the vulnerable in our society. According to Hartmann, “traffickers’ prey on others’ weaknesses, unfortunate circumstances, unfamiliarity, and inexperience. Traffickers are trained to identify vulnerability and use expert manipulation tactics to persuade and control their victims. They identify a void and offer to fill it.”⁷

2. Unemployment

Many youths in Nigeria for example, who have finished their studies and have been carrying their certificates from one place to another seeking for employments without result. Some of them their families are living in difficult conditions, many become desperate, and that desperation makes them vulnerable to traffickers. Their desperation gives the traffickers opportunity to strike.

Poverty is one of the factors that is encouraging human trafficking in Nigeria. Poverty makes people vulnerable to this evil. For example, a young man or woman who cannot comfortably afford a good meal in a day and someone comes with promises on how to give such person brighter future, if such appears to be his or her only option, such a person may gladly accept the offer and be willing to do whatever he or she is asked to do.

2. Displacement

Displacement is another factor that has brought a rapid growth in human trafficking. Many parts of Nigeria have experienced a good number of IDP camps which means Internally Displaced Persons. “The number of internally displaced persons in Nigeria is approximately a third of the IDPs in Africa and 10 per cent of IDPs in the world. The report ranked Nigeria 3rd. with 3.3 million displaced persons, behind Syria and Columbia which have 6.5 and 5.7 million IDPs respectively.”⁸ Many States in Nigeria have been heavily affected, for example “the North East and North Central states have been the hardest hit. Zamfara, Borno, Yobe and Adamawa in the North East, and Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue, Taraba in North Central.”⁹ This is due to constant attack of Boko Haram, herdsmen clashes with farmers and ethno-religious violence. These instabilities have led to escape of many youths in the hands

⁷Micah Hartmann, (2018), “Causes & Effects of Human Trafficking”. Available at <http://blog.Theexodusroad.com/causes-effects-of-human-trafficking>. Sourced 15/11/2019.

⁸ *Nigeria Civil Society SITUATION ROOM*, (2019). “IDPs and the 2019 Elections”. Available at <http://www.placng.org/situationroom/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ID...>

⁹ *Nigeria Civil Society SITUATION ROOM*, (2019)

of human traffickers, while searching for safety and survival. Below is the statistics of people displaced due to the above-mentioned factors between 2016 and 2018.

States	No of IDPs in 2016	No of IDPs in 2018
Adamawa	265,782	164,150
Bauchi	70,078	53,309
Benue	175,070	122,000
Borno	1,434,149	1,364,539
FCT	11,680	
Gombe	25,332	31,909
Kaduna	36,976	
Kano	9,331	
Nasarawa	37,553	
Plateau	77,317	38,000
Taraba	50,227	63,272
Yobe	131,203	105,311

In recent years, the States of Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa and Benue have also experienced a rise in the incidence of internal displacement. Between January and June 2018, led to the displacement of 417,000 people in the Middle Belt.¹⁰ Apart from the above-mentioned causes of displacement, natural disaster like water is also another factor that is responsible for displacement even though minimal comparing to Boko Haram insurgency and the Fulani herdsmen attacks.

a. Ignorance

Most times ignorance can be an instrument to human trafficking. It could be because of lack of education or lack of awareness or Inexperience. According to Hartmann “a teenager who is approached by a trafficker may accept an attractive job offer, seeing it as a great opportunity at such a young age. An immigrant who arrives in a foreign country may not understand his or her rights, may be unfamiliar with the nation’s laws, or may not know the national language. A trafficker will quickly take advantage of these types of situations.”¹¹

¹⁰ *Nigeria Civil Society SITUATION ROOM, (2019*

¹¹ Micah Hartmann, (2018), “Causes &Effects of Human Trafficking”. Available at [http:// blog. Theexodusroad .com>causes-effects-of-human-trafficking](http://blog.Theexodusroad.com/causes-effects-of-human-trafficking). Sourced 15/11/2019.

b. Greed

Greediness can be a major factor that contributes to human trafficking. Most youths and families have been informed by reliable sources about the danger of allowing oneself or one's children to travel either to cities or abroad on the promises of getting a job for them. Sometimes, such advice is ignored. People want to become rich overnight; this ambition has destroyed many youths in Nigeria.

C. Broken Families/ Death

Families that parents are divorced because of one problem or another, are sometimes victims to this modern slavery called human trafficking and sometimes youths who have lost a mother or father or both parents and are in the mercy of relatives to train them. Some of them are cast out of their homes, abandoned, or placed into the child welfare system. While some due to challenges at home may run away from their homes These groups can be forced to do anything for survival either by their guardians since they are not their biological children or by themselves. Experience of "homelessness, and those who live in isolation are often targeted by traffickers. When someone feels alone or unloved or has been abused in the past, they may be willing to take great risks. They may feel as though they have little to lose or may even find comfort living with their traffickers. Some traffickers offer love and acceptance to lure individuals to work for them.¹² There are many other factors which are not discussed in this paper, some of them are, political situations of different countries, war, social/cultural practices.

The Effects of Trafficking on the Victims

The concern of this paper is to discuss the consequences of trafficking on those who are being captured or deceived or manipulated and tortured by their fellow human beings not on the traffickers themselves. Few of such effects are discussed below.

d. Psychological Effect

Most of those trafficked go through serious mental trauma. The traffickers dehumanize the victims and are used as objects. When a human being is objectified, such a person loses his or her sense of innate power and dignity. The person feels useless in life. The experience they go through causes traumatic stress. Some of them will find it difficult to trust people again,

¹² Micah Hartmann, (2018), "Causes & Effects of Human Trafficking"

which may lead to difficulty in relating with people, depression, anxiety, fear, guilt and shame and other mental. These effects can hurt the victims throughout their lives.

e. Physical / Health Effects

Many victims experience physical injuries. Many are sexually abused by their traffickers and customers. They may be raped, beaten, and subjected to abuse over a long period of time. There is a risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, infections, and other sicknesses, such as eye damaged, lung diseases etc. Many lose their lives in the process. Look at this story sent on one of the social Media by Dr. Veronica, a member of APAS. She said that;

last night, my nineteen-year-old daughter got a mouthwatering offer for an ushering job. The pay was N10,000 per day. It was for 3 days. She and her friends were excited about the offer. We had been talking about discerning spirit and she just felt all wasn't right. When something is too good to be true then it is. She said one of the things that struck her was when he offered her VIP section to usher and she asked if the pay was different, he said no so she opted for regular. She then googled the event the guy mentioned. There was nothing on the net about the event. For a big company like Coca Cola there should be some hype about their launch but that wasn't the case. There was nothing about it on social media or their site. She became suspicious. The address he also dropped was bogus too. She called the guy to ask questions he couldn't answer. When they were too much, he blocked her. She quickly notified her friends and one of them called him. Guess what, he was arranging a hookup for them for the weekend. Imagine! If the girls had shown up, they would have been lured for hookup. But was it really hookup? The kidnap spree now is no more to get money but for organ harvesting. People are disappearing especially young girls and it is because they are lured with financial gains. Imagine making N30k in a weekend for standing for six hours. Many young girls will jump at it, but these are ways of trafficking girls into prostitution or get their organs.

Those who are involved in hard or forced labour, may be working in dangerous conditions for hours without rest and payment. For example, those working in construction factories, they may also be exposed to dangerous contaminants or work with heavy equipment. As a result, many are subjected

to serious infections, respiratory problems, injuries, impairments, and exhaustion.¹³ Even poor habitations and poor diet can cause malnutrition to the victims. The victims are not given any medical attention. “Those recruited in chemical factories are treated like modern-day slaves and when they succumb to occupational diseases, are quickly replaced by another batch of victims.”¹⁴

f. Substance Abuse

This is one of the terrible effects of human trafficking. Trafficked victims may be subjected to substance abuse by their traffickers. Some are “forced to use drugs or alcohol to ensure their compliance and to enable them to take on more clients, work longer hours or perform objectionable or risky acts. When they become used to the drugs, they will hardly do without them. They will also sometimes be using them to alleviate the pain of their situation, often resulting to addiction, organ damage, malnutrition, needle-induced infections, overdose and death.”¹⁵

Solutions on How to Help Stop Youth and Human Trafficking

As earlier mentioned, human trafficking affects both the young, old and children in the society, but the highest group is the youths. Those who are involved in these ill lives among us. Therefore, people should first be conscious of their environment. Parents should take the training of their children serious. Show your children love. Train them in a way that they will be free with you to communicate things happening to them. Build trust in them. Family is the first classroom and the most important. Parents should train their children to be satisfied with what they have not wanting to be like Mr. A or B. It is good to work hard but not envying people whom they are not aware of the source of their wealth.

Greediness both on the path of parents and the youths is one of the major causes of trafficking. One becomes a victim because of one’s ambition to be like his or her friend. There is need to have patient in life. Quick money has

¹³ Micah Hartmann, (2018), “Causes & Effects of Human Trafficking”

¹⁴ Urvashi Pokharna, (2018). “The Devastating Effects of Human Trafficking”. Available at <https://opinionfront.com/effects-of-human-trafficking>. Sourced 22/9/2019.

¹⁵ United Nations, An Introduction to Human Trafficking: Vulnerability, Impact and Action. United Nation, New York, 2008. Pg. 85.

led many youths to doom, so they should learn to be patient in life. Many of our youths do not want to learn hand work or trade. They do not want to be taught by someone. They want to be master of their own as fast as they can make it. It is not a way of survival. So, to avoid falling prey to the traffickers, they need to humble themselves. Greediness go with pride; therefore, they need to know that greediness makes one vulnerable to traffickers. Comparison destroys humans, and youths are fond of this, this paper advises the youths to stop comparing themselves with others. Be yourself, be focus, struggle and you will succeed.

Another crucial point that need to be watched is the use of social media. As good as social media is, it has its disadvantages. We know that 85-90 percent of those patronizing the social media are the youths. We need to educate the youths on the dangers of social media. Traffickers use mostly the internet and other social media and websites to recruit victims or sell trafficked services online. Youths should be careful on who to accept as a friend on your Facebook page. Be slow in accepting friend request from those you do not know or engaging in personal discussions. You make be risking your life by doing so. Therefore, wise use of the social media is very important.

This problem is affecting everyone in one way or the other, so we all need to add our voices to numerous others to create awareness about the ills of human trafficking through the media, in schools, churches, mosques and other avenues. People should be discouraged from travelling abroad for jobs they are not sure of. Programs should be organized in schools and churches to emphasize on this evil of modern slave trade.

Parents should send their children to school, where they cannot afford, States and Countries should be able to give their citizens free education to a particular level. In school, children should be taught rights education. Knowing one's right in particular will help both youth and children to understand their legal and human rights, so they can make good decisions and keep themselves safe. According to Jessinia Ruff, "by educating children and families about their rights and the dangers of human trafficking, children will be less likely to be manipulated or forced into the industry. Children will also be more likely to stay in school, enabling them to eventually get a good job that provides a fair wage."¹⁶ There are so many other ways of stopping

¹⁶ Jessinia Ruff, (2017). "How educating children on their rights can prevent human trafficking". Available at <http://www.onedayswages.org>2017/08/08>rights-education>. Sourced on 26/11/2019

human trafficking, which were not written in this paper. No matter the area we are looking at it, the most crucial way is education and awareness. Everybody has a role to play in fighting human trafficking and it is important we work towards increasing education and creating awareness. Governments have the responsibility of protecting their citizens and are encouraged to do so.

Conclusion

Why is human trafficking t1increasing everyday both in developing and developed countries? Simply the answer could be that the world is facing the following problems: moral problem, criminal problem migration problem, human right problem etc. it is also a fact that human trafficking thrives because it generates lot of money for the traffickers. Apart from the selfish desire of the traffickers, the victims fall prey because of the desire to improve the standard of living and social status. Indeed, human trafficking is one of the worst criminal activities that has affected our world. “It is one of the wicked acts that have made the lives of millions as worse as the hell. This kind of modern slave trade has washed away the humanity among those who are being involved. Human beings have been treated like mere objects by their fellow human beings because individual interest and pleasure. The victimization of poor and vulnerable masses has excluded them from the human race and commodified them like animals and vegetables in the market. The right and access to justice has no significant meaning and worth for them. The paper therefore calls for vigilance and solicit for the help of everyone to assist the world in eliminating this evil.

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