SURVIVING THE MURKY WATERS OF MIGRATION: UNDERSTANDING THE PLIGHTS OF THE VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mahmoud M. Lawan, PhD, mni
Department of Political Science
Bayero University, Kano

Abstract

This paper interrogates the complex intersection between migration and human trafficking, focusing on the experiences and vulnerabilities of victims navigating irregular migration pathways. It argues that while migration is often pursued as a strategy for economic survival and social mobility, structural inequalities, weak governance frameworks, and restrictive migration regimes expose migrants to exploitation by trafficking networks. Drawing on secondary data and case-based illustration from previous studies, the study highlights how factors such as poverty, unemployment, gender inequality, conflict and lack of awareness create conditions that traffickers exploit. The paper further examines the mechanism of recruitment, transportation, and control often employed by traffickers, emphasizing deception, coercion, sexual abuse, drug use and inducement, and abuse of power. Particular attention is given to the physical, psychological, and socio-economic consequences suffered by victims, including forced labour, sexual exploitation, stigmatization, child abuse, and limited access to justice. The paper concludes that addressing human trafficking within the broader context of migration requires a multidimensional approach that goes beyond border control to include socio-economic improvement, public awareness, strengthening legal frameworks, and international cooperation. It recommends victim-centered policies that prioritize protection, empowerment and sustainable reintegration, alongside proactive measures to tackle the root causes of irregular migration. There is also the apparent need to strengthen NAPTIP Act to ensure that arrest and prosecution of traffickers is pursued without fear or favour. By deepening understanding of victims' experiences, the paper contributes to ongoing scholarly and policy debates on migration governance and human security.

Keywords: Migration, human trafficking, legal framework, forced labour, sexual exploitation

Introduction

On the 28th July, 2021 in a news monitored on Al-Jazeera, it was reported that 57 people were drown off the coast of Libya. These were victims of human trafficking struggling to find their way to Europe through Libya. This is reported daily by news media in Nigeria and other countries in Africa. The situation is very dicey given the increasing socio-economic deprivation facing the average Nigerian in the struggle to survive. Human trafficking has become the norm rather than the exception in the efforts of many young Nigerians to find the means of livelihood or to make ends meet. However, in the process, they grapple with the dangers of losing their lives through several undetected ways employed by the traffickers in human persons.

Several Nigerians get indulged in migration which often degenerates into trafficking. In certain situations, men and women who desperately seek for a better life or struggle to run from the harsh economic conditions occasioned by the declining economic potentials of the country find themselves in the trafficking ring. Human trafficking cuts across almost all strata of the society with various professionals, artisans, school drop outs, etc becoming victims of the dangerous trade. It is estimated that over 143 countries of the world are linked to trafficking in persons and therefore the modern slave trade knows no boundaries. An estimated 46 million people (cited in Yakubu, 2021: p.21), are believed to be either coerced, kidnapped or forced into different forms of human trafficking exploitation such as sex trade, domestic servitude or forced labour. According to UNICEF report in 2002, over 80% of the prostitutes of African origin operating in the Italian sex trade are Nigerian women. This situation is not only disturbing but negatively affects the political and foreign image of Nigeria as a foremost black African nation and a power house in global politics. The chapter is structured into six sections, starting with the first which is the introduction. Section two reviews the key concepts in the discourse on human trafficking and migration. The push and pull triggers are addressed in section three while section four examines the plights of the victims of this deadly trade. In section five, the consequences of trafficking in humans as it affects the victims are clearly brought to the fore and the concluding section presents the recommendations.

1. Unpacking the Key Concepts in the Discourse: Human Trafficking and Migration

There is no doubt that, concepts are very important in understanding any scientific enterprise. In social sciences, concepts prepare the ground and set the tone for any intellectual discourse. It is in this context, human trafficking and migration must be clarified.

Trafficking in humans has been practiced by mankind for a long period of time. Slave trade as a form of human slavery has transcended and affected human interaction before its abolition over 200 years ago. However, human trafficking as a modern form of slavery with devastating effects on human lives have assumed very dangerous and sophisticated dimensions. In fact, the contemporary global trafficking in human persons has assumed the proportion which can be termed as serious threat to global healthy living and peace. It is imperative to attempt an overview of what human trafficking entails.

According to the UN Trafficking Protocol; human trafficking can be defined as:

"Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or 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 (as cited in Shatsari, 2010)

The definition painted above provides a comprehensive coverage of the heinous crime of human trafficking in both content and dimension. Yet another definition considers human trafficking as the practice of exploiting adults and children for use as commodities or objects in conditions of sexual and labour servitude. It is largely referred to as modern slavery, because it is the illegal trade in human beings through recruitment or abduction by means of force, fraud or coercion for the purposes of forced labour, debt bondage or sexual exploitation (ILO, Global Report, 2017). Victims of human trafficking face gory forms of suffering and degradation in the hands of their sponsors and traffickers. The situation is unimaginable and devastating.

The issue of migration have been with human society since the creation of man. In fact, the central process that dominates the formation of people anywhere in the world is migration (Analysis, 2004). Migration is central to human existence and development, and has shaped the transformation of hitherto developed and underdeveloped formations.

It is believed that the concept of migration is from the latin word *migratio,* which was first recorded in 1606-1615. It can be defined as the movement of a complete population of people or animals from one area to another. It is usually a response to changes in conditions of living; economy; temperature or food supply. Among animals such as insects, mammals and birds, it could be as a result of temperature, food supply or daylight, often undertaken for the purpose of breeding.

Human migration is the movement of people from one place to another with the intentions of settling, permanently or temporarily in a new location. Such movements could be in search of work, or economic opportunities, or to study or for tourism. Migration is a global phenomenon, which can be classified into forced, voluntary or imposed on the migrants by circumstances (SIRA, 2019). Unarguably, migration is a marker of globalization that has become part of our humanity. However, what worries the world is the unsafe migration that results in all forms of exploitation, including human trafficking and migrant smuggling. In fact, human trafficking, a modern day slavery that knows no border is indeed migration gone wrong (Adeniyi, 2019). Migration has been with man since the earliest times and cannot in any way be completely halted. However, it is its evil manifestation in the form of human trafficking that needs to be controlled, regulated and checkmated to minimize human exploitation and degradation. Scholars of migration have argued that migration can be either of three, or four, or five types. Internal migration which is considered as movement within a state, country or continent, such as a movement from one city, district or country within a state or country. For example, in the United States of America, there was the Mikey movement from New York to New Hampshire. External migration involves movement to a different state, country or

continent, it is an age old phenomenon. But, the most dramatic example of it took place in modern times, is the Great Atlantic migration where millions of people left Europe for North America in the 1840s, mostly from Germany and Ireland (www.kids.britannica.com).

Emigration means leaving one place to move to another. Immigration- moving into a new place, a complete movement or relocation to another place. Finally, return migration- moving back to where one originally came from, a sort of home coming. Return migrants can be a source of growth for the home country through their accumulated knowledge and skills. Student migrants who return home after studying abroad are very good example. Although, human trafficking and migration does not connote the same thing, human trafficking is the negative outcome of migration with incredible consequences. Human trafficking is a multi-dimensional problem, which can be considered as a moral issue, a criminal problem as well as a human rights and a labor matter. Dealing with the menace would require a multi-faceted approach. In fact, human trafficking is the fastest growing criminal industry in the world and the world's third largest criminal enterprise, after drug dealing and gun running, with an estimated annual revenue of 9.5 billion USD, according to the United Nations figures (cited in Lipede, 2007). Recent estimates by the International Labour Organization indicate that human trafficking and forced labour generate approximately 236 billion USD annually in illicit profits worldwide. While this figure is widely cited, some analysts argue that it may underestimate the true scale of the illicit economy, with alternative estimates suggesting revenue approaching 500 billion USD. These figures underscore the economic centrality of human trafficking within global organized crime networks (ILO, 2024). The United Nations Trafficking Protocol has clearly and unequivocally identified seven forms of trafficking as listed below:

1. Trafficking for the exploitation of prostitution of others;
2. Trafficking for other forms of sexual exploitation;
3. Trafficking for forced labor;
4. Trafficking to place somebody in a condition of servitude;
5. Trafficking for the purpose of enslavement of somebody;
6. Trafficking for the purposes similar to slavery;
7. Trafficking for the purpose of removal of organs from human beings (as cited in Shatsari, 2010, p.196).

There is no doubt that currently, the criminal practice of trafficking exists under all the seven forms listed above and victims suffer from the heinous activities of the traffickers.

2. **Methodology adopted for Review**: From the outset, this paper is a review article meant to interrogate the intersection between migration and human trafficking with specific focus on Nigeria. Migration and human trafficking are cross-cultural phenomena. As such, discussion on them will cut across several countries because some of the countries are the source, transit,

destination points, as clearly presented in the paper. The paper adopts a qualitative research design relying exclusively on secondary data sources. Data were collected from existing scholarly publications, including journal articles, published books, government publications, reports from international organizations such as International Organization for Migration, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, International Labour Organization, United Nations International Children Emergency Fund, as well as Conference papers, credible online databases and news extracts from reputable media outlets such as Aljazeera, Channel News and CNN. The paper employs documentary analysis to critically examine causes and consequences of migration and human trafficking with particular emphasis on Nigeria. Relevant materials were purposively selected based on their relevance, credibility and recency. Data generated were synthesized and analysed where recurring themes such as poverty, unemployment, weak border governance, conflict and insecurity, irregular migration routes and exploitation networks were identified, categorized and interpreted to generate insights into the relationship between migration and human trafficking. This methodological approach is suitable because it enables an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon without direct field interaction, while drawing on a broad range of existing evidence and expert analyses.

3. Migration and Human Trafficking: The Push and Pull Triggers

Migration is a global phenomenon. There is hardly any country in the world, which has not experienced one form of migration or the other. In some countries, migration is generally internal as a result of several internal factors which will be interrogated later in this section. It is reported that more than 270 million people live outside their countries of origin. Currently, one out of thirty people on earth live in other peoples' land (migration today; world101.cfr.org, accessed 15/9/2022)

In fact, there is absolutely nothing wrong with movements across the global landscape, however when such movements become highly exploited and engendered for profit making, it renders migration dangerous and degenerate into human trafficking. But, what is responsible for this trafficking in humans? Why do people choose to leave their country of origin and for what reasons? What are the attractions that push people to migrate or get involved in trafficking? What are the push and pull triggers that precipitate trafficking? We start with the push factors which are examined below:

1. Harsh economic conditions: Nkrumah once argued that seek first the economic kingdom, and all others shall be added on it. The economy must be in good

standing before nations can grow. The collapse of the oil boom in the late 1970s and the imposition of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in the 1980s at the instance of the Bretton Woods institutions led to the trying times for the majority of Nigerians. SAP has led to the decline in the purchasing power of the naira and low capacity utilization of industries which in turn contributed to a decline in per capita income and a collapse of social services (Lipede, 2007). In addition, to the above, the collapse of the power sector has led to the closure of key manufacturing industries in Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Port Harcourt and other cities which has aggravated the unemployment situation in the country. The implementation of neo liberal policies has further accentuated inflation, and the rising cost of food items in the country. The economic deprivation has negatively impacted on the living conditions of the people, thus the resort to seek for alternative means of survival, which often leads to migration or exploiting the vulnerabilities of the victims to be trafficked out of the country. According to the CNN, in the news monitored on 17/09/2022, over 11,000 immigrants mostly Cubans and Venezuelans moved into Florida, in search of better economic opportunities. This may not be unconnected with the biting economic deprivation in these countries occasioned by the falling oil prices in the global economy.

2. Heightened levels of conflict: Currently, conflict has permeated the global space with devastating erosion of the rights of the victims. Conflict over the control of resources; identity conflict; conflict of citizenship question; the insecurity occasioned by the terrorism around the world have all pushed the people to a dangerous precipice. In Nigeria, the insurgency in the North East; the banditry and kidnapping in the North West and South West as well as the heightened agitations of separation by regional warlords such as the IPOB in the South East has accelerated internal migration in the country. In trying to escape from the conflicts and seek solace for a peaceful life, some others may explore the human trafficking alternative where they can enjoy better economic prospects in a peaceful environment. The recent Russian-Ukrainian conflict has created mass migration of people across Europe. For instance, many Ukrainians have crossed into Poland and Germany. This situation may be exploited either now or in the foreseeable future into the trafficking belt. As a consequence of the several years of conflict in Syria, Syrian women and girls are sold into sexual slavery in Lebanon (www.aljazeera.com, accessed 18/9/2022)

3. Increased levels of poverty: Reports available from International Agencies indicates that Nigeria is one of the poverty capitals of the world. There is heightened level of poverty occasioned by the harsh economic conditions in the country. Poverty, manifested in illiteracy, unemployment and poor living standards, therefore appears to be at the heart of human trafficking (Lipede; 2007). Poverty and the lack of opportunities to improve one's position in the society exacerbate the position of many caught in the poverty trap (Lipede, 2007) and in the bid to survive and make ends meet, people explore the human trafficking angle.
4. Increasing spate of insecurity: In the last ten years or more, Nigeria has experienced one of the worst incidences of insecurity. Beginning with the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East; banditry and cattle rustling in the North West; ethnic and regional irredentism in the South East have all combined to give a gory picture of killings, bombings and destruction of lives and properties in the country. This situation has not only seriously aggravated internal and external migration, but the human trafficking networks and agents have exploited the vulnerability of those seeking for peace in perpetrating their heinous trade in human persons.

Clearly, the push factors highlighted above cannot be the only triggers for migration and human trafficking. In fact, in a materialistic society, peer pressure to succeed could also act as a powerful push factor. Other push factors include the craze for conspicuous consumption and other material gains, misplaced values, decline in socio-cultural values and greed are common not only among traffickers and victims but even among other social groups(Lipede,2007).

There are equally the pull triggers as factors that serve as attractive triggers for people to move to other countries or which pull the victims for trafficking to other parts of the world in search of opportunities and seemingly better life. These are:

1. The Demand and Supply of Labour: Labour as a factor of production is required in both developed and developing economies. Some of the purposes for which human trafficking strive is because of sexual exploitation which is the most common and forced labor. At some point in the developed world, there seemed to have been an increase in the demand for cheap labor and sex workers which was one of the major pull factors in the trade for women. In a study by Akinyemi et. al, (2020), which is a systematic review of drivers and interventions against sex work migration in Edo state, the researchers identified Edo state as a major hub for trafficking linked to international migration routes. In fact, the study

discovered that poverty, unemployment, cultural pressures, and migration aspirations (Japa syndrome) drive women into trafficking networks disguised as migration opportunities. In Italy, the preference for non-Europeans in the sex trade, especially in the demand for prostitutes from supposedly less AIDS prone areas like Nigeria and other African countries in the 1980s and 1990s increased in Central and Northern Italy (Lipede,2007), which is one of the main destination countries in Europe. This factor was greatly responsible for the massive trafficking of women from Edo state in Nigeria to Italy and other European countries. Many of the early arrivals in Italy, who returned home with messages of success eventually lured other young women who got attracted to the success stories to also move to Italy or Europe.

2. Movements of People across International Boundaries: The creation and imposition of artificial and arbitrary boundaries by the colonial powers separated hitherto culturally unified settlements across the borders. In spite of these separations, people around these boundaries has continued to engage in trans-border trade and movements across the international boundaries. Consequently, these factors while encouraging the maintenance of decades- old trade and economic and other relations between border communities in the West African sub-region, have also made it easier for traffickers to move across borders with their human cargo. Many traffickers are known to use ancient trading routes and transit camps to carry their victims either through the Mediterranean or red sea to Europe (Lipede, 2007). In this regard, a study on migration, border governance and trafficking networks examined the Nigeria-Niger border as a major trafficking corridor (Idris et al, 2024). The study emphasized how weak border surveillance and community disengagement facilitate trafficking operations. It further argues that migration routes toward North Africa and Europe create opportunities for traffickers to exploit migrants.
3. Better Economic Opportunities and Infrastructure in the Destination Countries: There is no disputing the fact that most of the developed countries are found in Europe and the USA, which are also the destination countries where trafficked victims eventually find their way. According to the global report on trafficking in persons, the major hotspots for traffickers in Europe are Italy, Austria, Germany, France, Belgium, Spain, Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom . In these countries, they find better economic prospects and efficient

infrastructure such as electricity, water, good roads, better health and education facilities which attract people into these countries either in the form of human trafficking for sex or forced labor or even as brain drain which is very rampant now.

4. Absence of Legislation against Women Trafficking: In many of the transit and destination countries, stiff penalties which could act as deterrent on traffickers are absent or completely nonexistent. However, this is fast changing in many of these countries, particularly with the promulgation of the Anti-slavery law in 2004 in Europe. In fact, the European Union mandated its member countries to review their domestic criminal legislations by the end of 2004, in order to prohibit trafficking in persons for both labor and sexual exploitation and this gave rise to the Anti-slavery law of 2004. Until 2004 therefore, the trade has remained a lucrative one without many legal obstacles (Lipede, 2007). Although, in the case of Nigeria, the anti-trafficking agency (NAPTIP) exists to implement and enforce the laws on trafficking, despite this policy progress, institutional weaknesses, limited resources, and low conviction rates undermine the effectiveness of the agency (Shuaibu, 2024). This position was articulated in a study on Institutional and Legal Responses in Nigeria conducted by Shuaibu. The study established that migration-related trafficking persists due to gaps in enforcement, public awareness and inter-agency coordination.

Similarly, in some European countries, prostitution is legalized. In the city of Rome, for example, prostitution is not only legal but taxed, bringing in funds for the government, (Lipede, 2007). In a number of European countries, such as Netherlands, Germany, Greece, Austria to mention a few, prostitution is a legal and regulated (www.wikipedia.com, accessed 21/9/2022). In such a scenario, many women are lured to move to Europe for sex trade.

Other equally important factors which serve as pull triggers include the involvement of corrupt elements in the immigration, customs, police and border patrol officers who act as both pull and push factors and conspire with the traffickers in transit and destination countries to perpetrate the evil trade.

5. The Plights of the Victims of Trafficking: Synthesis of the Nature, Trends and Consequences

In the section on conceptualization, this paper submitted that there are seven forms of trafficking in line with the listings made by the UN Trafficking Protocol. However, the most common types of human trafficking are forced labor; domestic servitude; child begging or labor; removal of organs and of

course, the best known which is sexual exploitation, otherwise referred to as sex trade. The main economic sectors who benefits from the human trafficking include but are not limited to agriculture, manufacturing, domestic work, hospitality and the commercial sex industry.

Similarly, a synthesis of literature presented in the studies reviewed in section four reveals that migration is a primary pathway into trafficking networks. Poverty, unemployment, economic hardship and the absence of basic infrastructure are the dominant drivers in migration and the ultimate trap of human trafficking in which young men and women get entrapped. Clearly, the irregular migration routes to Europe increase the vulnerability of victims of trafficking. There is a strong overlap between migration, smuggling and trafficking. Edo state in Nigeria and other border regions in Africa as indicated in the literature serve as major trafficking hubs for the heinous business. It is also understood that weak institutions, corruption among border personnel and across the borders, as well as absence of inter-agency collaboration undermine anti-trafficking efforts in Nigeria and across Africa.

Clearly, the this paper focuses on human trafficking in general, however, emphasis is on the trafficking in women or sex trade, which is the most documented. In fact, some human trafficking statistics and facts indicates that women and girls are disproportionately affected by human trafficking accounting for 71% of all victims (ILO, 2017). In effect, the international labor organization reported that 4.8 million people are trafficked for forced sexual exploitation, while 24.9 million people are victims of forced labor (ILO, 2017). Similarly, the largest share of labor trafficked adults are domestic workers who constitute 24% (ILO, 2017).

As earlier pointed out, commercial sex industry is the most lucrative with an estimated market value of $99 billion. Undoubtedly, countries across Asia, Africa, Europe, USA, South America and the Caribbean are considered as source, transit and destination of human trafficking. As indicated earlier, most of the European states are the destination countries. In Asia, countries such as Thailand and Cambodia serve as both source, transit and destination routes. Trafficking in human persons in Thailand is a booming industry and earns about $12 billion for the economy more than the country's drug trade (ILO). In 2019, about 974 victims were rescued, most of them from Myanmar (Burma). Victims of human trafficking in Thailand are trafficked through established routes, facilitated by the long, porous borders and the prevalence of corruption at the border posts. Cambodia is also famous as a source, transit and destination country with most of the victims involved in sexual exploitation. In Asia, 36% of the trafficked victims

are children used for child labor while 64% are adults heavily exploited for sex, domestic and forced labor (UNODC, accessed on 19/09/2022). India is considered to be the topmost in the list of countries with highest number of victims of trafficking accounting for 14 million victims (UNODC).

Africa is also one of the worst hit in this heinous business. Several African countries are involved, perhaps because of the underdevelopment of many African states. In fact, the severity of the malaise has clearly characterized the African situation as a tragedy of unimaginable proportions. While Niger and Mali are focal points into the Sahara desert, Libya has, for years been the main transit port for migrants seeking to access Europe by sea but since the death of Gaddafi, the country has had no effective national government with different warring factions battling for territorial control. This has made the environment conducive for the activities of human traffickers. In the process, hundreds of thousands of migrants in Libya are held by smugglers in dire conditions and many of them in forced labour (Adeniyi, 2019).

Mali is increasingly becoming notorious as a transit country for those who seek to access Europe by road and sea. Except, for the increased activities of the bandits and rebels across the Malian routes, no fewer than 76,778 migrants moved upward from Mali at the rate of 152 migrants a day in the bid to access Italy and Spain through Algeria and Libya (Adeniyi, 2019).

Nigeria is a well-known source, transit and destination country for trafficking in persons mostly to the Middle East in Saudi Arabia; other African countries and Europe; to places such as Italy, Spain, Germany etc. The famous Edo prostitution ring, which tragically exported young able bodied girls from Benin to Italy and other parts of Europe is still fresh in our memory.

6. Dehumanising the Human Person: Consequences of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a highly organized criminal network involving recruiters, agents, middlemen, transporters, security men, clergy men, hoteliers, juju priests who performed voodoo to hold victims hostage and the receivers at the destination points. In this network, huge investment is provided to generate the human cargo with possible outcome in the form of profits which accrue to the members of the network. In most cases, the victims are left to suffer with nothing to show for it. The trafficking network employ various routes to transport their human cargo. In fact, several routes exist in both Northern and Southern axis of Nigeria. In the north, human trafficking is believed to have started in the middle or late 1980s, when cripples and other disabled persons were trafficked by air from the Malam Aminu Kano international airport (MAKIA) to Mecca

ostensibly to perform the pilgrimage but actually to be exploited as beggars. Over the years, the destitute, women, people of fraudulent characters are among the various types of people trafficked to Saudi Arabia (Lipede, 2007). Most of the victims who are trafficked from the northern part of Nigeria find destinations mostly in the Hausa speaking settlements of west and central African countries such as Bangui, Douala etc; Saudi Arabia and the Middle-Eastern countries. Today, young artisans and other professionals find their way into Dubai, Oman etc to make a living, some through forced labor. Victims used sea and air, but in most cases utilize the land routes. Victims from the north are usually transported through Niger, Lake Chad and Cameroun to Europe by sea. In fact, these victims cross at different border crossings before using overland routes across the Sahara (through Niger) to North Africa, from Algeria, Libya or Morocco, they make hazardous journeys in small boats across the Mediterranean or Red sea, through to Spain, Portugal or Italy (Lipede, 2007). The Southern axis used the Lagos, Ogun or Calabar routes through some African countries such as the Cotonou, Togo, Accra, Bamako and Gabon by road and then move to Europe by air or they move to Morocco through the desert then to Europe by sea (Lipede, 2007).

Due to the clandestine nature of the illegal trade, traffickers deploy different methods in moving the human cargo to the destination countries. Victims are often smuggled in containers, vehicles or trains and even by foot. Victims are also moved into either transit or destination countries using donkeys and horses to avoid border patrol officials. Travel documents are either forged or stolen with false visas to ensure victims arrive destination countries at all cost.

Who are these victims? What is the character of the victims of trafficking? Human trafficking knows no bound, victims of human trafficking cut across all strata of society including university graduates and educated professionals desperate to migrate for better opportunities or well paid jobs. Among victims are secondary school students or drop outs; artisans; married and unmarried men and women, young girls and boys and even minors. Recruitment of victims by traffickers knows no distinction, because the ultimate objective is the benefits of the crime.

Victims of human trafficking either in Nigeria or other parts of the world suffer from traumatic abuses and violations of their dignity as humans. Human beings are God's precious creations, but human trafficking destroys that humanity because of the heinous crimes committed on the victims.

Olusegun Adeniyi provided a well-deserved attention to the deadly scourge of trafficking in persons in a book titled; "From Frying Pan to Fire". Adeniyi documented the risks

involved in migration and the inhuman treatment of the victims by traffickers. He gives the story of his brother, Agboola who spent six years trying to desperately enter Europe without success. He laments on the plights of the victims who passed through Libya, thus:

After the 2011 political crisis in Libya, the plights of migrants became worse as a result of the attendant instability. Arbitrary arrest and detention, harassment, bonded labor, periodic roundups, and detention became rampant with Nigerians being the most vulnerable in such situations (Adeniyi, 2019).

One of the worst form of indignity, victims of trafficking suffer is sexual exploitation in the form of rape. In fact, some of them suffer from gang rape. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) report, in 72 percent of human trafficking cases where the victims are women, the indignity is primarily sexual, with labor and other forms of exploitation accounting for the remaining 28 percent. In the cases of men, labor exploitation accounts for 85.7 percent of cases while sexual exploitation accounts for 6.8 percent of cases (as cited in Adeniyi, 2019). The report further revealed that women and unaccompanied girls of Nigerian origin are among the most at risk of being trafficked for sexual exploitation, though other nationals are also affected. There are reports indicating that women and teenage girls who get trafficked for domestic servitude are also subjected to incessant rapes by the heads of the families where they work and in some cases even the children molest these women. In fact, one of the Libyan returnees (among the first batch of 5,499 Nigerians rescued by the federal government under the auspices of the European Union), revealed how many of them sell their bodies for mere loaves of bread (Adeniyi, 2019)

In January, 2018, a Federal Government delegation led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs travelled to Libya on the directive of the President of Nigeria to facilitate the repatriation of Nigerian migrants trapped in Libya revealed the level of indignity suffered by the victims of the trafficking in persons. A presidential aide who was part of the delegation reported that there was a girl who had been sexually molested by the soldiers guarding the facility and was left to bleed after she had been injected with a drug to induce abortion (Adeniyi; 2019). The level and extent of man's inhumanity to man is heart-rending and heinous. The lady in question could be infected with a deadly disease which could endanger her life or even lead to death. Cases of boat capsizing or forceful drowning of victims are daily occurrences. On 24 May, 2017 a wooden boat capsized with more than 500 people off the coast of Lampedusa, Italy. In 2021, the UN reported that over 1,692 migrants were drowned in the sea as a result of desperate journeys to survive. In a repost monitored at the channels news on 24 September, 2022, 53 Syrians drowned off the coast of

Syria, perhaps migrants or victims of trafficking moving out of the conflict ridden Syrian territory. The situation is not limited to mere drowning, but also there are cases of the lifeless bodies of the drowned victims seen floating in the seas. Victims who are trafficked through the land routes have reported cases of mysterious deaths or cases of human skeletons littered around the roads. There are cases of dead migrants or victims who are left to decompose in the deserts.

Migrants who are trafficked through the land routes passing through Niger, Mali and Libya before getting to Europe undergo huge inhuman treatment in the hands of their transporters and agents. For instance, these desperate journeys take several months and in the process some victims secure jobs along the routes. Unfortunately, they suffer from forced labor with meager pay and even deaths are recorded as a result of deadly accidents in the work place or even enslavement in the work place detention centers. The extent of dehumanization is very unprecedented.

Another effect of the trafficking in persons, which the victims suffer from, is racism and discrimination either in the transit or destination countries. Many victims go through extreme discrimination and racism even in places like Libya, Algeria and Mauritania. Though, African countries both consider themselves as Afro-Arabs and indulge in the inhuman treatment of fellow Africans who are dark-skinned. For instance, Adeniyi reported that no matter how migrants gets to Libya (whether trafficked, sold or kidnapped along the way) they are usually arrested on arrival, detained and asked to pay a ransom in order to be released (2019; 19). In fact, while in detention, they are thoroughly beaten and handcuffed for committing no crime and made to work in farms under excruciating conditions without pay.

Other consequences of the trafficking on the victims also includes confinement and torture by their European and Arab tormentors; overcrowding in cells where men and adolescent boys are kept together, in spite of the health implications.

As a consequence of the debilitating conditions, victims of human trafficking are subjected to, could lead to emotional and psychological trauma for the victims and other health conditions. The following are identified as health characteristics of trafficked victim:

-Brutal conditions that result in physical breakdowns

-Emotional abuse and pelvic inflammatory disease

-Sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS etc

-Bruises, broken bones and other signs of untreated medical problems

-Critical illness including diabetes, cancer and heart disease

-Malnutrition, dehydration or poor personal hygiene

-Post traumatic stress, psychological disorders (as cited in Mbachu, 2015).

In the light of the terrible plight suffered by the victims of trafficking in persons which is for the purpose of money or sources of income for the traffickers, certainly, resources should be mobilized to reduce or eliminate this heinous scourge in the society.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

One of the greatest tragedy of the current global order is the menace of human trafficking with its negative consequences on humanity. This tragedy must be attacked head on and concerted efforts are required to checkmate its spread and widespread destruction of human lives. Consequently, the root causes of human trafficking must be tackled. The current state of affairs in many African countries including Nigeria leave much to be desired. Underdevelopment, poverty, ignorance, absence of infrastructure still pervade our socio-political landscape. Therefore, the best approach towards tackling human trafficking is for the governments and leaders to make the development and provisions of welfare and employment opportunities to the people a priority. In fact, the Nigerian government should pursue vigorous implementation of the socio-economic rights contained in chapter 2 of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Shatsari, 2010), because the provisions of the chapter place beneficial requirements on governments or its agencies to avoid discrimination on the grounds of sex, place of origin or status; to manage the economy as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizens and to build the Nigerian state on the principles of social justice and democracy (Shatsari, 2010).

This, if pursued and implemented, could potentially reduce, if not eliminate the root causes of human trafficking in Nigeria. Human trafficking is a transnational business involving organized syndicates, as such, there is need for coordinated response to the menace. This response should involve co-operation among the ECOWAS, AU and the EU countries, because the source, transit and destination cut across these unions. The coordinated response should strive to tackle it in a multi-dimensional contexts such as job creation, migration management, security and border management (Adeniyi, 2019)

In a similar manner, the Nigerian government and NGOs should ensure greater co-operation and synergy across the border countries and in a collective manner, fight the organized crime. This synergy should involve information sharing; workshops; seminars, conferences and researches into the human trafficking trade.

Due to the clandestine nature of human trafficking, traffickers are not easily detected, arrested and

prosecuted. According to the United States department of state, about 111 suspects were arrested in 2019. While 232 human trafficking suspects were arrested along the Nigeria-Niger border in 2020. However, arrests are not enough, these suspects should be summarily prosecuted and jailed for these crimes against the people.

The Nigerian government should plan for the future and plan well, because our population is growing exponentially and is also one of the youngest in Africa. The United Nations has projected that Nigeria's population could rise to 440 million by 2050 (Adeniyi, 2019), and this poses a serious threat to the country's future survival as a nation.

The enactment of the NAPTIP ACT in 2003 and amended in 2005 as the trafficking in persons (prohibition) law enforcement and Administration (Amended) Act 2005, was a step in the right direction. In fact, as at February 2009, 56 traffickers had been convicted since the NAPTIP Act came into force in 2003 and 60 trafficking cases were still in court (as cited in Shatsari, 2010). However, NAPTIP should be strengthened with increased funding to perform its mandate of investigation; monitoring; public enlightenment; counseling and rehabilitation; prosecution and research into the subject of trafficking.

Establishment of care homes for victims is necessary to accommodate, rehabilitate and prepare them for reintegration into the society. There is need for enlightenment of parents to appreciate their role in child protection to reduce incidents of allowing children for internal or external trafficking. More of the NGOs and CBOs should get involved in increased awareness of the dangers of human trafficking and the rehabilitation of the victims of the deadly trade in humans.

It is significant to conclude that, human trafficking is a global threat to human survival, and all hands must be on deck to stamp it out of the society. Fundamentally, the magic wand in this struggle, like the late Nobel laureate, Norman Borlang said, "You can't build a peaceful world on empty stomach and human misery" that is the message for us all.

References

Adeniyi, O. (2019). From frying pan to fire. Bookcraft.

Akinyemi, O. O., et al. (2020). A systematic review of drivers and interventions against sex work migration in Edo State, Nigeria. International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 40(7/8).

Lipede, A. (2007). Women trafficking and insecurity in West Africa: Character, trend and scale in Nigeria. In B. M. Barkindo & A. Lipede (Eds.), Human trafficking and economic crimes across Nigeria's international borders. Spectrum Books Limited.

Ibrahim, F. O. (2012). Human trafficking in Nigeria: A discourse on causes and impacts. In M. A. Yusuf et al. (Eds.), Nigerian politics, society and the environment. Faculty of Social and Management Sciences.

Idris, A., et al. (2024). Community-based border policing: Towards complementing border surveillance strategy in countering human trafficking on the Nigeria-Niger border. Journal of Asian and African Studies.

Mbachu, O. (2015). Globalization and African security: History, challenges and prospects. Medusa Academic Publishers Limited.

Shatsari, R. S. (2010). Legislation against human trafficking in Nigeria: A critical overview of the NAPTIP Act. In S. I. Radda, M. Lawan, & M. Mukhtar (Eds.), Issues in Nigeria's social problems. Benchmark Publishers Limited.

Shuaibu, S. I. (2024). Institutional frameworks for combating human trafficking in Nigeria: An assessment of NAPTIP (2015–2023). South East Journal of Political Science, 10(1).

Yakubu, R. (2021). Human trafficking in Nigeria: A political economy perspective. In K. A. Omojuwa et al. (Eds.), Etches of a mentor: 44 years of intellectual service: A festschrift in honour of Professor Raufu Ayoade Dunmoye. Ahmadu Bello University Press Limited.

SIRA. (2019). Nigerian-German relations in modern times: A reflection. In Reflections in Nigeria's foreign policy. Global Limited.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2022). Global report on trafficking in persons. https://www.unodc.org/

International Labour Organization. (2017). Global report on labour. https://www.ilo.org/

Migration Today. (2022). Retrieved September 15, 2022, from

World101. (https://world101.cfr.org?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

Al Jazeera News (https://www.aljazeera.com/news/?utm_source=chatgpt.com). (2021). Retrieved December 25, 2021.

Channels Television. (https://www.channelstv.com?utm_source=chatgpt.com). (2021). Retrieved November 17, 2021.

Britannica Kids. (https://kids.britannica.com?utm_source=chatgpt.com). (2022). Retrieved September 15, 2022.

Varsity Tutors. (https://www.varsitytutors.com?utm_source=chatgpt.com). (2022). Retrieved September 15, 2022.

United Nations. (2019). Trends in international migrant stock. Retrieved September 15, 2022, from https://www.un.org/

CNN News. (https://www.cnn.com/news?utm_source=chatgpt.com). (2022). Retrieved September 17, 2022.