



## **Concepts, Causes and Consequences of Trafficking in Persons: Implication for Guidance and Counseling**

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### **Abstract**

Trafficking in persons has been identified as a modern-day form of slavery. This is because according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), some 2.5 million people are subjected to human trafficking at any given time. The interest of this paper is to do an overview of the numerous nomenclatures given to this illicit trade from the period of trans-Atlantic slave trade to the present time. The paper also examined the causes of trafficking in persons both for the traffickers and for the victims of human trafficking. Attempt was also made to take a cursory look at the consequences of trafficking in persons on individuals and the society at large so as to help put a stop to the problem. Attempts were also made to suggest how guidance and counselling groups and individual can create awareness as to the menace of the trade. The author finally recommended among others the use of individual counselling to bring about family reorientation of core values as instrument per excellence in curbing the trade. Secondly, the paper also recommended the use of public enlightenment through creating awareness campaigns via jingles, films and guidance to reduce the vulnerability of potential victims.

**Keywords:** Slave Trade, Trafficking in Persons, Guidance and Counseling.

### **Introduction**

Trafficking in person has been with mankind from the primordial time, and over the years. The label or nomenclature has changed tremendously starting with slave trade, to Trans-Atlantic slave trade, to child trafficking, and now human trafficking and / or trafficking in persons. Whatever appellation or name given to the illicit trade, the common denominator is that “over many centuries, the notion of human trafficking has been accepted to mean illegal, criminal and inhumane deprivation of liberty and violation of the dignity of human beings for some sort of profit” (NAPTIP 2014; 24) Trafficking in persons or human trafficking is the local or international buying and selling of human beings for the purposes of enslavement, cheap labour, organ harvesting and/ or for adoption, all for the ultimate objective of making profit for the sellers. In support of this working definition the United Nations Protocol (2000), defined trafficking in persons as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability or 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 shall include, at a minimum the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”. This definition appears to cover all the dimensions of human trafficking. The reader will do well to remember that child trafficking and other such nomenclature have been used to literature to explain this illicit trade over the years Ngwakwe (2010:2016) observed that “trafficking is used to imply any form of movement and change of control, supervision and guardianship of the child which is not in the interest of the child, is inconsistent with the laws (domestic and international regulating dealings in the affairs of the child), lacks parental/guardians consent or such consent is obtained by coercion, duress or fraud.

Human trafficking has also been defined as “the unlawful act of transporting or coercing people in order to benefit from the work or service, typically in the form of forced labour or sexual exploitation. It has also been defined as “modern-day slavery and involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labour or commercial sex act (<https://www.adhs.gov/blue-campaign>). Finally human trafficking or trafficking in persons is a hidden crime, meaning a crime that happened in the black market or “behind closed doors” because it is an illicit trade. A careful reader will see that over the years human trafficking has been in existence under numerous names such as slave trade, child trafficking, women and young girls trafficking and of course the latest umbrella label of trafficking in persons.

### **Conceptual Clarifications:**

Considerable effort will now be made to clarify briefly some of the related concepts used in literature by earlier writers to explain slave trade, child trafficking, women & young girls trafficking and of recent, human trafficking and trafficking in persons. Slave Trade as the name implies is defined as trade on human beings for the purpose of forced labour both in the domestic front as well as factory and agricultural farm land. Isichei (1976) put it more succinctly by saying that the trans- Atlantic Slave trade in 1518 saw the first load of African Prisoners (slaves) taken directly from West Africa to the West Indies, ushering in over three centuries of the infamous triangular slave trade. In the eighteenth century, slave trade rose to its climax in Igboland - a trade dominated by the British (Isichei, 1976). A number of independent observers claimed that a certain captain Adams, who made ten voyages to the area between 1956 and 1800 said that over 20,000 slaves were sold annually at Bonny, 16,000 of them Igbo (Isichei, 1976).. Over a period of twenty years, 320,000 Igbos were sold into slavery at Bonny, and 50,000 at Calabar and Elim Kalabari (Isichei, 1976). The distinction is that in slave trade, emphasis was on able-bodied young men who were needed for labour and productivity in the plantations and factories in Europe and America. Children were not the main target unless where their mothers become pregnant in transit.

In Child trafficking, a child without prejudice to statutory provisions regulating age for specific purposes, a child is used here in line with the Nigeria constitution to mean a person below the age of eighteen years (source). Trafficking is also used to imply any form of movement and change of control, supervision and guardianship of the child which:

- Is not in the interest of the child.
- Is inconsistent with the laws (domestic and international regulating dealings in the affairs of the child).
- Lacks parental / guardian’s consent or such consent is obtained by coercion, duress or fraud (Ngwakwe, 2010, 206).

Women and Young Girls Trafficking is the focus on women and young girls as objects and victims by traffickers. Statistics show that over 80% (eighty percent) of victims of trafficking are women (young girls, including pre-teen and teenagers) (Source). However, there seems to be a split of gender between pre-colonial slave trade and post-colonial modern-day slavery. During the former, able bodied young men with enough strengths to work on western farm in Europe and the Americas were of high demand in the slave market. In today’s slavery called trafficking in persons, the preferred demand has changed between the sexes - traffickers now want young women, not to plough farmlands, but to satisfy the expansion of the sex industry in developed countries. The victims pass through



harrowing experiences of rights abuses and deprivations. The girls often end up in prostitution where they are employed in various commercial sexual services like fondling the genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, bestiality, the production of pornographic materials, and sometimes sleeping with animals, or even made to use artificial things for sexual pleasure....” (National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, 2014; Ngwakwe, 2010).

Human Trafficking/Trafficking in Persons appears to be a general label and the terms mostly used by writers to describe all forms of that criminal and illicit trade. According to the protocol of the United Nations adopted in the city of Palermo Italy, in the year 2000, human trafficking or trafficking in persons is defined as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat or the use of force or other forms of coercion, such as abduction by fraud, deception, or the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or by receiving payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person, for the purpose of exploitation”.

### Causes of Trafficking in Persons

One will be wondering why human beings will treat their fellow human beings in this uncivilized manner. Human trafficking which is used interchangeably with trafficking in persons is caused by two major factors namely push factors and pull factors (National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, 2014). By way of explanation. Push factors refer to the reasons why victims are forced or pushed to leave their own environment to venture into the unknown. They include the following:

- a. **Poverty:** - poverty is the inability of an adult person to work and make income with which to provide the basic necessities of life. It is a kind of generalized deprivation of basic needs of the individual for survival. Udechukwu (2005) made it clear that the pains of poverty can be more devastating than the pains of sickness. Hence, it is a truism that acute poverty can push a young person into making him/herself available for human trafficking.
- b. **Low wages/under-employment:** - Trafficking in person can become an Eldorado for a graduate who receives about ₦20,000. Therein lies his rentage, feeding, transportation etc. After genuinely struggling for some time, can accept an offer from a friend to go explore other areas including travelling outside the country without current and correct papers. Hence, Ngwakwe (2010) posits that “today, not only children and women are trafficked; young boys seeking greener pastures abroad also fall prey to this evil”
- c. **Land dispossession:** - In Igbo land Nigeria, there is a tradition of land tenure system whereby land is transferred and inherited from fathers to their children. Whereas such land is dispossessed from the owners for whatever reasons they can lose both hope and interest in such society and community and migrant to whatsoever that resembles opportunities including trafficking in persons especially where large sum of money is promised with little effort.
- d. **Social Marginalization:** - All over the world especially in black Africa people are marginalized based on their ethnic group and of course based on religiosity. Even among people of the same faith, there is still marginalization based on denominational differences. So, if people fail to gain admission into universities because of their ethnic group, fail to get employment because of their faith, such marginalized persons fall prey to promise of lucrative jobs in Europe.
- e. **Climate change:** - An environment of frequent change in climate such as landslide, tremour, earthquake, frequent storm, desertification and fire can become very dynamic, unpredictable, expanding, fluctuating environment is a turbulent environment. Hence, young people can decide to seek for greener pastures elsewhere. Trafficking in persons thus become a very attractive alternative

- f. **Lack of Opportunities in home communities:** - In Nigeria, because of so much emphasis on statism and state of origin, opportunities abound more in the northern parts for employment, admission, and owning properties. In the same vein, opportunities to do certain jobs and earn money in dollars and pound sterling abound outside the country. Hence, there are some people who are behind trafficking and tricking young people into travelling outside the country with a promise of well - paid jobs waiting for them.
- g. **Economic Hardship:** - It is not a matter of rhetoric or polemics that acute hardship in Nigeria have become the catalyst that drives the Nigeria youth to go into human trafficking as their last resort to either make it in life or go down as non-achievers. There is no gain-saying that the most spectacular failure of successive government in Nigeria from 1979 till date, which borders on criminality has been their failure to create wealth and their readiness to plunge the nation into greater economic hardship. On the other hand, the full factors are the reasons that make young people to embark on certain destinations. The full factors include the following:
- i. *Perceived better opportunities elsewhere:* - Many a time, there are unverified news of better opportunities elsewhere. The tendencies are that since there are evidence to prove that there is acute lack of opportunities in home communities. People especially the youths will definitely look outside their communities, their state and of course their countries for perceived better opportunities. It is in this type of exploration of other countries that most of them become victims of trafficking in persons.
  - ii. *Lack of Workers:* - It is also true that some countries do not have enough and adequate workers for their factories and industries especially in the developed countries of Europe and North America. Whereas such workers are in surplus in most West African countries including Nigeria. Naturally, people gravitate to those countries where they will have work to do and where they will be paid as at when due. Such promises of better work and payment which is done in US dollars can become strong pull factor that draws people into trafficking in persons.
  - iii. *Good Social Security Measures:* - Good Social Security measures mean availability of state of the arts health facilities, good road networks, water supply, basic education, steady supply of electricity, housing scheme development as well as adequate security of lives and properties and of course recreational facilities. All these are lacking in our society while they exist outside the country, their existence in other countries becomes a pull factor that attract people into human trafficking knowingly and unknowingly.
  - iv. *Positive Economic Situation:* - In the words of Ojo (2011: 188) he posits that: "Unfortunately however, as vital as infrastructures to the socio-economic well-being of a nation, successive civil and military Administration in Nigeria has paid little or no attention to their development. The result has been a comatose economy, crippled education system and fractured health care delivery. In other climes, the development of infrastructure is the rule but it is the exception in Nigeria". A close look at the above assertion shows that the economic situation in Nigeria is far from positive, thus other places where the economic situation is vibrant and healthy thus can be described as positive, and thus becomes a pull factor that attract people to trafficking in persons.
  - v. *Political and Social Stability:* - Political and Social Stability are products of good governance. It is a truism that in Europe and North America where there is good governance, it shows in infrastructural development of good roads, water supply, qualitative education, health care facilities, steady electricity, housing scheme development, workable transportation and recreational facilities per excellence. However,



in Nigeria, the reverse is the case hence Ezeogidi (2014) avers that “good governance remains a theory that has not found relevance in the concept of empiricism and instability in Nigeria; it remains a Utopian theory, a million miles journey that is waiting for a take-off grant”. All giving rise to political and social instability which acts as pull factor to trafficking in person as a safe haven to personal well-being. It is important to state here that these push and pull factors can be presented in a tabular form which was the way NAPTIP (2014) presented it before this writer simplified the points raised.

In the same vein, Ngwakwe (2010) identifies some causes of trafficking in persons to include monetary dividends or attraction, violence and other forms of child abuse, corruption and bad government? In continuation, among others greedy parents as a major cause. The author said, that some parents who are very greedy and want a better life for their ward, pressurize their daughters into illicit trade in order to bring money to the family.

Another reason that pulls people to human trafficking is the get-rich-quick syndrome. Some people want to be rich very quickly and at all cost. Due to the fact that they want to get rich quickly, they may fall victim to traffickers who deceive them easily because of their desire to get “quick cash”. It is also true that greed and increasing glamourization of the West (America); and collapse of family values as well as family dysfunction are pull factors to human trafficking. In the primordial time, children fear to bring home sudden and unexplainable wealth and properties for fear of what their parents will say. However, nowadays, parents urge, cajole, talk and even pray their children into going out to make money at all costs, because the children have seen that that has been the sole desire of their parents from them all along.

### **Consequences of Trafficking in Persons**

Again, the consequences of trafficking in persons are very negative and has two sides namely; consequences on individuals known and referred to here as personal consequences while the other side is societal consequences.

#### **1. Personal consequences of trafficking in persons:**

Trafficking in persons has been identified as a modern-day slavery. It therefore breached the human right of freedom of movement, and human dignity as provided by section 34 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended thus:

Every person is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person, and accordingly

- (a) no person shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment;
- (b) No person shall be held in slavery or servitude
- (c) No person shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour

Trafficking in persons on the other hand can be degrading and dehumanizing. For instance, the life to personal liberty is breached by the aspect of human trafficking that restrict the victim to certain location of amorous activities only for the benefit of their captors. Victims of human trafficking irrespective of their faith are subjected to taking oath before a shrine to be obedient and loyal to their captors. Moreover, personal consequences result in loss of, or deprivation of property rights. Hence, Ngwakwe (2010) reported, that “in many cases, traffickers seize their victims’ travelling document and sell the woman to brothel owners...” Also, the victims of human trafficking pass through harrowing experiences of rights abuses and deprivations.



The girls often end up in prostitution where they are employed in the various commercial sexual services like fondling the genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, bestiality, the production of pornographic materials, and sometimes sleeping with animals, or even made to use artificial things for sexual pleasure (Ngwakwe, 2010). The above scenario will definitely lead to health risks and health challenges to the victims. Trafficking in persons could result in death of victims because all the consequences of deaths can result from the unusual travel methods of trafficking, infection with deadly diseases other poor living conditions etc. Can ultimately lead to death of victims.

## 2. Societal Consequences of Trafficking in Persons:

Trafficking in persons can trigger public sector corruption. Writing on the effects of corruption on economic development of a country, Ihiokwu and Okpamen (2007, 334) noted that:

*Corruption reduces economic development by creating economic inefficiencies, increasing the cost of doing business, reducing competition, scaring potential investors, diverting public funds from services that benefit citizens and reducing compliance with regulation.*

Moreover, trafficking in persons can also fuel irregular migration. For instance, it amounts to irregular migration when children below the age of eighteen are compelled to move out from the custody of their loved ones and biological parents to destination where there is change of control, supervision and guardianship of the child which

- (a) Is not in the interest of the child.
- (b) Is inconsistent with the laws (domestic and international regulations dealings in the affairs of the child)
- (c) Lacks parental/guardians' consent or such consent is obtained by coercion, duress or fraud.

Trafficking in persons is ranked as the world's third target and lucrative organized crime, second only to trafficking in drugs and the arms trade (National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, 2014). In fact, both trades are interwoven with one another making it a very organized crime. According to the United Nations office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2017) some 2.5 million people are subjected to human trafficking at any given time. It is therefore a serious global and national social and economic crisis. It can lead to other consequences such as the use of child-soldier, HIV/AIDS pandemic malnutrition and diseases, Covid-19 variants etc.

It is also easy to see the nexus between trafficking in persons and the spread of HIV/AIDs and other diseases which could lead to massive loss of precious lives. This also leads to the under development of human capital who are wasted through harsh condition of migration, diseases and infection and it is a truism to say that no effort is made anywhere in the world to develop the victims of human trafficking.

As a final comment to be made in this regard, trafficking in person can yield or lead to insecurity through migrations, social breakdown and exclusion such as the use of child-soldiers and / or deploying victims to espionage assignments. Finally, "it promotes money laundering and other financial crimes which can distort the economy: it can bring about a negative image for the country wherein anybody from that country will be perceived as a person of no moral standard since he/she comes from a country known for trafficking in persons. This is a national embarrassment and will need thousand and millions of monies invested in image laundering to clear the mess brought about by the activities of those involved in human trafficking. It is



to solve this numerous problem that group guidance and individual counseling must be called to bare to change the get- rich-syndrome.

### **Implication for guidance and Counselling**

Guidance by way of definition is a cluster of educational activities geared towards the creation of awareness which will in turn prevent problems and challenges for a social group. While counselling on the other hand is that process which takes place in a one-to-one relationship between an individual troubled by problems with which he cannot cope alone, and a professional worker whose training and experience have qualified him to help others reach solutions to various types of personal difficulties (Udechukwu, 2014). This definition clearly shows that guidance is preventive while counselling is curative. Secondly the definitions shows that guidance is group oriented while counselling is individual oriented. Both sister concepts therefore go hand in hand and are not by any means limited to what happens within the inner perimeters of the school settings. Hence, Guidance and Counselling, especially group guidance, can be organized for Nigerian Parents and their wards as a preventive measure for persons attracted to human trafficking. While counselling on individual basis will serve as curative measures for victims of human trafficking.

It is therefore, within the scope of Guidance and Counselling to make services available for the Nigerian Parents and potential youthful travelers in a warm and threat-free environment. The Guidance Counsellor can organize awareness, seminars, workshops and/or conferences where they would interact with the parents and youths to discuss their challenges, educate the people on the dangers of travelling outside the country with legitimate valid papers. Also, the Guidance Counsellors must educate the people on the risks and negative consequences of choosing trafficking in persons as a lee-way to financial Eldorado.

These types of interactive sessions will be free from the usual support given by kindred meetings that are usually backed with rules and regulations with corresponding sanctions. The guidance and counselling interaction must be cordial, free, warm, friendly, threat-free and devoid of any kind of payment and/or sanctions.

This interaction sessions can be organized in synergy with the religious leaders and the church. This is because parents, youths and most Nigerians find it easier to assemble in church environments or setting such as town halls, civic centers and villages squares. It is upon this background that this researcher suggests that the training of Guidance Counsellors in Nigeria must be upgraded to include proficiency and needed competencies in the crucial areas of trafficking in persons, effects of poverty, child abuse, wife abuse, husband abuse, value orientation etc. This training will act as pre-requisite for their relevance in Guiding and Counselling victims of human trafficking.

These interactive sessions will help all stakeholders to air their views on any matter that worries them, share their views on issues corruption, unemployment get-rich-quick syndrome, lack of core values of hard-work, perseverance, coping strategies for the teaming adolescents and young persons. Coping with irresponsible parents that cajole their children to make money at all cost. This intermittent interactive session gives the operators and victims of trafficking in person a sense of we are in the public eyes”, Such seminars, workshop and conferences are in themselves refreshing, preventive and curative.

## Conclusion

Trafficking in persons is prevalent in Nigeria especially among young women. It appears that the impact of poverty, unemployment, quick money mentality, over-expectations, immature and frantic approach to financial stress, over-demanding from parents, curiosity have all combined with causes such as hereditary, environmental discomfort and poverty etc. Have rendered the youth especially young women vulnerable to human trafficking. The conclusion is that creation of awareness through seminars, workshop and conferences will reduce these incidents of human trafficking, especially when such enlightenment and awareness creation are done in synergy with the church leaders. Guidance and Counselling techniques and services rendered in a threat-free, cordial, warm and encouraging environment will not only prevent further cases, and or reduce same to the barest minimum.

## Suggestions:

Sequel the enormity of the risks and negative consequences of trafficking in person the following suggestions are hereby made:

1. Guidance and Counselling techniques and Services should be used to create awareness concerning the risks and dangers of human trafficking.
2. Seminars, workshop and conferences should be used to discourage trafficking in persons especially when done in synergy with the church leadership.
3. Counsellors' training should also be reviewed by curriculum planners to include strategies for curbing trafficking in persons, inculcation of family core values such as hard work, honesty, perseverance, and of course, setting the right goals.
4. Government at all levels should strive to create more jobs and build more skill acquisition centers as well as give the young graduates incentive such as grants, soft loans enabling environment to come out of poverty.
5. The judiciary should be fearless in issuing sanctions and severely punish traffickers as well as rehabilitate victims of trafficking in person while making effort to maintain confidentiality when counselling victims.

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