

SCOURGE OF POVERTY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN PORT HARCOURT CITY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

DANIEL, URANTA, DSW.

**Department of Social Work, University of Port Harcourt,
Nigeria**

UDEH CHINONSO CHRISTIAN

Department of Social Work, University of Port Harcourt.

And

NWOKE, KELVIN

Department of Social Work, University of Port Harcourt.

Abstract

The study investigated poverty and human trafficking in Port Harcourt Local Government Area, Rivers State. Three research objectives guided the study. The conflict theory was the theoretical framework. The survey approach design was adopted. The main instrument of data collection was the questionnaire. A total of 162 respondents were used via the simple random sampling technique. Findings show that unemployment, poverty, greed, illiteracy were factors influencing child trafficking in Port Harcourt. The victims of child trafficking have had emotional, psychological problems. The study recommended that NAPTIP and other government agencies do more in the fight against child trafficking.

Keywords: Scourge of poverty, Child trafficking, Conflict theory, Slavery and Forced labour.

Introduction

Human trafficking, often referred to as modern day slavery, has emerged in the past decade as a major criminal and human right issue. Trafficking in human beings is a global problem with serious consequences for individual victims as well as communities and countries. It is an old practice with the most widely known case being that of the transatlantic slave trade in which many Africans were sold and transported to foreign countries as slaves. Human trafficking is currently regarded as a contemporary form of slavery (International Labour Organization [ILO, 2001]). It is a process of people being recruited in their community and country of origin and transported to the destination where they are being exploited for purposes of forced labour, prostitution, domestic servitude and other forms of exploitation.

It involves a range of human rights violations, which in the long term may have serious physical and psychological effects on victims. Human trafficking may involve the crossing of international borders but can also occur within the borders of one country as internal human trafficking. Nigeria is a source, of transit, to destination country for trafficking and experiences both internal and external trafficking of women and children. Internal trafficking takes the form of recruitment and transportation of children from rural to urban areas, while the external is across the country's boundaries. In essence, child trafficking in Nigeria can be divided into three dimensions: internal, cross-border, and Nigeria as a transit country.

Children were trafficked within Nigeria, and to Gabon, Benin, Burkina Faso, Togo, Niger, Cote d'Ivoire, and also in transit on their way to Lebanon, and Europe to work as domestic

servants, produce porters, roadside sellers, agricultural labourers, and for sexual exploitation. Also, children are trafficked into Nigeria from neighboring countries.

According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2006) in the last two decades, there has been an increase in the internal trafficking of women and children. An increased number of people are trafficked from rural communities in Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Bayelsa, Ebonyi, Imo, Benue, Niger and Kwara States to cities such as Lagos, Abeokuta, Ibadan, Kano, Kaduna, Calabar and Port Harcourt. These children work under deplorable conditions, have little or no hope of getting education or vocational training that would help them to better their lots and many are subjected to mental and physical abuse.

Many of them were actually 'sold' by their parents, or enrolled with 'agencies' for domestic work since the parents are too poor to provide them with basic necessities. Some of these children are used in carrying out criminal activities including armed robbery, acting as drug couriers and so on. Furthermore, as a result of the increasing number of mothers going to work outside of their homes, the demand for domestic workers or house helps, as they are called, has increased tremendously. Most often, these working mothers employ the services of 'agents' to help them acquire the house helps, preferably young girls between the ages of 9 and 14. Also, internally trafficked children are used as shop attendants, catering service hands, head loaders, bakery hands, bus conductors, hawkers and prostitutions.

These children hawkers most often face various human rights and sexual abuses from their employers as well as from members of the public. In spite of the increasing awareness and increased efforts to control the scourge of trafficking in children especially girls by the government of Nigeria and many non-governmental organizations (NGOs), children continue to be trafficked in and out of Nigeria. This paper thus examines factors responsible for child trafficking in Nigeria. It examines the nexus between poverty and child trafficking with a view to providing strategies for addressing this problem.

Poverty as a Social Problem

Poverty in this context of study means lacking of basic needs like clothing, shelter, food, and health facilities. Poverty can also refer to limited resources and low standard of living which cannot fulfil basic human needs. Currently in India and Pakistan and other countries around the world including Nigeria which was sometime tag the poverty capital of the whole world is a major problem of any society. Poverty entails more than lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods. Approximately, 70 million people live on less than one US Dollar per day, 54% of Nigerians live below the poverty line and over one third live in extreme poverty (UNDP, 2006).

Consequently, some parents who are in this category above subject their children to child labour, sexual abuse, child trafficking and other child abuse to survive.

Statement of the Problem

Admittedly, the trafficking of children with all its ramifications is tantamount to a debasement of human hood. Given the dehumanizing treatment which trafficked persons receive, the phenomenon of the trafficking of human being is beginning to attract attention from several quarters. The concern and attention which the menace of trafficking of women has begun to attract stems from the realization that the phenomenon, being a national and

international crime, means that no one country or government has the power and the resources to eradicate it all alone.

No one can say with exactitude when the trafficking of human began, but the phenomenon can be said to have gained prominence in Nigeria in the early 1990s when drug trafficking and Advanced Fee Fraud (419) became commonplace. This probably explains why the American Drug Enforcement Agency, the International Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, decided to collectively turn the heat on drug traffickers (Muhammed, 2004).

Eki Igbiniedion, chairperson of Idia Renaissance, an NGO involved in the fight against the trafficking of women, argues that the trafficking of women began recently as an economic arrangement, a simple survival strategy adopted by families desperate for a reprieve from biting economic hardships (Muhammed, 2004).

Numerous factors such as poverty, level of ignorance and family size among other things account for why girls and women especially, fall easy prey to the antics of traffickers. As it is well known, poverty is an inherent and factual reality especially in Africa. In Nigeria, the World Bank (1995) reported that over 45 per cent of the country's population lives below the poverty line. Similarly, Chauhan (2018) observed the reality that in most poor homes parents can barely meet the legitimate needs of their children.

He added rather painfully that the financial distress of most poor parents makes them vulnerable to the deceit of traffickers who promise their children juicy and supposedly rewarding jobs only to cajole them into prostitution and forced labour abroad. Saricho (2016) and Olayemi (2015) are of the view that a poor man can do anything possible to break away from the shackles of poverty including trading off their daughters to traffickers.

Beside poverty, many of the girls and women trafficked abroad are ignorant of the fate that await them in their country of destination. With little or no formal education some of the victims are easily carried away by the picture of Eldorado painted by their dubious sponsors. Adomako-Ampofo (2017) noted that many such victims have paid dearly for their ignorance while in Europe. Some scholars have also blamed trafficking on family size. One of scholar, Nye (2010) asserted that adolescents from larger families are more likely to feel neglected and rejected by their parents than those from smaller family backgrounds.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guided the study;

1. To examine the socio-economic factors behind the trafficking of children in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
2. To examine if illiteracy contributes to human trafficking in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
3. To examine lack as a factor to poverty contribute to child trafficking.
4. To assess if children trafficked experience trauma and disease
5. To investigate the efforts of government and non-governmental organizations in curbing child trafficking in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Research Questions

These research questions are drawn out in accordance with the objectives of the study.

1. What socio-economic factors and unemployment account for the trafficking of children in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
2. Does illiteracy contribute to human trafficking?
3. Does poverty contribute to human trafficking?
4. Do the children traffic experienced trauma and disease?
5. What are the efforts of government and non-governmental organizations in curbing child trafficking in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Concept of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a modern day slavery involving the movement of victims who are subject to violence, deception coercion for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labour. The U.S Department of State (2004) estimates that 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year, while millions more are trafficked within their own countries. The International Labour Organization, ILO (200) puts the number of children and women shipped across national boundaries and sold into modern day slavery at between 700,000 to 1000000. According to the ILO, about 500,000 of these people are brought into the United States of America and Europe for sexual and domestic servitude.

Forte (2006) identified three major types of human trafficking. These are migrant smuggling, sex trafficking and labour trafficking. Migrant smuggling, according to him, is a form of trafficking in which smugglers assist migrants with their consent, to cross a national border, while sex trafficking is the trafficking in humans for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Victims of sex trafficking are forced into commercial sex industry-pornography, prostitution, stripping, live-sex shows or illegal massage parlors or escort services (Forte, 2006).

Still on the topic of sex trafficking, the U.S Department of States estimates that about 70 percent of all victims of international human trafficking are forced into the commercial sex industry, and half of all victims are children. With regard to labour trafficking, Forte said the practice is for the purpose of using humans for forced and indentured servitude such as maids, sweatshop factory hands, migrant agricultural workers or construction site labourers.

Trafficking of persons in Nigeria according to the Geneva-based United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund; UNICEF (2009) is of two types: internal and external trafficking. In internal trafficking children are procured by middlemen to serve as domestic and agricultural workers. In addition, because of the high level of poverty in the rural areas parents and families give their children to foster parents who engage these children in street hawking and domestic work.

External (international) trafficking provides girls and women for prostitution rackets in Europe and the Middle East. For the purpose of this research, our focus is on the external dimension of trafficking in persons. Criminal rings are involved in the smuggling of girls and women across national borders to regional destinations in Europe, particularly Italy where 60 percent of girls trafficking victims are Nigerians (UNICEF, 2010). The Fund estimated that more than 20,000 Nigerian girls are engaged in commercial sex work in Europe and most of the girls came from either Edo State or other states in the southeast regions of Nigeria. These are bad news for the country generally, and women in particular.

All over the world, it would appear that, governments have continued to allow female trafficking to flourish with near impunity. Lured with fraudulent and often unrealizable

promises of lucrative opportunities, women migrate within and across national borders for work. A United States Department of State Trafficking Report released in 2000 found out crime rings and loosely connected criminal network traffic between 45,000 and 50,000 women and children into the U.S annually (Hughes et al, 2005).

Brussa (1995) argues that in Milan, Italy, 80 percent of street prostitutes are foreigners, while according to the International Organization for Migration, (IOM, 2016), there are 19,000-25,000 foreign prostitutes in Italy, approximately 2,000 of who have been trafficked. The same source puts the age of victims of trafficking between 17-20 years with some "as young as 14". It also found out that the majority of the women and girls trafficked into Italy had not previously engaged in prostitution in their home countries.

According to the European Race Audit Bulletin No.25 (2017), trafficked and/or prostituted Polish women arrived (in Italy) around 1989; followed in 1992 by Nigerians and some Peruvians and Colombians. Between 60 to 80 percent of Nigerian girls/women in the sex trade outside the country are in Italy while Belgium and the Netherlands are experiencing an upsurge in the number of Nigeria girls (UNICEF, 2010).

Trafficked women from Nigeria predominantly go to Europe and other Nigerian cities for prostitution. Hughes et al (2005), opine that hundreds of Nigerian women and girls, hoping to escape poverty and discrimination at home, voluntarily migrate to various States in response to job offers as domestic workers or waitresses. However, upon arrival in their States of destination, many of these women discover to their dismay that it is not the much-expected "Eldorado" of their dreams, as the majority of them found them trapped in forced prostitution, saddled with exorbitant debts and compelled to work under brutal conditions.

Many of those who are trafficked to other States prostitution have tended to be of the Ibo, Ibibio, Edo, and Delta tribes. There is no conclusive research on why females from these States are more likely to migrate but Pearson (2012:9) quoting Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings in Lagos, said, "Some Nigerians believe it is because the Ibo are especially enterprising and have a history of migrating".

Adducing a possible reason for the predominance of females from Edo and Delta States among victims of trafficking, Pearson (2010) attributed the trend to poverty but added quickly that these States are not the poorest part of Nigeria. Trafficking of females from other States is said to be especially well organized and centres on a female figure called "Mama" or "Madam", who plays key role in luring young women to leave their homes for Italy. The trafficking web is organized at three levels; the first centers around "Mama" living in the country of origin; the second centers around the Nigerian "Mama" in Italy; and the third, the "Messengers" who are the persons who transfer the money from Italy to Nigeria (IOM, 2016).

As part of the 'recruitment' drive, Nigerian girls are contracted in the suburbs of cities such as Lagos or Benin City and in the countryside in the south and east. As noted by Pearson, there has been a traditional migration flow from Nigeria to Italy since the late 1980s for agriculture, a trend he said, made many Nigerians to settle in Italy and other countries. He explained that it was predominantly these settled Nigerian women, often married to European men, who are traffickers/madams.

According to him, trafficked women are generally not aware of the conditions of work that awaited them i.e., confiscation of documents, forced to work long hours on the street

every day, forced to serve a minimum of clients per day, physical abuse, threats and debt bondage. As revealed by the IOM (2016:12), “debts for travel are supposed to be paid off in six months but in the majority of cases, after three or four years, the girls are still in no position to pay back the debt they owe”.

The Civil Liberties Organization, (CLO, 2010) noted that cartel or cartels behind the exportation of young girls and women overseas to work in the sex trade have largely remained faceless. No matter how many times the women might get deported; they seemed to be able to procure travel documents to return to the same or different foreign lands to continue in the illicit trade.

While some entered the trade knowingly- sometimes with the connivance, approval or acquiescence of their parents – others appeared to have been lured into it with false tales of money to be made from plaiting or weaving hair, or working as maids or children’s nannies- tales which though false, could seem reasonable to young women anxious to help reduce the hardship being faced by their families (CLO, 2010).

Causes of the Trafficking in Humans

The traffic in humans, especially female, appears to be flourishing. The global business involving “human goods” seems to have attained a level comparable to those of the illicit trades in drugs and weapons. In terms of numbers, the major victims are women and children who are forced into prostitution or forced labour. Two main reasons which are commonly referred to as ‘Push and Pull’ factors may be accountable for the prevalence of trafficking in women. These reasons as outlined and elaborated by Pearson (2013), include, firstly, harsh living conditions mostly characterized by poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunities in the countries of origin and secondly, the demand that exists in the rich countries of the West. Pearson explained further that it is under such circumstances that the victims are exploited as cheap labour in the restaurant trade or the sex industry through forced marriage and illegal adoption. Simply put, these are the push and pull factors.

For Anita (2010), some of the trafficked women especially chose to migrate for sex work because of the realization that the sex trade is profitable. Scripraphai and Scripraphai (2017), on the other hand, maintained that the trade in human beings is an outgrowth of international labour migration. In their view, people seek to migrate temporarily to work in richer countries in order to improve their economic standing at home. The due explained that while job opportunities abound for male migrants in Europe and North America, women migrants who had no access to jobs often take to prostitution as an option.

Apart from the economic factor, there are some people who blame the trafficking of women on the fact that women in Third world countries are held in low esteem and consequently manipulated and controlled by a male- dominated society. One such person is Jane Edeki of the African Women Empowerment Group (AWEG), a non-governmental advocacy group based in Nigeria. Edeki asserted that if women were empowered by the male-dominated society, they would be hard put to let themselves be trafficked (Oshadare, 2014).

Methods and Techniques of Traffickers

There is usually a symbiotic relationship between the trafficked females and their traffickers according to the International Organization for Migration, (IOM, 2016). Traffickers are often young criminals attracted by the prospect of making easy money. According to the

above source, Edo women and girls trafficked into other states are usually recruited informally by friends and relatives as well as through organized and independent groups operating on a small scale. Traffickers use the same migration routes and methods that are generally used for illegal migration. In Bayelsa for example, they use fishing boats in transporting these females to other States in Nigeria. They do this in collaboration with some security agencies who are corrupt and money seeking.

UNICEF (2010) reported that the trafficking of Nigerians (girls) women from State to State in Nigeria has slave-like characteristics, a trend it attributed to the tightening of controls on illegal immigration. The UNICEF painted a graphic picture of the tortuous journey thus:

Many Nigerian girls and women are obliged to take long routes across different States in Nigeria and make the hazardous journey across the riverine areas in small boats. Several of them never reach their destinations either because they are abandoned enroute or they drown. Those that reach their destinations are sold off to prostitution rackets and or engage in other forms of commercial sex work (UNICEF, 2010)

In spite of the hardships which trafficked women go through either on their way to Europe or the dehumanizing treatment they receive in the hands of the traffickers and their agents, only very few of the Nigerian women in the sex trade in Italy wish to return to Nigeria. IOM (2016) blamed this seeming reluctance on what some of the women said were lack of better alternatives to prostitution in Nigeria, fear of reprisals from the traffickers and the shame and stigma of returning of home without being successful abroad.

Nigerian Government's Intervention in the Trafficking of Women in particular

Worried by the menace of trafficking of women and its concomitant negative image on the country, the then President Olusegun Obasanjo administration adopted a three-prong attack against the monstrous trade. At the level of the Presidency, was the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and other Related Matters (NAPTIP). Secondly, there were the federal government paramilitary agencies such as the Nigeria Immigration Services, (NIS); the Nigeria Police (NPF) and the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS).

The third prong was at the level of government parastatals like the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), whose primary assignments are only indirectly related to human trafficking (Lipede, 2007). We shall only concern ourselves with the activities NAPTIP in this study.

Consequences of Human Trafficking

Trafficking in women in particular is a global problem affecting large numbers of girls and women. It is lucrative and is linked with criminal activity and corruption, as it is often hidden and hard to address. As pointed out by IOM (1996), women who have been trafficked face a range of dangers, including violence and sexual abuse. In some cases, trafficked women encounter State complicity as they are arrested and detained as illegal aliens. Brussa (2016) remarked that women's physical and mental well-being is harmed by the isolation they suffer by being confined in closed apartments and the restriction of their movements.

In addition to the consequences of the trafficking of women highlighted above, there is also the more worrisome health dimension. Jane Edeki of the African Women Empowerment

Group (AWEG) warns that the trafficking of women poses a mortal danger to Nigerian women because of the high incidence of Human Immune Virus/Acquired Deficiency Syndrome HIV/AIDS infection among deported Nigerian girls and women (Oshadare, 2004). In fact, in many rural Nigerian villages and even urban centers, it is common to find young women and girls who were sold into prostitution in Italy and elsewhere and who had contracted AIDS abandoned to their fate. Beyond the women victims of HIV and AIDs are orphans.

In 2003, 26% of all orphans were orphaned due to AIDS. (UNAIDS, UNICEF, USAID, 2004). Consequently, most of these children left on their own are easily recruited by traffickers. A vicious circle thus ensues: HIV and AIDS prevalence increases the number of orphans trafficked as illustrated in case of the AIDS orphans.

Simultaneously, trafficking increases the number of HIV infections. In general, women and girls are more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS infection, thus trafficked girls and women are most at risk. In the case of those trafficked for purposes of commercial sex work. Burkhalter (2013) explained that vulnerability is increased in a variety of ways:

Trafficked persons are unable to insist upon condom use. Trafficked persons may be forced to perform those sexual practices most associated with AIDS transmission. Trafficked persons are forced to have sex with multiple partners. Violence in commercial sex is common; especially where women or children are forced to have sex against their will. Injuries sustained during forced sex may increase vulnerability to HIV transmission. The physically immature bodies of young girls are extremely vulnerable to sexual injury. Such injuries increase their risk of infection. Many trafficked persons have other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) due to forced and unsafe sexual activities. This heightens the risk of contracting HIV by up to a factor of 10 (in UNESCO, 2006:40)

UNICEF (2010) summarized the consequences of trafficking in girls and women from Nigeria to include loss of lives, increasing prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, increase in violence and crime rate, increased school drop-out rates.

Theoretical Framework

Our theoretical framework is derived from the conflict area of study. A close look at Nigeria's social set up shows clearly that the capitalist nature of the economy has led to the polarization of the society into two diametrically antagonistic classes: the haves and have-nots. What is more, the government's economic policies tend to favour the dominant capitalist class leaving the majority in dire straits. The collapse of the oil boom in the late 1970s and the imposition of the Structural Adjustment Program, SAP, at the insistence of the Breton Woods Institutions led to trying times for the majority of Nigerians.

SAP has led to a 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, 2017). Inequalities in rural and urban incomes widened overtime. Food insecurity, inability to meet basic needs like education, health care, etc. reflected the deepening poverty in rural communities.

Research Design

A research design is used in this study was survey. Under this design, questionnaire were designed and distributed to respondents, and information (data) retrieved from the questionnaire were explained in line with the research questions.

Data used for this study are derived from two sources: Primary and Secondary sources of data. The primary source of data would be derived from questionnaires that would be distributed to respondents. The secondary source of data emanated from books, journals, government publications, internet to support the information from the primary source.

Study Area

Port Harcourt Local Government Area is found in Rivers State. Port Harcourt is the capital city if Rivers State. It shares boundary with Ahoada, Bori, Okrika, Eleme, Obio/Akpor, Degema. The area was founded in 1912 after it was named by Lewis Harcourt, the then Secretary of the British colony by Lord Frederick Lugard (Anderson, 2012). The name emanated after a Port built in 1912 by the British government. Prior to the naming, the area was occupied by farmlands of the Diobu village group of the Ikwerre and Ijo.

The Port was created to enhance economic activities for the British government. Nowadays, Port Harcourt is majorly occupied with industrial activities, with major focus on petroleum production (Ibiwari, 2015). It is no surprise that the city is the leading refinery of petroleum products in Nigeria. Aside industrial activities, trade is another economic activity found in the city.

The presence of Mile 1 Market, New Layout Market, Creek Road market are clear testaments of trade as a major economic activity in the city. The population of the city is 538,558 according to the 2006 National Population Census.

Sample Size and Technique

The study sampled 200 respondents. These 200 respondents were drawn from four Settlement Centres: Borokiri, Ibeto Road, Macoba, Harbour Road. The respondents were students, traders, businessmen/women, entrepreneurs, and civil servants. The simple random sampling was used for the research. The sample size utilized 20 copies of questionnaires for each cluster.

The data was analysed using simple percentage and tables.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Presentation of data gathered from the administration of questionnaire to respondents.

Socio-economic Demographic Data

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-25	83	51.2
26-35	64	39.5
36-above	15	9.2
Total	162	100
Sex		
Male	46	28.3
Female	116	71.7

Total	162	100
Marital Status		
Married	81	50
Single	68	41.9
Divorced	13	8.1
Total	162	100
Educational Qualification		
Primary	84	51.9
Secondary	68	41.9
Tertiary	10	6.1
Total	162	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

From table above, the age of respondents, 18-25 years accounted for 83 (51.2%), 26-35 accounted for 64 (39.5%), 36 and above accounted for 15 (9.2%) of respondents. On sex distribution of respondents, male accounted for 46(28.3%), female accounted for 116(71.7%) of respondents. The marital status of respondents, married respondents accounted for 81 or 50%, single accounted for 68 or 41.9%, divorced accounted for 13 or 8.1% of the respondents.

From the educational qualification of respondents, 84 or 51.9% respondents stated they had completed primary education, another 68 or 41.9% for secondary education, while 10 or 6.1% of the respondents accounted for tertiary education.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Is unemployment a factor behind human trafficking?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	82	50.7
Agree	43	26.5
Strongly disagree	21	12.9
Disagree	16	9.9
Total	162	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

From table 1 above, those respondents who strongly agree accounted for 82 or 50.7%, agree accounted for 43 or 26.5%, strongly disagree accounted for 21 or 12.9%, while those respondents who disagree accounted for 16 or 9.9%.

Table 2: Is Illiteracy a factor behind parents giving out their children for family assistant (house help)?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	71	43.9
Agree	68	41.9
Strongly disagree	12	7.4
Disagree	11	6.9
Total	162	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

From table 2 above, those respondents who strongly agree accounted for 71 or 43.9%, agree accounted for 68 or 41.9%, strongly disagree accounted for 12 or 7.4%, while those respondents who disagree accounted for 11 or 6.8%.

Table 3: Is poverty a factor behind child trafficking?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	78	48.1
Agree	46	28.3
Strongly disagree	25	15.4
Disagree	13	8.1
Total	162	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

From table 3 above, those respondents who strongly agree accounted for 78 or 48.1%, agree accounted for 46 or 28.3%, strongly disagree accounted for 25 or 15.4%, while those respondents who disagree accounted for 13 or 8.1%.

Table 4: Do children Trafficked face psychological trauma?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	75	46.2
Agree	38	23.4
Strongly disagree	26	16.1
Disagree	23	14.2
Total	162	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2021.

From table 4 above, those respondents who strongly agree accounted for 75 or 46.2%, agree accounted for 38 or 23.4%, strongly disagree accounted for 26 or 16.1%, while those respondents who disagree accounted for 23 or 14.2%.

Table 5: Do Non-governmental Organizations enlighten the public on human trafficking?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	73	45
Agree	59	36.4
Strongly disagree	16	9.9
Disagree	14	8.9
Total	162	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2021.

From table 10 above, those respondents who strongly agree accounted for 73 or 45%, agree accounted for 59 or 36.4%, strongly disagree accounted for 16 or 9.9%, while those respondents who disagree accounted for 14 or 8.9%.

Findings showed that many inhabitants of Port Harcourt heard of trafficking in children. The study found out from the respondents views those children who are vulnerable to trafficking stand a chance of not been properly educated.

Respondents believed that there are factors that have made child trafficking possible. These factors range unemployment, illiteracy, poverty and fast making money, some parents give out to people that claim will take care of them.

The study established that females that are aware of the true meaning of trafficking are less likely to fall victims of female trafficking than those that lack awareness and trafficking victimization 100% of the trafficking in children victims, under the NAP TIP shelter in Rivers State that they never heard of the crime of trafficking in children before they fell victim of the crime. When children are not equipped to be aware of the potential health, social and other consequences of trafficking in females, then they cannot be expected to make or take rational and informed decisions at the initial stages of recruitment. This leaves the children much more vulnerable to trafficking victimization.

The study showed that children with High level of education are not more likely to fall victims of child trafficking than those with lower level of education. This is a clear indication that female education is not the panacea of child trafficking victimization. The social and economic situation in Port Harcourt particularly need to be improved upon so that there will be less attraction to crime.

Roles of Social Worker's Practice and Education

1. The Social Workers should embark on advocacy and sensitization programmes vigorously, in order to reduce human trafficking.
2. The Social Worker can undertake data-base activity to ascertain the number of victims rescued and rehabilitated in each State of federation.
3. They should embark on rehabilitation services of the victims captured.
4. Social workers can initiate capacity building for the victims.

Conclusion

The study reiterates that all human societies, irrespective of their levels of development have crime and criminality to contend with. Heads of different states have proposed indispensable foundations for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world but these are yet to be achieved. The government of Nigeria is firmly committed to combating trafficking in persons in all its forms.

Ensuring that criminals who engage in trafficking are aggressively investigated, swiftly prosecuted, and severely punished and that the victims are provided with the assistance they need. This firm commitment of the Nigerian government has not reduced the incidence of trafficking in females in the country, as the recent press release of the Nigerian Immigration Service (2012) clearly reports that the crime is on the increase.

Efforts should be geared towards employing proactive measures in combating this crime. The study revealed that many inhabitants of Port Harcourt that had social characteristics that are susceptible to vulnerability are aware of trafficking in children due to the uneven level of socio-economic statuses and poverty.

Recommendation

The study makes the following recommendations against the back-drop of its findings.

1. The National Agency for Prohibition in Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Offences should use more of crime prevention strategies.

2. More awareness campaigns on trafficking in both females/males as well as modern technology should be launched in Port Harcourt coverage has to be wide and the crime adequately explained.
3. The discovery that some children willingly chose to be trafficked abroad shows that moral decadence has crept into our society. The education, religious and cultural institutions should take part in the campaign against trafficking in females.
4. The rehabilitative treatments administered to the victims of trafficking should not be generalized. Those that willingly chose to be trafficked abroad and the unsuspecting victims suffered harms of different degrees. They should therefore, be treated separately.

References

- Babandede, C, (2014). The International Migration of Young Malians: tradition, necessity or rites of passage. London: London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.
- Clo (2006). Explanations of Criminal Behaviour <http://online.morianevalley.edu/fall/2002/cbin5-3300/lesson-41.htm> Sociological%20explanations.
- Lipede, F (2007). Trafficking in Women in Africa: A Regional Report. Cable News Network (2003). Human Trafficking on the Rise.
- NAPTIP (2003). Introduction in the Reasoning Criminal. New York: Springer – Verlag. Coalition against Trafficking in Women. Factbook on global sexual VT exploitation, www.catwpage.nets.
- Olayemi, F. (2015). <http://www.futuredirections.org.au/admin>.
- Pearson, B. (2012). The Trade in Human Beings is a Basic Worldwide Scourge <http://www.humantrafficking.net>.
- Saricho, T. (2016). The Role of the Press in Combating Human Trafficking. Nigeria: Olulimit Press.
- UNDP, (2006). Nigeria Human Development Report 2006, Human Development Indicators Country fact sheets
- UNESCO. (2006). Child Trafficking, Sex Trafficking. <http://www.humantrafficking.change.org>.
- UNICEF, (2009). Foundation for General Strain Theory. Criminology 30(1) 47 – 87. UNICEF, (2010). Crime and Delinquency: Cincinnati Anderson Publishing Company.
- USAID. (2004). Sex Trafficking: Lessons from History. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/safe-horizon/98828483195>.