

ERADICATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND CHILD LABOUR THROUGH VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

Human trafficking and child labour for the purpose of domestic, service, commercial, prostitution and other forms of exploitative labour is a global phenomenon and wide spread in Nigeria. Nigeria is a source, Transit and destination country for child trafficking. This paper will examine the concept of human trafficking, child labour and vocational education, cause of human trafficking and child labour, vocational education as a remedy for solving human trafficking and child labour and Recommendations for the prevention of the scourge.

Introduction

Human trafficking and child labour are like Siamese twins. You cannot separate one from the other. What affects one affects the other. Trafficking in persons and child labour for the purpose of domestic service, prostitution and other forms of exploitative labour is a widespread phenomenon all over the world including Nigeria. Globally, human trafficking and child labour are among the fastest growing organized crimes facing our world today.

The Foslko National child labour, survey (2003) estimates that there are 15 million children engaged in child labour in Nigeria with 40% of them at risk of being trafficked both internally and externally for domestic and forced labour, prostitution, entertainment, pornography, armed conflict and sometimes ritual killings. Nigeria is a source, transit and destination country for child trafficking,

currently external trafficking of children exists between Nigeria and Garbon, Cameroon, Niger, Italy, Spain, Benin Republic and Saudi Arabia. The number of trafficking and child labour victims across the globe are in hundreds of millions comprising, men, women and children of all races, creed and colour. Their individual and collective experiences fall squarely within the specific and general acts listed as crimes against humanity in various international instruments.

The international community is agreed that trafficking in humans and child labour amounts to gross violation of the laws of humanity meaning that it is a crime against humanity that should attract the requisite legal duties that arise in connection with high profile crimes, including the duty to arrest, prosecute or

extradite perpetrators on the part of all effected state parties.

In July 2003, the trafficking in persons prohibition and Administration Act was passed in Nigeria, a legislative framework that prohibits children and adults against criminal networks. As a result of the law, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and other related matters (NAPTIP) was established to fight human trafficking through investigation of cases, prosecution of criminals, rescue and rehabilitation of victims.

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and United Nations International Childrens Education Fund situation assessment of child trafficking in Southern Nigeria state (2004) reported that 46% of repatriated victims of external trafficking in Nigeria are children, with a female to male ratio of 7:3. (www.unicefnig.org). Private transit camps have been reported to exist in Akwa Ibom, Cross Rivers and Ondo States where children are transported from the South Eastern States and forced into hard labour and prostitution. Likewise, immigration and investigation reports from NAPTIP have shown increasing number of cases in the Northern part of the country. Nigeria being a major participant in this crime against humanity, something has to be done to eradicate or reduce its occurrence to the barest minimum.

The Concept of Human Trafficking, Child Labour and Vocational Education

Human trafficking is the modern nomenclature for the old trans-Atlantic Slave trade now being perpetuated on a wider scale for more end uses and in a more sophisticated and globalised manner across the nooks and crannies of the 21st century world. The United Nations convention against Transnational organized crime (2000) also known as Palermo protocol gives a definition of trafficking As: -

“the recruitment, transportation, transfer harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the 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. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery servitude of the removal of organs”.

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defined trafficking as “To buy or sell something illegally”. In the same view, McCormick & Zamora (2000) said in United Nation (UN) reports that around the world, more than 4 million people a year are traded against their will to work in some form of servitude. Before now, the two most prevalent forms

of trafficking were drugs and arms. Trafficking in human beings came into focus in the last three decades due to the magnification of its practices and the ever-expanding dimensions it has assumed on the heels of globalisation. Trafficking in humans has gradually metamorphosed from basic slavery and bonded labour to several other practices like forced prostitution, baby trafficking for adoption purposes, pornographic experimentation, removal of vital organs, forced marriages and pawns in the chess-board of the entertainment industry.

Child labour on the other hand is defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that: -

- 1) Is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and
- 2) Interferes with their schooling by
- 3) Depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
- 4) Obliging them to leave school prematurely; or
- 5) Requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

In most extreme forms, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illness an/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities – often at a very early age. Whether or not particular forms of “work” can be

called “child labour” depends on the child’s age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries.

The answer varies from country to country as well as among sectors within countries (www.ilo.org/ipecc).

Vocational education is a type of instruction intended to equip persons for industrial or commercial occupations. It may be obtained in the school or outside the school system. That means training for a specific vocation in industry, agriculture or trade.

(www.thefreedictionary.com/vocational-education). Vocational education emphasizes the acquisition and participation in occupation of social and economic value. It is designed to develop skills, abilities, understanding, attitudes, work habits and appreciation encompassing knowledge and information needed by workers to enter and make progress in employment on a useful and productive basis. Vocational education according to Ayakoha and Oramu (1992) involves in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, as well as acquisition of practical skills relating to occupation.

Vocational education or training prepares learners for the jobs that are based in manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic and totally related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation, hence the term in which the learners participates. It is sometimes referred to as technical education, as the

learner directly develops expertise in a particular group of techniques or technology. Enene (1997) said that entrepreneurship in vocational education tends to establish and bring out entrepreneurial skills that can promote productivity and resourcefulness in the field of vocational enterprise.

Maduka and Nwaiwu (2005) opined that vocational education appears to be fluid and elastic in meaning, in that it covers in a broad sense, a wide range of definitions depending on the school of thought. We can adduce the meaning of vocational education from the following impressions given by them:

- i) It is a form of education which makes an individual more employable in one group of occupation than others.
- ii) Vocational education emphasizes habit formation e.g. Thinking, doing etc. achieved through repetitive training i.e. experiences in the occupation or training on the job, not pseudo job, as such a job training is given to those who need it, who want it and who can benefit from it.
- iii) Vocational education satisfies the democratic ideas of equality in educational opportunities for all citizens
- iv) It is that part of the experiences whereby the student learns successfully to carry on a gainful employment.

In summary therefore, vocational education is a functional or skill Oriented education, which has much emphasis on learning by doing. It emphasizes the

preparation of individuals in the “thinking” and “doing” habits needed for employment in occupations to meet social and technological demands.

Causes of Human Trafficking and Child Labour.

Direct and indirect costs often force children to drop out of elementary and lower secondary schools and is a contributing factor to children being pushed into the labour force as well as victims of human trafficking. In addition to school fees, cost associated with uniforms, shoes, books and transportation fares are obstacles to children’s education. Text books change yearly requiring families to purchase new books for each child. In essence, “free education” will not resolve child labour problems because even if tuition is free, parents/guardians have to pay for uniforms transportation fees and books.

(www.hrw.org/reports/2005indonesia).

A whole lot of factors are responsible for Human trafficking and child labour in the whole world especial in Sub-Saharan Africa. The way in which different causes at different levels interact with each other ultimately determines whether or not an individual child or person becomes trafficked or forced into labour. Some of the causes are as follows:-

- 1) **Over population:** - Most of the Asian and African Countries are over populated. Due to limited resources and more mouth to feed, children and young people are employed in various forms.

- 2) **Illiteracy:-** Illiterate parents do not realize the need for a proper physical, emotional and cognitive development of a child. As they are uneducated, they do not realized the importance of education for their children.
 - 3) **Poverty:-** Many a time poverty forces parents to sent their children to hazardous jobs. Although they know it is wrong, they have no other alternative as they need the money.
 - 4) **Urbanization:-** The industrial revolution has its own negative side. Many a time Multi National Corporations (MNC) and export industries in the developing world employ child workers, particularly in the garment industries.
 - 5) **Unemployment of Elders:-** Elders often find it difficult to get jobs. The industrialists and factory owners find it profitable to employ children. This is so because they can pay less and extract more work. They will also not create Union problems.
 - 6) **Willingness to exploit children:-** This is the root of the problem. Even if a family is very poor, the incidence of child labour and human trafficking will be very low unless there are people willing to exploit these children.
- Other Causes are as follows:-**
- 1) Tradition of making the children learn the family skills
 - 2) Absence of universal compulsory primary education
 - 3) Social apathy and tolerance of child labour.
 - 4) Ignorance of the parents about the adverse consequences of child labour.
 - 5) Ineffective enforcement of the legal provisions pertaining to child labour
 - 6) Non-availability of and non-accessibility to schools.
 - 7) Irrelevant and non-attractive school curriculum
 - 8) Lack of effective policing and border control measures and the existence of corrupt practices within the law enforcement agencies.
 - 9) Lack of capacity for law enforcement, information exchange and analysis within and among countries.
 - 10) Lack of victim support services particularly the absence of comprehensive witness protection programmes that can secure the corporation of victims in prosecuting traffickers
- Vocational Education as a Remedy for Solving Human Trafficking and Child Labour**
- Education is a crucial component of any effective effort to eliminate child labour and human trafficking and vocational education is key. There are many interlinked explanations for human trafficking and child labour. No single

factor can fully explain its persistence and in some cases growth. Human trafficking and child participation in the labour force is endlessly varied and infinitely volatile responding to changing market and social conditions. Experience shows that a combination of economic growth respect for labour standards, Universal vocational education and social protection together with a better understanding of needs and rights of children can bring about a significant reduction in child labour

Human trafficking and child labour are stubborn problems that even if overcome in certain places or sectors will seek out opportunities to reappear in new and often unanticipated ways. The response to the problem must be as versatile and adaptable as child labour itself. Vocational education and training provides the skills needed for gainful employment which in turn contributes to Local and National development.

Up until the end of the twentieth century, vocational education focused on specific trades such as for example, an automobile mechanic or welder and was therefore associated with the activities of the lower social classes. As a consequence, it attracted a level of stigma. Vocational education is related to the age-old apprenticeship system of learning. However, as the labour market becomes more specialized and economies demand higher levels of skill, governments and businesses are increasingly investing in the future of vocational education through publicly funded training organizations and subsidized apprenticeship or traineeship initiatives.

Vocational education has diversified over the 20th century and now exists in industries, such as retail, Tourism, Information Technology, Agriculture, Fine Arts, Home Economics, Business Management. Under International Law, the right to education is guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the convention on the Rights of the child, and the International Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These instruments dictate that primary education must be “compulsory and available free to all”. Second Education including Vocational Education must be “available and accessible to every child”, and state parties must *take appropriate measures, such as introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need.*

In addition, the convention on the Rights of the child obligates states parties “to take measures to encourage regular attendance at school and the reduction of drop out rates”. State parties to the convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women are obligated to end discrimination against girls in education including access to schooling, reduction of female students drop out rates, and programmes for girls who have left school prematurely. Both primary and secondary education must include elements of “Availability”, “Accessibility” “Acceptability” and “Adaptability”.

If vocational education is made compulsory and accessible to all, at least from the junior secondary school level, every child will learn a trade or skill that will keep him or her self employed

gainfully thereby eradicating the incidence of human trafficking and child labour. The gains of vocational education as an instrument to eradicate human trafficking and child labour cannot be over emphasized, specifically vocational education will among others as opined by Maduka & Nwaiwu (2005);

- 1) Create opportunities for learner to develop personal qualities and positive self concept which will help them meet the challenges of work and life.
- 2) Develop the ability in the individual (young and old) to cope with modern demands in technology.
- 3) Increase the occupational choice of those involved in the programme
- 4) Maintain a link between the school and industry through industrial training programmes, thereby establishing smooth transition from the school to the job environment.
- 5) Create avenues for personal initiative in the individual and sustaining it to a productive level.
- 6) Develop men, women and children who know their rights and privileges first, as members of a family and as citizens of a Nation.
- 7) Above all put money in the hands of parents, guardians and individuals to meet their daily needs thereby diverting their attention from committing crime against humanity.

Conclusion

From the above discourse, it is imperative that the thorny issue of human trafficking and child labour

should be taken very seriously by stake holders. One of the practical ways of eradicating human trafficking and child labour no doubt remains through accelerated vocational education with strong emphasis on self employment. The days of white collar jobs in Nigeria are over. There are no jobs. The few available cannot go round; Unemployment and poverty breeds frustration and people resort to human trafficking and child labour. With emphasis on vocations, skill acquisition and trade people will be gainfully employed and make money to take care of their needs. The frontiers of vocational education should be exploited not only in the polytechnics and colleges of education but also in the university to take care of graduate unemployment.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for the eradication of human trafficking and child labour.

- 1) Vocational education should be included in school. Curriculum, at the primary, secondary and tertiary level, in order to turn out graduates who can be self employed
- 2) The small and medium enterprise (SMEDAN) loan scheme should be re-structured to guarantee loans, to small scale enterprises, with very low interest rates and long moratorium.
- 3) Vocational training should be upgraded and re-structured to

meet up the urgent demands of the twenty first century bearing in mind the demands of globalization, information and communications technology.

- 4) The international convention on Rights of the child which has been domesticated and ratified as child Rights Act 2003 in Nigeria is yet to be passed in many states of Nigeria who see it as uncultural and therefore cannot be integrated into vocational education. Those states, are by this paper encouraged to do so. Those who have passed the Act should ensure that its provisions which are meant to eradicate child labour and human trafficking are enforced to the letter by law enforcement Agents and incorporated into the curriculum of vocational education.

It is also recommended that an accelerated mass mobilization, local, state and national orientation be embarked upon by the state and National Orientation Agencies especially at the grassroot to educate the people on the dangers of human trafficking and child labour through guardians and counseling and vocational instructions.

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