

## Implications of Child Trafficking for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

By

**Dr Olojede Ibukunoluwa, Bose**

Department of Political Science,

Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Oyo State

Email: [proudlybosedey@yahoo.com](mailto:proudlybosedey@yahoo.com)

### **Abstract**

*Empirical records reveal that Nigeria is not only a misogynistic, sexist and patriarchal society, it is one of the unsafest and toxic places for children as they are sold as commodities even by their parents. Unfortunately, child trafficking is associated with debasing human rights violations wherein the trafficked victims are forced to endure painful sexual intercourse with multiple partners. They are also hired for pornography and bestiality. These conditions are experiences that make children vulnerable to numerous sexually transmitted diseases such as chlamydia, hepatitis B, pelvic inflammatory diseases, trichomoniasis, vaginal cancer, long term pelvic pain, drug addiction, depression, HIV/AIDS infertility and other physical, psychological and mental health challenges at a very young age. More disturbing is the fact that it frustrates the efforts of government towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals particularly as it relates to education for all because many of the victims trafficked are deprived of the opportunity to acquire formal education. In the light of this, this study seeks to examine the implications of child trafficking for sustainable development in Nigeria. Qualitative method based on document investigation was adopted and the findings from this paper revealed that Illiteracy amongst parents increased the child's vulnerability to child traffickers particularly among rural dwellers in Nigeria where ignorance is pervasive. It therefore concludes and recommends that for development to become sustainable, the government as a matter of necessity must make education affordable and accessible to all particularly for rural children who are more susceptible to the wiles of child traffickers*

**Keywords:** Child trafficking, Domestic servitude, Illiteracy, Sex slavery, Sustainable Development.

### **Introduction**

Human trafficking is a global scourge that is despicable, heinous and detestable yet it is a reality of life particularly for the Nigerian child. Alao, Iyanda and Alao (2015) noted that child trafficking violates human rights and cuts across state borders and criminal laws. It involves organized crimes, coercive sexual exploitation, labor exploitation and juvenile delinquency which are transnational in scope and of late organ removal for commercial and ritual purposes. For instance, the discovery of an evil forest at Soka in Ibadan, Oyo state Nigeria where more than 20 decomposing bodies were found and 19 in chains in an underground building may just be a tip of an ice berg as many centers of human and organ sales are located all over Nigeria yet to be discovered. In addition, the discovery of baby factories in Owerri, Imo state and Ondo state are all confirmation of the dire implications of human trafficking in Nigeria. Unfortunately, apart from demand and supply issue in child

trafficking, poverty, unemployment, greed, poor legal regime, anarchy and insufficient collaborative efforts among global community encourages the growth of the trade among others

Sadly, child trafficking is an issue of human exploitation that creates instability and corrupts the chain of manpower supply. In many parts of the world, victims of child trafficking are exploited and forced to engage in dysfunctional and obnoxious crimes like prostitution, hard labor and worst still are at the mercy of strangers. They are coerced into the life they never envisaged which is full of dehumanization, horror, violence, degradation, sexual abuse and gang rape (Aderobaki, 2019; Akinboye, 2004). Regrettably, child trafficking is considered to be the third largest source of profit for organized crimes apart from drugs and arms. For instance, in 2007 marking the 200-year anniversary for the abolition of slavery Enaikele and Olutayo (2011) observed that approximately 800,000 persons were trafficked across the world each year. They also stressed that child trafficking has a total market value estimation of about 32 billion dollars. Hence, this social malaise has commodified children and reduced them to products and goods which contravene the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights prohibiting slavery and promoting a life of freedom and dignity for every human being. Interestingly, according to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes (article 3a) trafficking of human beings refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer or harboring of persons through the use of threat or other forms of coercion such as abduction, deception and abuse of power over a person in a position of vulnerability.

Similarly, it can be seen as the giving or receiving of payments to achieve the consent of a person (by means of deceit) in order to have control over the victim for the purpose of exploitation particularly for reasons bordering on prostitution, sexual exploitation, slavery and forced labor. Unfortunately, the most disturbing exploitative migration is child trafficking and it is described as a contemporary form of slavery which is often accompanied by grave and debasing human rights violations. Similarly, the most common form of trafficking involves children who are sold to work in the sex industry. The victims are often scarred from their experiences and show noticeable physical, psychological and mental damages such as paranoia, anxiety disorders, physical scars, numbness, sadness, guilt, obsessional fears, low self-esteem, shame, acute stress disorder, revulsion, resentment, hatred for adults and the opposite gender, depression, phobia, unwanted pregnancy, violent tendencies, STDs and HIV (Abdulraheem and Oladipo, 2010).

However, in Nigeria even though there has been the creation of several Governmental agencies as well as NGOs such as the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Women Trafficking and Child Labor Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), Coalition Against Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children (CAHTSEC) Mirabel center (MC), Bethesda Child Support Agency and Berean Institute (BCSABI), The Child Growth Initiative (TCGI) and Kudirat Initiative for Democracy (KIND) to combat trafficking and to help victims get back on their feet through rehabilitation centers. Tens of thousands of children are trafficked across the world and Lagos being a commercial

nerve center and with close proximity to national and international borders has been identified as a route and destination for internal and external trafficking which therefore makes Lagos state a hub for human trafficking (Aderobaki,2019).In the light of this therefore ,this paper addresses the recurring causes of child trafficking in Nigeria and its implications for sustainable development.

### **Concept of Child Trafficking**

Child trafficking according to Attoh (2017) remains an intractable problem in Nigeria and West Africa. It is believed to be modern day slavery fueled by poverty, unemployment, greed and weak legislation with the victims being predominantly girls. Nigeria is a source, transit and destination country for women and children trafficked for the purpose of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Within Nigeria, women and girls are trafficked primarily for domestic servitude and commercial sexual exploitation while boys are trafficked for forced labor in street vending, agriculture, mining, stone quarries and as domestic servants. Religious leaders in the North also traffic boys called almajari for forced begging. Women, girls and boys are trafficked from Nigeria to other West and Central African countries, primarily Gabon, Cameroon, Ghana, Chad, Benin, Togo, Niger, Burkina Faso and The Gambia. Benin Republic is a primary source country for boys and girls trafficked for forced labor in Nigeria's granite quarries. Nigerian women and girls are trafficked through Libya, Morocco and Algeria to Europe, primarily for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation and to the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia for forced prostitution and forced labor.

In the light of this, the first internationally agreed upon definition of child trafficking is embodied in the United Nation's protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Thus, the U.N Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime defined human trafficking as follows: the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipts 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 payment or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation. Therefore, exploitation includes at a minimum sexual slavery or the removal of organs. Therefore, the consent of a victim of trafficking to the intended exploitation shall be irrelevant where any of the aforementioned have been used (fraud, deception, threat, abduction, coercion or abuse of power).However, the recruitment, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered trafficking in persons even if it does not involve any of the above listed means. Therefore, it is an inhumane crime which indicates the following:

- a. It is a dehumanizing crime against humanity, marked by the intent to deceive and exploit
- b. Encompasses the range of actions considered part of the trafficking process which include recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring and receipt
- c. Acknowledges men are also trafficked though it emphasizes on children

- d. It recognizes a range of purposes of trafficking in addition to sexual exploitation (UNESCO,2006).

Similarly, Akor (2011) observed that child trafficking is the recruitment and transportation of children across national or international borders for sexual or domestic purposes. It also includes the purchase, sale, transfer, receipts or harboring of under aged girls (in other words, children below 18 years) through deception for the purpose of subjecting them to involuntary servitude. For Attoh (2017) the term child trafficking refers to a set of interrelated activities that encompasses migration, commercial sexual exploitation as well as acts that violate human and children's rights. Child trafficking in Nigeria is propelled by corruption which is present at every level of the society. A 2015 Human Right Watch noted that endemic public-sector corruption continued to undermine the full maximization and enjoyment of social and economic rights in Nigeria. Corruption can facilitate trafficking. For instance, it can ease the transportation of victims within countries and across borders without detection or request for paper work. Economically disempowered and destitute families aiming to escape poor conditions of living are vulnerable to traffickers. Women and young girls, owing to feminization of poverty and discriminatory cultural practices are even more exposed to the crafty devices of the child traffickers. Secondly, the political system characterized by institutional weakness and fragility has created a fertile ground for criminally organized groups to thrive. According to the 2015 United States Trafficking in Persons Report, European Police Office (EUROPOL) has identified Nigerian organized crime related to trafficking in persons as one of the greatest law enforcement challenges to European governments. Finally following the oil boom in the 1970s, opportunities for migration, both inside and outside the country created avenues for exploitation and international child trafficking (Aderobaki,2019).

Hence, the child traffickers are the link between supply and demand, on the one hand increasing supply through the recruitment, deception, transportation and exploitation process and on the other hand boosting demand by providing easy access to the trafficked persons. This includes recruiters as well as transporters, receivers, pimps, brothel keepers, corrupt border guards and producers of false documentation all of which benefit as the trafficked persons pass through their hands. The traffickers are often part of the extended family, have links with the family nucleus or are someone known within the local community. Whatever the scale and means of the operation, the process is systematic, well organized economic phenomenon involving the displacement and movement of persons solely to profit from the exploitation of the trafficked person's labor. Nigerian traffickers abroad have established mafia-like organizations of control in most destination countries. They are well connected and operate in cartels and network which are difficult and risky to infiltrate. They are ruthless and will sacrifice anyone to cover their tracks and remain hidden. They use codes for communication among themselves. Child traffickers do not always operate in groups; however, some engage in independent operations.

Nevertheless, the high profits, low risks of punishment for human trafficking make it an attractive business. African traffickers face low risk of arrest, prosecution or other negative consequences. They have exploited the lack of rule of law, the non-implementation

of existing anti-slavery laws and corruption of judicial systems. These lapses allow perpetrators to go unpunished coupled with the fact that prosecution is rare and fraught with difficulties (UNESCO, 2006).

### **Concept of Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the future generations to meet their own needs. These further emphasized a better quality of life now and for generations to come (Akintoye and Adejumo, 2014). This suggests that the concept of sustainable development is the continuous improvement in the living standard of citizens and the structural transformation/changes in the productive and distributive input and output systems of the economy without using up resources faster than the planet can replenish. Joshua, Nchekwube and Oyeyemi (2017) further reiterated that sustainable development is the efforts of government (federal, state or local) to improve the environment and the living conditions of the people in such a way as not to negatively affect generations to come. For Nwogwugwu and Okworonkwo (2015) sustainable development is about achieving wholesome and integrated development with cross-border or global perspective. It is the ability of a society to develop in a way that benefits different sectors, cutting across borders and futuristic goals in terms of targeting different generations.

Olojede (2014) on the other hand argued that sustainable development is the continuous development that leads to long and healthy lives, knowledge and unlimited access to the resources needed for a decent standard as well as being able to participate in the life of the community. She further reiterated that there are certain indices or yardsticks for which include life expectancy, adult literacy and access to all the three levels of education . In a broader sense, the notion of sustainable development incorporates all aspects of individuals well-being from their health status to their economic and political freedom without compromising on the future. Essentially, this implies that sustainable development is the consistent increase in political, economic, agricultural, educational and technological progress in a society that takes care of the future.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper employs the Marxist theory to explain and underpin the child trafficking phenomenon in order to facilitate a deeper and holistic understanding of the issues under discourse. The Marxist theory was derived from the writings of Karl Marx, a German Philosopher in 1948 (Anifowoshe and Enemu, 1999) and he posits that capitalism is the separation between owners of the means of production (the haves) and non-owners of the means of production (the have not). The exchange between the capitalists and the have nots results in the rich getting richer and the non-bourgeoisies getting poorer which in turn predisposes them to become victims of crimes perpetuated by the elites. This suggests that capitalism is seen as a machine which is made up of the components of cheap labor, capital, raw materials and markets-the victims. Therefore, due to the economic inequality capitalism has created and the wide gap between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the purchase of labor cannot occur under free, fair and humane conditions. Hence, since capitalist control the means of production, the victims of capitalism are naturally coerced into being exploited.

Thus, capitalism empowers the rich at the expense of the poor by placing a higher value on the monetary value of man rather than the unique characteristics of each individual. In summary, capitalism restricts and blocks the freedom of the poor and increases the wealth of the rich which consequently makes the poor perpetually victims (Ilegbinosa,2012).

Fundamentally, the central premise of his perspective is that Marxist theory sees the prevalence of child trafficking from the material basis of society. That capitalism is characterized notably by inequality in wealth and power between individuals and this inequality is the root cause of crime. The Marxist sees power as largely being held by those who own and control the means of production (the ruling class) and the capitalist society reflects the relationship between the ruling class and the underclass (who are majorly the victims of human trafficking) and the definition of crime reflects and serves the interests of the ruling class only. According to the Marxists, laws are not expressions of value consensus but rather a reflection of the ruling class ideology. Hence, the Marxian theory revealed that Marxism provides a lens through which we can view political reality by reference to relevant economic, social and legal factors (Enaikele and Olutayo,2011).

### **A Brief History of Child Trafficking**

Human trafficking is not a new challenge to human security globally. From time immemorial particularly in Africa even before the era of commercial slave trade It manifested in parents willfully sending their children to serve people they were indebted to for a specific number of years in order to offset their debt. In contemporary society, human trafficking is regarded as a modified form of slavery (Alao,Iyanda and Alao,2015) and so the history of human trafficking including that of children cannot be completely divorced from the phenomenon of slavery. This is because they involve the acquisition and transportation of humans across local, national and international borders for servitude with or without the consent of the trafficked person. Slavery made its first appearance when pristine tribes reached the pastoral as distinct from the hunting and gathering stage of development. Slavery was modest with respect to the number of slaves because the care of flocks only needed a few hands. However, a transformation in character and complexity of slavery came in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century when many Africans were shipped across the Atlantic as slaves in what later became known as the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. The intercontinental slave trade which involved Europeans and Africans was carried on through four continents of Europe, Africa and the two Americas.

Following the voyages, countries such as Brazil and Haiti were discovered to be rich in mineral deposits and plantations waiting to be exploited. The exploitation of these resources required a large reservoir of labor which the native Red Indians could not cope with. Consequently, as more plantations were set up and more mines were opened up, the demand for slaves increased drastically and focus shifted to Africa. This marked the genesis of massive importation of able bodied Africans into the new worlds as slaves. The trend of human trafficking for forced labor continued until 1808 when the obnoxious trade was formally abolished. Although slave trade ended 212 years ago, a contemporary form of slavery that involves trafficking of humans particularly children for exploitative, sexual and

commercial labor in Europe and America from Africa has been on the increase in recent years and the reasons are not far-fetched. These are caused by poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, poor leadership amongst others (Akor,2011).

### **Causes of Child Trafficking in Nigeria**

According to Kwagyang, Saulawa and Daud (2016) several factors are responsible for child trafficking in Nigeria as well as in other parts of the world. Some of these factors are enumerated below:

#### **Poverty**

Poverty is a major factor responsible for child trafficking in Nigeria. It cannot be denied that abject poverty, unconducive economic environment, unemployment, massive retrenchments, underemployment and poor quality of life has made parents who would otherwise have been most caring and loving to neglect and even commercialize their children. Some families are living in penury as a result of insufficient income to cater for their families. They are out of job or business either as a result of retirement or insufficiency of the income to settle the children's school fees, rents and feeding. Hence, this creates a perfect situation for parents and children to fall victim of bogus promises of a good time abroad with the prospect of earning foreign exchange that will convert into tons of naira (Nigerian currency) back home in Nigeria.

Although Nigeria has enormous natural and human resources and it is also the largest oil producer in Africa and the eleventh largest in the world, it is rated as one of the poorest countries in the world with a GDP per capita of about \$1,000 for a population of about 150 million. With about two third of its population living in rural areas without basic social amenities such as electricity, road, hospitals, schools, good drinking water and earning less than 1 dollar per day. The lack of opportunities for economic ventures, low standard of living and devalued local currencies, also results in the failure to meet the health, food, housing and security needs of the people. It has been observed that the population living in political and economic instability often seek to migrate elsewhere in search of better opportunities. The destination of that migration is usually into bigger cities. The rural areas of Nigeria where the bulk of the population resides, are not industrialized and characterized with lack of electricity, access to road, hospitals and insecurity caused by Boko haram Islamic sect, farmer-herders clash, kidnapping, vandalism among others. The economic situation is such that most parents are unable to care and properly feed their families. Parents subject their children to various forms of labor including trafficking for economic gains.

#### **Illiteracy**

Illiteracy generally tends to increase individual vulnerability to child trafficking. In most countries including Nigeria where child trafficking is rife, illiteracy is a common cause of child trafficking and so due to high level of illiteracy particularly among rural dwellers in Nigeria, families are not open towards accepting family planning due to pervasive ignorance, superstitious beliefs and sentiments they hold so tenaciously as opposed to logical reasoning.

Hence, they tend to reproduce children recklessly without planning for their education and general welfare. The consequence of this is that they have more children than they can support or cater for. Therefore, they readily and ignorantly give out their children to agents of child traffickers who deceive the parents by selling to them a fairy tale life of milk and honey flowing bountifully in Europe and Saudi Arabia where people pick hard currencies on the streets.

### **Unemployment**

Unemployment in Nigeria has become so pervasive that every year youths graduate from secondary schools and universities all across the 36 states without hope or prospects of getting a job. Unfortunately, the vulnerability to child trafficking is worse for young Nigerians who have no financial empowerment and academic qualifications. Therefore, an economically vulnerable family can easily be hoaxed by the dream of a better livelihood for their under aged children while being oblivious of the dangers or consequences of giving consent to child trafficking agents.

### **Corruption**

Corruption is a universal menace that cuts across nations, cultures, races and classes of people in both developed and developing countries (Fatile and Adejuwon,2012). However, the high level of corruption in Nigeria makes it possible for unscrupulous persons to use official channels to secure bogus travel documents for new recruit into child prostitution abroad. Sometimes there is corruption even within the foreign missions themselves making it possible for scoundrels and criminally minded people to procure visa for a fee. Unfortunately, the incidence of corruption has taken a frightening dimension such that Nigeria is now internationally regarded as one of the most, if not the most corrupt country in the world. Nigeria is ranked 27, on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean) on the 2014 Corruption Perception Index (Olojede,2019).

### **Cultism**

Cultism is also one of the factors that propels child trafficking in Nigeria. Children fall victim to child trafficking because of their involvement in wrong associations in school and lack of alternative opportunities within their impoverished home communities. Thus, cultism is another avenue through which youths become victims of child traffickers.

### **Weak legal system and lack of adequate legislation or political will**

Porous borders and limited capacity of commitment by immigration and law enforcement officers to control borders are contributory factors of child trafficking in Nigeria. Equally, lack of adequate legislation, political will and commitment to enforce existing legislation and mandates are factors that facilitate child trafficking. For instance, the federal government have pursued strong anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts by enacting the 2003 Trafficking in Persons Law Enforcement and Administration Act. This act was also amended in 2005 to increase the penalties for offenders. The law prescribed penalties of five



years' imprisonment or a fine not to exceed the equivalent of approximately \$645 or both for labor trafficking offenses.

### **Types of Child Trafficking**

There are three major types of child trafficking. These are migrant smuggling, sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Migrant smuggling is a form of trafficking in which smugglers assist migrants with their consent to cross a national border while sex trafficking is the trafficking of children for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Victims of sex trafficking are coerced into commercial sex industry, pornography, prostitution, stripping, live sex shows, illegal massage parlors or escort services. Nevertheless, the U.S Department of States estimates that about 70% of all victims of international human trafficking are forced into the commercial sex industry and half of these victims are children. With regard to labor trafficking, Akor (2011) noted that the practice is for the purpose of using humans for forced and indentured servitude such as domestic house helps, migrant agricultural workers or construction site laborers. However, in Nigeria, trafficking of persons is both internal and external. In internal trafficking, children are procured by middle men to serve as domestic and agricultural workers while external trafficking on the other hand provides under aged girls for prostitution rackets in Europe and the Middle-East (Akor,2011)

### **Implications of Child Trafficking for Sustainable Development in Nigeria**

The concept of national image subsumes a mental picture in which a nation state portrays or projects about itself in her relationship with other nation state in the international system. It is a cardinal element for the perception and assessment of national character. National character are those fundamental, intellectual and moral traits which reveal themselves on all levels of thought and actions and which gives each nation its unmistakable distinctiveness. It is in recognition of the need to portray good national image among comity of nations and enhance sustainable development that Nigeria established the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and as well collaborates with the various organizations in the fight against the scourge of human trafficking .Despite these efforts however ,the incidence of human trafficking persists and has continued to create negative effects on the country's image (Njoku,2015).Nevertheless, for Enaikele and Olutayo (2011) child trafficking is essentially a gender based violence against both genders of children and dangerous to sustainable development because many of the trafficked children are usually young girls and the implication is that these girls are frequently recruited for sexual exploitation in which they experience all manners of debasing and dehumanizing sexual encounters.

Arising from this are various health hazards that the victims are exposed to via unprotected sexual intercourse. Trafficked victims are forced to endure painful sexual intercourse with multiple partners. They are also hired for pornography and bestiality. These conditions are experiences that make girls vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhoea, chlamydia, trichomoniasis, hepatitis B, pelvic inflammatory diseases, vaginal cancer, infertility and other female reproductive health challenges at a very young

age. In addition, violence and degradation is also common in commercial sex and particularly prevalent when a young girl is forcibly subjected to sex against her will.

Injuries and abrasions sustained by this could heighten her vulnerability to HIV transmission and this is also compounded by her inability to receive timely medical tests, treatment, counselling and prevention services because her oppressors want to evade immigration laws. Similarly, under aged boys are also denied the opportunity of formal education, decent shelter and food as well as health care when they fall ill due to the dangerous job hazards associated with their work. they also experience physical and sexual violence as well as heinously oppressive and degrading treatment where they work as domestic servants, manual laborers in farmlands and other mining industries(Bejide,2014). Sadly, the consequences of this is that it predisposes the young lads to physical ,mental and psychological damages as they grow up such as transfer of infectious diseases, long term pelvic pain ,eating disorders HIV/AIDS, insomnia, drug addiction, alcoholic and cigarette abuse depression, emotional neglect, tuberculosis, lack of nutrition, uncontrolled anger, violent crimes and flashing traumas creating images of violence against others in their minds eyes because they grew up devoid of parental guidance ,protection, and care and lived at the mercy of their oppressors who show no empathy, kindness and love to them .Thus this damage propels them to get attracted to vicious crimes involving militancy ,murder, sexual violence, banditry, delinquency, gangsterism and thuggery (Salihu and Chutiyaami,2016).

Therefore, child trafficking violates the core values of all civilized nations and makes the citizenry an object to be enslaved or commercialized rather than being a subject of a nation. Such a situation permanently hinders the socio-economic development of those trafficked and keeps the next generation impoverished, uneducated, disempowered and vulnerable to many forms of abuses that further complicates the tasks of governance that breeds a generation that may not be able to significantly contribute to sustainable development (Alao,Iyanda and Alao,2015).

Nonetheless, some of the implications of child trafficking that poses as a threat to sustainable development in Nigeria according to Njoku (2015) include the frustration of efforts of government towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals particularly education for all. Many of the victims of child trafficking are deprived of the opportunity to acquire formal education. Unfortunately, it is quite pathetic that many years after the goal of International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) was launched, the prevention and elimination of worst forms of child labor is still a mirage in Nigeria. This casts doubt on the commitment and seriousness of the government towards eliminating child labor and consequently sustainable development.

Child trafficking exposes victims to all forms of inhumane and debasing treatments in foreign countries. These include physical assault, brutality, gang rape, detention and in some extreme cases execution regardless of their age. In addition, it exposes some of the victims to be used as guinea pigs for scientific and medical research in foreign countries. For instance,

victims lose their vital organs for a paltry \$150 in exchange for the permanent damage done to them. Thus, it deprives the country of high skilled manpower needed for rapid national development because the able-bodied youths are trafficked in their prime and exploited for hard labor and all manners of inhumane sexual degradation and commercialization. Similarly, brain drain results in financial, institutional and social costs, little returns from the investments in higher education, increasing dependency on foreign expertise due to dwindling professional sector, diminishing ability of the country to offer basic health care services to their subjects, widening gap in science and technology between the rich and poor countries, crumbling middle class population, failing tax system and disappearance of jobs all of which takes its toll on sustainable development

Lastly, bad international image ranks as one of the most notorious implications of child trafficking. Owing to the high degree and alarming rate of child trafficking engaged by Nigerians within and across the globe there have been series of unpleasant reports that portray Nigeria negatively. Such reports tend to demean Nigeria's international image globally. Consequently, this makes Nigerians a target for suspicion globally. For instance, Nigerians are faced with harsh immigration laws and in some cases the most sophisticated security gadgets are used in screening Nigerians at different international borders and embassies. Worst still, on several occasions, visa is denied to Nigerians because Nigerians are stereotyped as people bereft of morals, integrity and ethics and can do anything to acquire money even when it requires abominable practices of sleeping with dogs and monkeys. As a result of this smeared image abroad, it has brought about disdain and distrust by the international community which has unfortunately made Nigeria unappealing to international investors which in turn threatens the achievements of sustainable development goals (Kwagyang, Saulawa and Daud, 2016).

## Conclusion

Empirical records reveal that Nigeria is not only a misogynistic, sexist and patriarchal society, it is one of the unsafest and toxic places for children as they are sold as commodities even by their parents and loved ones. Some are trafficked out and sold as either domestic or sex slaves while others are married off as children in order to offset their parents' debts. Essentially, Child trafficking has become one of the most heinous, deadly, dehumanizing and wicked crimes against humanity particularly for minors. However, it is not just destabilizing to children, it sabotages and weakens the socio-economic structure of a society and makes the state vulnerable to squalor and unable to facilitate sustainable development. Hence states with high level of child trafficking hardly attain any kind of development. It is in the light of this that it has become a necessity that government needs to take serious and aggressive steps against the ravaging epidemic of child trafficking in Nigeria by curbing insecurity and making the sociopolitical environment safe and conducive for foreign investors. This will trigger a spiral effect of employment thus reducing poverty and the propensity for criminal activities antithetical to the sustainable development of the nation.

## Recommendations

It is fundamental and inevitable for the government to invest in security of lives and properties and desist from playing politics at the expense of the lives and future of generations so that sustainable development can be attainable. The educational institutions, religious institutions and NGOs must collaborate in enlightening the youths and the general public on the dangers of child trafficking as it does not only waste lives but frustrates the attainment of sustainable development. More stringent punishment like execution should be meted out to those found guilty of not just running child trafficking cartels and syndicates but enabling them such as corrupt border officials, law enforcement agents and child trafficking mercenaries or agents to serve as a deterrent to others guilty of such horrific crimes against children.

Education particularly in contemporary times has become very fundamental and inevitable. Thus, when children are educated they become empowered and knowledgeable and consequently, they become enabled to escape the poverty trap. Therefore, it is very essential that government makes education affordable and accessible to all particularly for rural children who are more susceptible to the wiles of child traffickers. Cultism is another avenue where children and teenagers are lured and deceived into a nonexistent good life. Hence cultism in universities, secondary and primary schools should be totally discouraged in all its ramifications because it has no value whatsoever to the improvement of lives, educational advancement or sustainable development of our teeming youths.

## References

- Aderobaki, A.(2019).Civil Society Organizations and Domestic Human Trafficking in Nigeria. (Master of Science Thesis, Babcock University, Ilisan-Remo, Ogun State).
- Akanji,S & Akosile, O.(2001).*Principles of Development Administration*. Lagos: Dartrade Limited
- Akor,L.(2011).Trafficking of Women in Nigeria: Causes, Consequences and the Way Forward. *Corvinus Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*,2 (2)
- Alao, D, Iyanda,R &Alao, F.(2015).Human Trafficking And The Challenges of Strengthening Human Security in Africa. *Journal of International Politics and Development*,13(1):1597-3544.
- Albert,A. (2010) “Sustainable Development through international Cooperation in Research and Education” in Poopola,L and Olorunisola,O (eds) *Contemporary Issues in Sustainable Development: Lessons for and Challenges to Nigeria*. Ibadan: The Postgraduate School, University of Ibadan
- Anifowose, R &Enemuo, F.(1999).Element of Politics. Lagos: Malt house Press.
- Aransi,O.(2017).Local Government, the People and the Challenges of Development in Nigeria. A 298<sup>th</sup> inaugural lecture presented at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.28<sup>th</sup> of February.
- Attoh,F.(2017).Wealth-Flow Theory and the Gender Hazards of Female Trafficking: Insights on Benin City, Nigeria. *Journal of International Politics and Development*, 15(1) :1597-3544

- Bejide, F. (2014). Male Child Victim of Sexual Abuse in Nigeria. *Frontiers of Legal Research*, 2(1):1929-6622
- Enaikelé, M. & Olutayo, A. (2011). Human Trafficking in Nigeria: Implications for Human Immune Deficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (Hiv/Aids) Pandemic. *International Journal Sociology and Anthropology*, 3(11):2006-988x
- Fapohunda, T. (2009). Women Emancipation for Sustainable Development in Nigeria: Myths, Realities and Challenges. *International Journal of Development Studies*, 4(4)
- Fatile, J & Adejuwon, K. (2012). Democracy and Development Under the Shadow of Corruption in Africa: The Nigeria's Fourth Republic in Perspective. *International Journal of Physical and Social Sciences*, 2 (4):2249-5894.
- Ilegbinosa, A. (2012). An Analysis of Karl Marx's Theory of Value on the Contemporary Capitalist Economy. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 3(5):2222-1700
- Kwagyang, G, Saulawa, M & Daud, K. (2016). Child Trafficking in Nigeria: Causes, Consequences and the Way Forward. *International Journal of Law*, 2(1):2455-2194
- Makama, G. (2013). Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria: The Way Forward. *European Scientific Journal*, 9(17) :1857-7431
- Njoku, A. (2015). Human Trafficking and its Effect on National Image: The Nigerian Case. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academic Research*, 3(2):2309-3218.
- Nwogwugwu, N & Okoronkwo, P. (2015). Effective Revenue Mobilization and Sustainable Development in Lagos State, Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 17(5):2319-7668.
- Olojede, I. (2019). Effectiveness Poverty Alleviation Programs of the National Directorate of Employment in Ogun And Oyo States, of Nigeria. (PhD Thesis, Babcock University, Ilisan-Remo, Ogun State).
- Omotola, J. (2006). "No Democracy, No Development or Vice Versa"? In Salihu, H., Olorunfemi, J., Lateef, U & Oludoyi, S. (eds) Democracy and Development in Nigeria. Lagos: Concept Publications.
- Opaluwa, S & Akanni, A. (2014). *Theories and Development in Administration: An Integrated Approach*. Lagos: Efficient Delivery Ventures
- Salihu, D & Chutiya, M. (2016). Trends of Child Trafficking Situation in Nigeria and a Way Forward. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 6(16):2225-0484.
- UNESCO (2006). Human trafficking in Nigeria: Root, Causes and Recommendations. A Policy Paper Poverty Series, Paris.

#### Author's Bio-Data

**Olojede, Ibukunoluwa Bose** is a lecturer in the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo State. She holds a PhD in Political Science from Babcock University, Ilisan-Remo, Ogun State. Her area of Specialization is in Public Administration and Gender Studies.