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**HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA**

Human trafficking is the trade of humans for the purpose of force labour, sexual slavery, or commercial sexual exploitation for the trafficker or others. The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act (2003), defines trafficking as all acts and attempted acts involved in the recruitment, transportation within or across Nigeria borders, purchases, sales, transfer, receipt or harbouring of a person involving the use of deception and debt bondage for the purpose of placing or holding the persons, whether for or not involuntary servitude (domestic, sexual or reproductive) in forced or bonded labour, or in slavery-like conditions. Human trafficking is thought to be one of the fastest-growing activities of trans-national criminal organizations.

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery. It is an illegal business and a social problem. Human trafficking is a social problem because it affects different categories of people. It is a social problem because of the magnitude, the trend and pattern it has taken over the years. This business has unleashed untold hardship on victims who are mostly from the female genders. For the crime of trafficking to succeed, there must be people who aid or facilitate the movement and transportation of victims to their destination and also a receiver. In this organized crime there are recruiters, these are people who go to villages to deceive young girls and boys through their parents. They give the impression to parents of assisting their relations for a better education, employment without the full knowledge of what await their children. Recruiters include sisters, brothers, in-laws, driver, business men and women, law enforcement officers, etc. Besides, the two weapons used by traffickers to get their victims are deception and through force. Human trafficking is a crime and it has a chain of syndicate. In this organised crime we have the: Sponsors, financial and facilitators, there are madams, supervisors, collaborators, Victims or persons who are trafficked and exploited. Human trafficking has continued to strive in Nigeria because of collusion among security, immigration, embassy and airline officials and traffickers. These officials often take bribes in exchange for facilitating smooth passage across the borders for traffickers and their victims.

The practice of entrusting poor children to more affluent friends or relatives may create vulnerability. Some parents sell their children, not just for the money, but also in the hope that their children will escape a situation of chronic poverty and move to a place where they will have a better life and more opportunities.

**FORMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

Trafficking in persons can take four (4) different forms within the country, which are:

* **Rural-Urban Trafficking**: This is where victims move from rural areas to urban areas.
* **Urban-Rural Trafficking:** This is where victims move from urban area to rural areas. People in this category are usually trafficked for farming purpose.
* **Rural-Rural Trafficking:** This is a situation where traffickers move victims from one rural area to another.
* **Urban-Urban Trafficking**: This is where traffickers move victims from one urban area to another. Human trafficking unfortunately, is one of the most flourishing and profitable criminal industries of the world. It has sometimes direct and sometimes indirect connections with the illegal arms and illicit drug trade industries.
* **Poverty**: Poverty is the principle driving force behind this trade, propelling vulnerable people into the hands of traffickers, who belong to both small-scale, local enterprises with extensive criminal networks and to large scale multi commodity businesses. Destinations for trafficked Nigerians include the neighboring West African countries (Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Gabon and Guinea), European countries (Italy, Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom), North Africa (Libya, Algeria and Morocco) and Middle Eastern countries (Saudi Arabia). Recently, South America has also become a point of destination for trafficked persons, particularly Venezuela. Primarily women and girls, but boys are also trafficked for purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labour and organ harvesting. (UNESCO, 2006).
* **Conflicts**: Conflict is a push factor for trafficking, migration and poverty. The World Bank report showed that more than 1.5 billion people live in countries affected by violent conflict. For instance, in Nigeria prone conflict zone, Boko- Haram trafficked children and use them as soldiers and militias. Human trafficking had become a major source of concern to all societies in recent time. Human trafficking has put Nigeria on the map of the notorious. The problem has assumed wider dimensions not only to the individual traffickers, but also to the country and societies at large. This problem of human trafficking among Nigerians has called for a search of immediate solution as the traffickers have destroyed the image of the nation (Nigeria) among the comity of nations. Human trafficking leads to shade business which is a crime against humanity.

**Implications of Human Trafficking in Nigeria:**

It has been observed that the victims of human trafficking are not permitted to leave upon arrival at their destination. They are held against their will through acts of coercion and forced to work or provide, services to the traffickers (pimps/madams) whose services may be by bonding, forced labour to commercialized sexual exploitation. In addition, the arrangement may be structured as a work contract, but with no or low payment which are highly exploitative. Also, in some cases the arrangement is structured as debt bondage, with the victim not being permitted or able to pay off the debt. In fact, every Nigerian have the right to life which the traffickers violates by the use of physical coercion that sometimes leads to death and persons rights to personal liberty, which the traffickers deprived victims from enjoying .

Trafficked Victims: Trafficking victims from Nigeria are exposed to psychological problems such as: social alienation both in home and host countries, stigmatization, social exclusion, and intolerance to make reintegration into their local communities difficult.

* **Sex Trafficking:** Sex trafficking is a type of violence perpetrated on women that takes place in diverse settings and usually involves many different actors. It is an aspect of human trafficking that is becoming pandemic in society and possibly, the fastest growing human rights violation in the world today. It has generated a lot of concern worldwide and especially in Nigeria where it is very rampant. In most cases, it involves involuntary servitude and is therefore commonly referred to as modern day slavery. They fell as victims to these deceits because of high level of inflationary trends in the society, acute unemployment, and high poverty rate in the country which majorities of Nigerians found themselves and in which the leaders both at the Federal and State levels had never been conscious enough to address. It is disheartening to know that once these victims reached their destinations, the women discover that they have been deceived and learn the true nature of work that they will be expected to do. To some extent, many of the women were deceived with lies regarding the financial arrangements and conditions of their employment, later to find themselves in abusive situation form which escape is both difficult and dangerous to these women.
* **Child Labour**: Child labour which is a physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development of children in Nigeria can interfere with their education. Child slavery is the sale of any person under the age of 18 for monetary gains by the traffickers. Every Nigerian child has the right to life; right to freedom and access to education.
* **Bonded Labour (Debt bondage**): This is the least known form of labour trafficking today, and yet it is the most widely used methods of enslaving people. Victims become bonded labourers when there is demand as a means of repayment for a loan or service in which its terms and conditions have not been defined or in which the value of the victims’ services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt. The value of their work is greater than the original sum of money “borrowed”.

Conclusively, trafficking in persons has become the largest manifestation of slavery in present times, depriving people of their rights and fundamental freedoms. It is a threat to global development, safety, and peace. Indeed trafficking is harmful to the individual trafficked as well as to society at large. This paper has outlined the various ways human trafficking in Nigeria has violated human rights of the citizens. The paper examined the trends of human trafficking, contributory factors, implications of human trafficking and recommendations to curb the ugly trend.

**References**

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