

HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A SCOURGE OF EDUCATION AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Education has become and is still the most veritable instrument of change of every society. This is why both developing and developed societies invest so much in education. This paper examined Human Trafficking as a scourge of Education and the Millennium Development Goals. In addition to clarifying the concepts "Human trafficking" and "Millennium Development Goals", the role of education in national development was also examined. The paper further showed that Human Trafficking hinders the achievement of both the goals of education and (the millennium Development. It was shown that victims of human trafficking are exposed to health problems such as the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome-(AIDS). They are also denied access to education, thus depriving them of the opportunities for personal development and contribution to the development of the society. In conclusion, the National Association for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) was advised to ensure that adequate punishment is given to violators of the NAPTIP laws. This will help to stem the tide of human trafficking in Nigeria.

Introduction

Human trafficking is a current social problem that is bedeviling Nigeria in particular and other countries of the world in general. Human trafficking is not only abhorrent, it has become a worrisome phenomenon. This is because it has so many implications for both the development of the individual and the society.

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly on December 10, 1948, declared all people free and as having equal rights and dignity. Similarly, the United Nations (UN) convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and rights of the child, adopted by the General Assembly, November, 20 1989 reaffirmed its faith in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women. Human trafficking is therefore, derogatory of human dignity because it deprives man of his rights, opportunities, and sometimes exposes him to treatments that are suitable for only animals.

-Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery. It enslaves man by depriving him of the opportunities for development and subsequent contribution to the development of the society. Though slave trade which dates back to the late 15th century, according to Fadeyo (2005), had been officially abolished throughout the world, human trafficking is a resurgence of it. As nations especially developing ones strive to increase their pace of development through the introduction of laudable education programmes and the use of information technologies such as computer, internet, and so on, human trafficking has become a scourge to those development programmes. This is because the human person is the most important factor in any development plan. Laudable programmes can only be implemented, effectively by efficient and well-trained human resource persons. Human trafficking cuts across nations, ages and gender. It is a social malaise that needs to be nipped in the bud if the goals of education in particular, and development in general in any nation could be achieved.

The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, (F. R. N) (1999), acknowledged the rights of all Nigeria citizens. Similarly, in section 34 of the constitution, it was stated that no individual shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment such as slavery, forced or compulsory labour or any act that degrades the human person. Despite this commitment of the Nigeria State to ensuring that the dignity of every Nigerian child or citizen is protected, incidences of human trafficking have been and are still being reported almost on a daily basis in our national dailies and media.

The United States Department, Bureau of International Labour Affairs revealed that Nigeria is a source, transit and destination country for trafficking children. Traffic in women and children

especially, has become a major source of worry to concerned governments, societies, individuals and non-governmental organization. This is because human trafficking could not only be described as an endemic disease, it is also pandemic because its tentacles has spread to almost all part of the world. This paper is divided into the following sections;

Conceptual Clarifications

The Roles of education in National Development

Implications of Human Trafficking for education and (he Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria

Conclusion

Conceptual Clarifications

Human Trafficking: Human trafficking simply means trading in human beings. It is the illegal or unlawful buying- and selling of human beings especially young children and women for the sole purpose of exploiting their labour and bodies. (Oiolobou, 2004). It has however been established that human trafficking does not involve only children and women, its sophistication and practice cuts across ages and gender.

The United States Resolution S2 on Trafficking introduced in 1998 also stated that "trafficking consists of all acts involved in the recruitment or transportation of persons within or across borders, involving deception, coercion or force, abuse of authority, debt, bondage or fraud, for the purpose of placing persons in situations of abuse or exploitation such as forced prostitution, battering and extreme cruelty, sweatshop labour or exploitative domestic servitude. Critical examination of this definition of human trafficking shows that human trafficking is a regular phenomenon in our society because one form of it or another can be detected on a daily basis. Many individuals are therefore, consciously or unconsciously involved in different aspects of human trafficking, some of which are Child Abuse, Child Labour, Prostitution, Drug Peddling and so on. When a parent forces his child to go and live with a relation in order to assist the relation in domestic work, human trafficking has taken place. This is because the right and dignity of the child is sacrificed for either the monetary or material gains which may accrue to the parent through such transaction.

Other instances of human trafficking in the society include girls being made to work in brothels as prostitutes either by their parents or guardians, boys and girls being forced into child labour, a child being beaten with a rod, a child or young adult being made to fetch water with a bucket that is too heavy for his age, a lady being compelled to have sex with an employer before she could be given a job, a young man being forced to sleep with his mistress (the wife of his master), an individual being denied the right to education, to mention just a few.

The Tide on line (200), writing on "Winning War Against Women Trafficking' described trafficking as the transportation of children and women (young ladies and adults) from one place to another either as child labour, sexual commodities or professional prostitutes who sell their bodies for money or engage in other menial jobs which there is neither future nor special skills. Human trafficking, according to the newspaper, occurs in two stages, which are internal and external. The internal trafficking occurs when the victims are moved from rural areas to urban areas to become house helps, hotel attendants and nannies. However, internal trafficking can also take place within a rural and an urban area respectively. The external trafficking on the other hand, occurs, when victims are transported from their country to another for the purpose of prostitution and child labour.

Human trafficking has therefore become a form of business for some individuals who also work through syndicates which may be the parents, relations, neighbours or friends of the victims. Most of the victims of human trafficking especially the children are most of the time deceived or coursed into following the syndicates to an unknown destination. Sometimes, they are promised good or better jobs, good education or better standard of living. However, it has also been reported that some victims especially the ladies offer themselves for the purpose of monetary gains.

Durall (1997), opined that child abuse which is a form of human trafficking includes the physical or mental injury, sexual exploitation, negligence, treatment or maltreatment of a child under the age of eighteen (IS) by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare. Child abuse is one of the commonest forms of human trafficking in Nigeria. Human trafficking is a common phenomenon in most countries of the world, including Nigeria. Christian Children's Fund Organization CCF,

(2006), stated that worldwide, an estimated 211 million children between the ages of 5 and 15 participate in some form of illegal, hazardous or exploitative labour.

In India for instance, it reported that children in Firozabad work in dark crowded rooms, hunched over on the floor making colourful glass bangles that will decorate the wrists of women and girls 24.9 million children here also reported to be involved in child labour in Philippines. In Nigeria in particular, the International Labour Organization (ILO) reported that in 1996, some 4000 children were trafficked from Cross River State to various parts within and outside the country. Benin was also registered to have 3000 trafficked children between 1995 and 1999.

In addition, the US state department also reported that within Nigeria, women and girls are primarily trafficked for domestic servitude and sexual exploitation, and boys for forced begging by religious teachers, forced street hawking and labour exploitation. It also reported the trafficking of Nigeria women to neighbouring countries, to North Africa, Saudi Arabia, France, Spain, the Netherlands to mention a few, for domestic servitude and sexual exploitation.

Many cases of human trafficking especially child abuse and child labour in Nigeria are being reported, almost on a weekly basis in our newspapers and televisions. On July 9, 2007, for instance, the Daily Sun reported the case of Amarachi Uzoawotu, a 14 year old girl recently rescued from the torture chamber of her mistress. Human trafficking is a menace in the society. It is therefore, high time it is tackled vehemently in order to nip it in the bud.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGS)

A United nations Millennium Summit' which focused on the need to check global poverty, hunger, disease and general underdevelopment was held in September, 2000. This summit was attended by 189 world leaders who later adopted the United Nations member states have agreed to try to achieve by the-year 2015. the goals arc:

1. **Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger:** This entails the reduction by -half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day. Also to reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.
2. **Achieve Universal primary Education (UPE):** This involves a commitment to ensuring that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary school.
3. **Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women:** Gender disparity should be eliminated in primary and secondary education preferable by 2005 and at all levels by 2015.
4. **Reduce Child Mortality:** The mortality rale among children under five should be reduced by two third.
5. **Improve Maternal Health:** it is hoped that this goal will be achieved by ensuring that the maternal mortality ratio is reduced by three quarter.
6. **Combat HIV/AIDS', Malaria and Other Diseases:** This will be ensured by halting and reversing the spread of HIV/ AIDS, malaria and other major diseases respectively.
7. **Ensure Environmental Sustainability:** This is made possible by integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes, reversing loss of environmental resources, and reducing by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water. It is also aimed at achieving significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.
8. **Develop a Global Partnership for Developments:** Developed countries will support the underdeveloped ones through aid, debt relief and better opportunities for trade.

The MDGs are geared towards the eradication of all obstacles on the path of development such as inequality in access to education, poverty and diseases; and ensure the sustainable development of all nations of the world.

The Role of Education in National Development

All nation of the World, believe in education as a very important tool for both individual and national development Education is the springboard for socio-political, economic and cultural development that enhances the production of skilled manpower for national development (Onwumere, 2006). Every form of development needed in the society is hinged on education. This is because without the necessary manpower (produced by education) no sustainable development can take place. This is why Martin Luther, in Thio (2003), stated that the prosperity of a nation consist in clever, capable, wise, honourable and well educated citizens who can acquire, hold and utilize every treasure and possession. Education is therefore, the key to economic empowerment. Its role in development is also perennial in that in a dynamic society, continual reforms take place in the education system in order to make it fit to meet the changing needs of the society. Azikiwe (2007), elaborated on the description and role of education in development thus:

Education is the vehicle for effecting any social change. Education is said to be a polyvalent agent for the generation and transmission of appropriate values, norms, ideals and skills from generation to generation. It is also the most powerful instrument for developing and empowering members of the society to compete for survival (P;l and 2).

Education ensures equality of opportunities among members of the society. This is because, it is the most recognized and accepted institutional means of achieving the cultural goals of a society. For an individual to have the opportunity of governance or participate in any form in the leadership of the society, education is imperative. It is also education that delivers an individual from the hurting tentacles of poverty, emancipates him from ignorance, narrow mindedness, inferiority complex, and opens his eyes to his potentials and opportunities

for development.

Education is thus, an important instrument for developing and empowering people to understand and master their society and natural environment in order to compete for survival (David and Iman, 2006). An individual who neither knows nor understands where he is may find it difficult to both adapt and survive in such an environment, since he is unaware of the provision made by the environment for his survival.

Imuka (2005), explaining education in a wider perspective also stated that education means the training of a person to enable him not only to be able to read and write or to be a professional in a given field, but also to enable him fit into the society. This means that education in the formal, informal and non-formal forms, are all equally important in the development of the individual and the nation. Whereas it may be impossible to give some older members of the society formal education, the non-formal education could be employed to equip them with necessary skills for survival. The recognition given to education by the Federal Government of Nigeria is revealed through her declaration in the National Policy on Education that Education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most important instrument of change' (FRN, 2004, 8). The Federal Government also stated in p.7, that, every Nigeria child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability. This disposition of the Federal Government of Nigeria towards education explains why many reforms had been taking place in Nigeria education. This is to ensure that education meets the needs of the changing Nigeria society, and that all hindrances to the proper functioning of the education sector be eradicated.

One factor that necessitated the reforms in the education sector was the New Economic Development Policy of Former President Obasanjo's government. This was termed the National Economic and Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS). It was launched in 2003, and it has five pillars which are:

- Value Reorientation
- Poverty Eradication
- Job Creation
- Wealth Generation
- Education for empowerment of the people

Beside the NEEDS, Nigeria is also a signatory to the United Nations Development Programme, Education for All' (EFA), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It was therefore, necessary to carry out reforms in the education sector in order to meet these goals.

One of the reforms that had taken place in Nigeria education is that of the Universal Basic Education which is now a 9-3-4 programme instead of the former 6-3-3-4. This means that the free and compulsory education now covers both the primary and the junior secondary levels. The UBE programme made provision for mass-Literacy and Civic education. It also extended its tentacles to many Nigerians. These include youths, school age children, disabled children, illiterate diverse, and so on.

With all these reforms in the education sector, the individual has to be available to be educated, otherwise no education can take place. Human trafficking deprives education of the human input (pupils and students) to the education system.

Implications of Human Trafficking for Education and the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria
Education has been described in this paper not only as a tool for economic empowerment, but also as a key to hope, impossibilities, and liberation from the tentacles of poverty. Education is one of the major means of social mobility in any society, it behaves then that a nation that seeks to lift her citizens from the muck of poverty will ensure that the door of educational opportunity is opened to them.

Similarly, the success of every developmental goal in any society is hinged on education. This is because it is education that makes members of the society aware of the importance and need for such programme. Education also provides the human resources needed for the implementation of the programmes. The Millennium Development Goal I aimed at the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. How then does Human trafficking hinder the achievement of the goal of education and the MDGs? One of the national goals of education which derive from the philosophy of Nigeria education is the acquisition of appropriate skills as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. Education thus, provides individuals with skill for earning living and for liberation from poverty. However, human trafficking denies victims the opportunity to acquire appropriate skills that will give them future vocation. They are also denied

access to education. These MDGs will be far from being fully achieved if some of the Nigerian citizens are denied the opportunities of benefiting from the educational programmes that will liberate them from poverty.

In the national Policy on Education, section 4, subsection 19a, it is stated that primary education shall be tuition free, universal and compulsory. This goal is in line with the second MDG which is aimed at the achievement of Universal primary education. Most trafficked children are denied access to education. The Tide on line (2007), opined that most trafficked children are not sent to school and that this makes them to become social miscreants and haters of the society when they grow up. Human trafficking is therefore, a scourge to education and the Millennium Development Goal in Nigeria.

The Third Millennium Development Goal is promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. In section 1, subsection 4c of the national Policy on Education (F. R. N, 2004 p.7), it was stated that every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities. This means that no citizen of Nigeria should be denied access to education on the basis of gender. However, the United States Department has found that women and girls are the most vulnerable to child traffickers. This is as a result of poverty and the African concept of the girl-child. Human trafficking, thus deprives women the opportunity of education which is one of the means of ensuring gender equality and women empowerment in the society.

Similarly, some of those women and girls are abused to the point that they become sick. When they are no more useful to the traffickers, they are dumped to die. Polkinghorne (2007), asserted that Nigerian women and girls who contract HIV and other sexually transmitted infections are secluded from the world, and have no access to health care. This development therefore, hinders the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal 5 aimed at improving maternal health.

The last MDGs to be considered in this paper are goals 4 and 6 which focused on the reduction of child mortality and combating of HIV/AIDS. Bozimo, Gotep, Zwalchir and Obanya (2004), revealed that trafficked children are exposed to severe physical torture and abuse which can result to ill health and death. Most trafficked children therefore, die during the process thus, hindering the millennium Development Goal of the reduction of child mortality. Education is also expected to teach the recipients good health habits which will keep diseases away from them. Trafficked children who have no access to education will lack the knowledge means that no citizen of Nigeria should be denied access to education on the basis of gender. However, the United States Department has found that women and girls are the most vulnerable to child traffickers. This is as a result of poverty and the African- concept of the girl-child. Human trafficking thus, deprives women the opportunity of education which is one of the means of ensuring gender equality and women empowerment in the society.

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Human trafficking has so many implications for education, the MDGs and national development in general. It has also been shown that children who have been exposed to sexual abuse have impaired language and learning ability, problems in personality development and behavioural disorders (Hutchinson Encyclopedia, 2007). This shows that even when children and young adults who have been victims of trafficking go back to school, they experience learning problems because of the negative impact trafficking had on their personality. Human trafficking is a cankerworm, a menace, a caterpillar and a scourge on education. It has to be up-rooted from the society because if education is not allowed to perform its functions, the

Millennium Development Goals will not be achieved in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The Federal Government of Nigeria has made several efforts to stem the rising tide of human trafficking. Some of the efforts made by the Federal Government include:

-Establishment of the national Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) in 2003.

-Presidential appointment of a special assistant for Human Trafficking and child labour in June 2003.

Despite these efforts made by the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the menace has not been eradicated. Human trafficking is a threat to both the education sector and national development. The major implication of human trafficking for education is that it deprives education of human resources (that is the man to be educated).

Victims of human trafficking are denied access to education. By this, they are denied every opportunity of personal development and subsequent contribution to the society. Education is the key to achieving and developmental goal in the society. This is why every society seeks to ensure that the percentage of her literate citizens is increased. World Census Data, according to Azikiwe (2007), showed that more than 40% of Nigeria children who are supposed to be in primary school are out of school. It also reported that out of 42.1 million of Nigeria children who are between the ages of 1-14 years, 22.3 million are in primary school, while 3.6 million are in junior secondary school. This gives a total of about only 25.9 million children in primary and junior secondary school. According to her, World Bank analysis also revealed that about 70% of secondary school population are out of school in Nigeria with only 30% of secondary school enrolment. There is no doubt that among these children who are not in school are trafficker children.

Sustainable national development is that kind of development that is intended to meet the requirement of the present time without at the same time, compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own need. (Indusogie, 2006). For Nigeria to achieve such development, every child and citizen must be made available to the education industry for training and remoulding. This could be done by ensuring the prosecution of anyone who either violates NAPTIP Laws, or denies any child access to education in anyway.

The government should also provide the agency with necessary facilities for the effective performance of her duties. It is only when this is done and the victims of human trafficking are handed over to the education industry for training and remoulding, that the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria can be achieved.

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