

## EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR ERADICATING CHILD TRAFFICKING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper looked into education as a tool for eradicating child trafficking in the 21st century. It present child trafficking as a concern in Nigeria presently and as a major violation of children's right and an exploitative way of child labour. It also itemized some certain percentages of Nigerian in sex trade in some nations of the world. e.g Europe, Asia and some common routes by which they were taken, stopover locations with means of transportation were also discussed. The mode of operating child trafficking agencies were also unrevealed, which types of trafficking were highlighted to be internal and external with its causes and effects. Education being an acquisition of knowledge was seen particular ill of the society since education caters for the needs of the society and also forms the bedrock for any national development.*

**KEYWORDS:** Education, tool, eradicating, child trafficking

### INTRODUCTION

Trafficking of children is a major violating of children's rights and a contributory factor to exploitative child labour. The trafficking of children for the purpose of domestic service, prostitution and other forms of exploitative labour is a widespread phenomeon in Nigeria. Children and women are recruited with promises of well-paid jobs in urban centers within the country or abroad. Realising too late that they have been lured into a debt bond. Violence, coercion and deception are used to take victims away from their families. Regretfully, Nigeria is a source, transit and destination country for trafficked women and children. Prostitution, domestic and expaloitative labour to fuel this modern form of slavery.

Six million Nigerian children are estimated to be at risk of trafficking for domestic and forced labour, prostitution and ponography every year, according to a national survey conducted by the International Labour Organisation in 2003. For the purpose of this

article, there is the need to start by asking what do we mean by the word “Child” and what then is “child trafficking”?

As defined by the informing leaflet produced by the office of the special assistant to the President (August 2006) trafficking is the recruitment , harbouring, transportation, providing, or obtaining by any means and person for labour services involving forced labour, slavery or servitude in any industry, such as forced labour or coerced participation in agriculture, prostitution, manufacturing or other industries or in domestic service or marriage.

The United Nations convention defines trafficking as “the recruitment harbouring, transportationo provision or obtaining of a person for labour/services, through use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery.

According to the multilateral cooperation agreement to combat child trafficking in West Africa (2005) defined trafficking on persons as the recruitment, transport, transfer, accommodation or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force of other forms 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 which includes the exploitation of the prostitution of other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

According to them child trafficking means the recruitment, trasportation, transfer, accomodation or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation regardless of the means set forth above. A child by law or by definitions is any person under 18 years of age. Fact sheet produced by UNICEF NIGERIA June (2002) defined child trafficking as an illegal movement of human beings for illicit commercial and business dealings.

Based on current knowledge, Nigeria is a major supplier, consumer and also a transit route for human trafficking. Millions of children driven into different types of exploitative labour often become the most vulnerable groups. Children and women rights in Nigeria: A woke-up call? (Situation Assessment and Analysis 2001) came out with the following findings:

<b>Scale of Problem (Estimates)</b>	
Average age of Trafficking children (especially girls)	<b>15 years could be higher or lower</b>
Nigerian in sex trade in Europe	60%-80 % of girls in sex trade in Italy (over 200 in Italy while Belgium and Netherlands are experiencing an upsurge in the number of Nigerian girls)
Common routes	West Coast of Mail. Morroco and by boat to Spain or West Coast to Libya-Saudi Arabia.
Means of Tranportation	90% travel by road across the Sahara desert, others through airports, seaports and bush paths.
Stop-over locations	Cameroon, Ghana, Senegal, Niger, Libya, Mali and Morroco.

- It is estimated that 80% of children trafficked to Italy are from Africa and 60% of these are Nigerians.
- Boys are mostly trafficked from South Eastern part. Imo and Abia and Akwa Ibom moved to Garbon, Equitorial Guinea and those from Kwara move toTogo and as far as Mali to work on the plantations. Private transit camps existto Akwa-Ibom, Calabar,and Ondo States were children are tranported from South Eastern states and forced into hard labour and prostitution.
- Movement is from rural to urban areas, especially during festive periods, most collection paints were based in urban areas; as a result of the on going advocacy trafficking agents now operate from the rural areas.
- About 8 million Nigerian children are engaged in exploitative child labour, putting them at great risk of human trafficking as 43% of them are based in the southern border towns of Calabar, Port-Harcourt and Owerri.
- Approximately, 19% of Scholl children in Nigeria work after school in exploitative and dangerous environments.

(Fact sheet produced by UNICEF, Nigeria, June 2002).

## MODE OF OPERATION

Men, women and children are trafficked, although most people agree that women, and children are more often victims of trafficking also the vulnerable the poor people with

disabilities, the very young and old, people who have low literacy and educational to also constitute victims of trafficking.

Hence, trafficking is assumed when the following takes place:

- A transaction
- An intermediary intervention
- A purposed mind to exploit
- Must have a concept of movement using threat, force, coercion, abduction, deception, abuse of power, giving or receiving of payment or benefit to achieve the consent of a person and/or having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation.

## **AGENCIES OF CHILD TRAFFICKING**

### **Suppliers of trafficked children are:**

- Parents/Relatives
- Community and Opinion leaders
- Well placed business women
- Universities, Colleges
- Illegal Hostels run by syndicates
- Rehabilitation centres

### **Receivers of Trafficked Children**

- Family Household
- Working mothers, widows
- Sex tourism, hotels, brothels and cultural troopers
- Farms/cottage industries/motor parks
- Smugglers/drug peddlers/trade associations
- Network in Africa, Europe, Asia, and America
- Mail order, street begging and hawking
- Construction sites, factories, immigrant farm work and cleaning services.

### **How to Recognise/Identify and Determine a Victim of Trafficking**

There are many ways of knowing who a trafficked victim is, it is important to know that victims can be identified by their behaviour and attitude. Asking a range of questions

will often help to determine who victims are upon contact. It is important to note that the following are factors that assist the process of identifying victims.

- Issues of job expectation
- The kind of items that are provided for the individual in the environment they find themselves.
- Are they families or they owe anyone money?
- Do they have freedom of movement and can they have leave where they are freely.
- What happens when errors or mistakes are committed at the working area or place of job.
- Have they or their family members ever been threatened if they attempt to leave.
- What type of social network do they have or are they allowed to have for example, are they allowed to have friends, buy things themselves, go out , visit member of their family, etc.

## **TYPES OF TRAFFICKING**

There are two types of human trafficking: Internal and External trafficking. Internal Trafficking occurs when:

- Men and women take their fellow human beings from state to state originating from fostering and extended family systems coupled with inability of the child to trace family members.
- Middlemen cheat employers by receiving in advance but do not allow the children to settle in one family or employment. Payment for the children's services often never reaches the poor parents.
- Many of the children who move out of the Koranic schools into the street are often used as human shields during religious conflict or as agents to ignite trouble.
- Internal movement of children for trafficking usually occurs during festive periods and other cultural activities. (March, April, and December).

External trafficking occurs when human beings are being moved beyond the shores of their countries to subject them to the most intolerable ways of living.

Children's and women's rights in Nigeria: A wake up call (Situation assessment and analysis 2001) said:

- On average, 10 children daily pass through Nigerian borders especially at Seme, Maiduguri, Sokoto and Calabar.

- Children from the south-south (Edo and Imo states) are the majority of those trafficked to Mali, Garbon, Saudi Arabia and Italy.
- Socio-cultural and Religious practices facilitate easy movement of children to Sudan, Mali, and Saudi Arabia.

Although, sexual exploitation/forced prostitution appears to be the most assumed form of trafficking in human beings, the reality is that people are also trafficked from economic exploitation, for the purpose of cheap labour and forced marriages.

### **MAJOR CAUSES OF TRAFFICKING**

- Widespread poverty sparks the push and pull factors to urban centers. According to the Nation Newspaper of Tuesdaz, September 30 2008. There was a record of an arrest made on some men by the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) on their way to Abidjan who deceived some certain girls that they were to be working in a salon and make money. Also, Integrate Regional Information Network (IRIN 2008): Identified the parents of 105 children found packed in a Lorry whom they suspect were trafficked to serve as beggars or servants after their parents allowed them to go away with strangers who promised to feed and educate them. The lack of education and the poverty of the area are behind the decision to send the children away.
- Limited capacity of customs and immigration agents, making the borders very porous.
- Lack of legal frame works and weak policy implementation.
- High level of illiteracy, unemployment and poor standards of living.
- Increasing taste for materialistic values among youths aggravated by peer pressure.
- Poor reporting and monitoring of cases by law enforcement agencies.
- High school drop-out tales, coupled with long closures of higher institutions of learning.
- Abuse of the common practice of placement and fostering along with weekend extended family safety net.
- Desperation of poor and illiterate parents with large families ignorant of the impact of child trafficking e.g in the east, trafficking agents reportedly give poor parents money for a child to be trafficked.

### **Effect of Child Trafficking on Nigeria**

According to UNICEF (Nigeria),

- Loss of lives
- Increasing prevalence of STDs including HIV/AIDS
- Increase in violence and crime rate
- Higher school drop outs
- Impaired national development
- Poor national image
- Massive deportation of Nigerian girls

### **EDUCATION AS A TOOL**

According to Osalusi (2003). She said education is a significant factor in every society of the world. the existence and mutual understanding of citizens are based on their level education.

Primitive or sophisticated society devised means of educating their citizens and the type and mode of education given to individuals in the society depends on the culture and values of the society. There is need for teachers to be conversant with the educational aims and goals of the country because it serves as a link between the activities of the school and the aspirations of the society.

Society is not static, it changes from time to time as dictated by human needs and aspirations. Education should aim at acquiring worthwhile experiences that would be used by the recipient positively for the development of the society. It should not be turned into negative purpose. The purpose of education is to bring about positive changes to behaviour, functional experiences that is capable of changing the life of the receiver for better.

In the traditional African society, the form of education offered the individual is called the informal/indigenous education based on transmission of culture and societal values as a preparation for life based on apprenticeship and every adult member of the society becomes an employed citizen.

Education caters for the needs of the society and forms the bed rock for any national development socially, politically and economically. It is a process through which individuals acquire knowledge, skills, competences and aptitude to fit properly into the society they belong and contribute their quota to its roles. It is a tool for the integration of

the individual respectively into the society so that the individual can achieve self-realization, develop national consciousness and promote unity and strife for social economic, political, scientific, cultural and technological process.

## **FORMS OF EDUCATION**

Acquisition of education is not limited to school alone. It takes place in a variety of setting at all times and by different means.

**Formal Education:** This is patterned after the western form of education; the curriculum is well structured with specific objectives spelt out clearly. It is carried out in organised institutions. These institutions are graded and learners attend according to the level of attainment. Level are pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education.

**Informal Education:** Which is also known as traditional or indigenous education. It is a process of training the young generation, no common curriculum and no administrative setup.

**Non-Formal Education:** This is out of school retaining for different categories of workers who wish to improve their skills and competencies on the job. It is meant for adult discussion and enlightenment programme on societal problems such as social problems (child trafficking) in the society. It includes various parts like continue education programmes, adult literacy programmes, youth mobilization education, vocational training programme.

All the various types of education above can be used to play a role in the eradication of child trafficking through processes of education such as instruction, training indoctrination, conditioning, initiation and teaching.

In the course of this write-up emphasis is more on the formal and non-formal type of education.

Apart from the fact that education should aim at developing the child's personality talents, mental and physical abilities to the fullest extent. Education should also prepare the child for an active adult life in a free society and foster respect for the child's parents his/her own cultural identity, language and values and for the cultural background and values of others.

The schools and the teachers have a crucial role to play. Teachers should encourage the students, discipline should be consistent with the child's right and dignity. Finally, government should encourage the teachers by paying them well so as to really perform well not just as a teacher but a mother, a counsellor and a role model.



## COMBATING CHILD TRAFFICKING THROUGH EDUCATION

Prevention they say is better than cure. The phenomenon of child trafficking are widely practiced within and across the globe. Nevertheless, we know that child trafficking exist in Nigeria. It is our responsibility to do something about it by saying no to child trafficking.

Education as received from the background constitutes one of the effective tool in combating such criminal activities. A child is recognised as a person under eighteen, hence the teachers at the primary and secondary level has an important role to play in the eradication of child trafficking with a little extension to our tertiary institutions both in the Formal and Non-formal setting. Thus, education can be used as a tool for the eradication of child trafficking in Nigeria in the following ways.

- A variety of dispositions such as care guidance and supervision orders, counseling probation, foster care, education and vocational training programmes should be well introduced into the school system.
- There should be discourage students from the use of narcotic drugs and prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances by preaching and teaching it in our schools.
- Our school system should prevent the students from the teacher and the school economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with child's education or harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.
- The aims of education in Nigeria should be reviewed and reframed in such a way that it would be directed towards:
  - a. The development of child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities to their their fullest potential.
  - b. The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom.
  - c. The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equity of sexes and friendship among all people, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.
    - The government should make primary education compulsory, available and free to all.
    - The government should encourage the development of different forms of secondary education including general and vocational

education, adult literacy. This should be made available and accessible to every child to take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need.

- Some subjects should be introduced into the curriculum of the school system like child health and nutrition, hygiene and environmental sanitation, breast-feeding, and prevention of accidents.
- The Parents Teachers Association (PTA) of the school should be strengthened where some crucial issues are discussed like family planning education, health care and guidance to the parents. Teachers should discuss with parents the behaviours of the children in school and be well written in the report sheets. Hence, progress report of the children can be made available to the parents so that the parents and the school can work together to correct the child before he/she begins to influence and initiate others.
- The disabled children should have equal access to qualitative basic education and vocational services. The government should finance the school well with facilities that these children can use to develop their skills and widen their experience. And has the right to special care which can help him/her enjoy a full decent life in dignity and achieve the greatest degree of self reliance and then be useful to themselves and to the nation rather allowing their parents in releasing out to strangers.
- Special education should be well introduced in our tertiary institutions where graduates of such institution will know that there is a job out there for them and more schools for the disabled should be built and well equipped so that they would have a place to develop themselves.
- PTA should be encouraged in such schools so that parents of these categories of children will know that there is ability in disability.
- Nigerian government should introduce a kind of education meant for vocational training and apprenticeship like hair dressing, carpentry, soap making, textile etc in all the Local Governments so that there

will be choice of equal opportunities for the citizens of Nigeria, this can be made free or with a token from the students so that at the end of the day, there will be no cause for excuse. Government can also give loans, which can be repaid back at their own convenience. This will automatically reduce the rate of child trafficking.

- School drop out rate should be reduced coupled with long closures of higher institutions of learning. Management of schools should also monitor the hostels run by some schools and institutions because of the illegal hostels run by syndicates.
- UBE/scholarship schemes, skills development be strengthened and sustained.
- Our educational research, monitoring and evaluation studies should be centered more on child trafficking and child labour pilot study should be initiated.
- Advocacy through participation of top policy makers in national, regional and global conferences should be encouraged like the one (WICE).
- In our schools, there should be establishment of child rights clubs with the convention on the rights of the child (CRC) kits.
- There should be development of information materials dramas, jungle, videos, posters and year planners. This can be done by the educational technology in our secondary and primary schools we have the Theater Arts teacher, Fine-Arts teachers that can work together to achieve this.
- The government should provide life skills and credit facilities to out of school youths from house families.
- Poor communities should have access to qualitative basic education and health services.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is obviously seen that there is child trafficking in Nigeria, the government strengthened the highlighted prevention measures of EDUCATION so as to make our children invulnerable to child trafficking. Let it be the concern of every sector that no one

shall be held in slavery or servitude. No one shall become victims of trafficking. And to say No to child trafficking. No to child labour. No to force labour.

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