

# Cross-Border Trafficking Of Women In The Face Of Displacements in West Africa

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**Abstract**— Cross-border trafficking of women during displacements or unrests in West African region has become one of the most vicious abuses of human rights. But it is very hard to fathom the extent of the concept as trafficking across the boundary which is closely related to kidnapping and abduction and prostitution and even though all these can exist also independent of trafficking. However, the outcome of any unethical practice can never be positive and fruitful to the national interest. The evil of trafficking in women when they get displaced as a result of conflict, war and insurgency has become a parasite that is being housed in our body and has so far resulted to both a human rights and developmental issue with listed consequences inimical to humanity. According to a new report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the vast majority of all cross-border trafficking victims are women and girls. The women are, however, trafficked into prostitution, exploitative labour, including work as porters, and sex slaves. According to this study, it is estimated that 62 per cent of cross-border trafficking victims are women kidnapped and abducted during displacements and conflicts in the society, but female children account for 28 per cent and 10 per cent in West African sub-region. This paper has endeavoured to analyze the nature, causes, modes and volume of women trafficked across borders in Africa during war, conflicts and displacements in West Africa. The paper points out the need to evolve a multidimensional approach and focuses attention on structural factors of trafficking and to recommend effective suggestions to combat the social menace.

**Index Terms**— Cross-border Trafficking, Displacement, Human Rights, Women.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Conflict although inherent to human race, has adverse effects on humans. These effects include damage of property, loss of property, displacement and even loss of lives. Displacement of persons as one of the effects of conflict then leads to

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persons roaming around without shelter while some become victims of trafficking. The trafficking of women for commercial sexual exploitation, sexual slavery and forced labour is presently one of the fastest growing transnational organized crimes in the international community. Trafficking in women and female children for labour and/or sexual exploitation is a deep-rooted and grievous issue in West African sub-region. According to the United Nations' Palermo Protocol (2017), trafficking in persons is defined as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

- Annually, thousands of persons are trafficked both domestically and internationally in West Africa. Trafficking in women and female children is estimated to be the fastest growing enterprise of the 21st century. This transnational organized crime comes at an unfathomable human cost and represents one of the most heinous facets of the modern world. In the absence of puzzle, the majority of victims of cross-border human trafficking are women and female children, the weakest segments of society in developing countries. The underdeveloped legal landscapes of developing countries, along with factors such as gender discrimination, domestic violence, and a lack of availability of education and economic opportunity, provide existing and potential traffickers with many potential victims (Okri, 2017).
- Generally, the flow of cross-border trafficking has been noticed to be from under developed or developing nation states to more advanced regions and states. Although, trafficking of women across boundaries is as pronounced as trafficking between nation states, traffickers make use of international borders for transporting their victims (Adebayo, 2005). These victims eventually fall into forced labour, forced prostitution amidst many others. Usually, they end up in large cities, sex tourism areas or near military bases, where the demand is highest. West Africa has been heavily affected by displacement as a result of internal conflicts. Internal conflicts based on ethnic tensions and rivalries, political instability, disputes over the control of natural resources, natural disasters, poverty, food insecurity and the urgent need of development

have all resulted in significant population displacement both within and outside the countries of West Africa. Studies have indicated clearly that some trafficking routes involve Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Nigeria, and Togo (UNICEF, 1998). Kelly and Regan (2000) posit that cross border trafficking comes with ease due to some reasons like porous borders, under governed borders, the manipulative use of local customs and the exploitatively capitalizing on the poor migration control.

Civil strife devastates nations and causes incalculable injuries and deaths, widespread abuse, killing, rape, mass displacements, and human rights violations. Armed conflict forces people from their homes and thrusts them away from their environment, leaving them vulnerable and easy prey to become objects of exploitation. In the midst of war or violent crisis, cross border trafficking flourishes and traffickers use the opportunity to traffic the vulnerable persons especially women and children. While the number of trafficked victims is uncertain, there is a consensus that the majority of the victims trafficked as a consequence of war and displacement are women and children (Kelly and Regan, 2000). War affects vulnerable groups the most because they are the ones that are most often discriminated against, excluded and displaced as a result of lack of self-defence, inability to fend for themselves amidst many more. Once these victims are exposed, they are at risk of re-victimization, trafficking, exploitation and traded by individuals and organized crime groups within and outside their societies. They are trafficked into becoming child soldiers, concubines of illegal armed groups, forced labour, sexual slavery, forced to sell drugs, steal, and beg for money, and thousands are coerced into a growing black market trade of human body parts (Julius, 2002).

The main objective of this review is to assess the frequency in which cross border trafficking of women occurs in West Africa in the face of displacement. This paper also examines cross border trafficking in its many forms in West Africa, the parties involved in trafficking, and the method to adopt in resolving the problem. In this paper, the following questions are central to the systematic review: What is the degree at which cross border trafficking of women in the face of displacement occurs in West Africa? Therefore, the displacements of women for commercial use and gains across borders become almost inevitable given that women have been adjudged to be a vulnerable group in the society.

### II. METHODOLOGY

The study is anchored on content analysis and ex-post facto research, relying on the data readily documented overtime. The study area is West African sub-region, as one security issue in any part will definitely have consequences on other parts of the region and African continent as a whole. The study is entirely a qualitative study while secondary materials such as journals, books, unpublished papers, official documents of the governments and newspapers on the menace were utilized. The Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Nigeria was also consulted for periodicals on the

cross-border trafficking and displacements in West Africa respectively.

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is confined within the use of Routine Activity Theory. This theory is an offshoot of crime opportunity theory which focuses on situations of crime in the society. The theory was propounded by Marcus Felson and Lawrence E. Cohen and it is premised on the belief that crime is relatively unaffected by social causes like poverty, violence, displacement, inequality and unemployment. The theory postulates that organization of routine activities in society creates opportunity for crimes (Kothari, 2008). This signifies that daily routine activities of individuals and group of people and their socialization strongly influence crimes.

The theory further submits that routine activities arising from opportunities over time amongst people can make crime easily committed and risky to be managed or eliminated. Although routine activities theory focuses on a range of factors that intersect in time and space, producing criminal tendencies and opportunities and in turn criminal events, but the theory fails to explain why people commit crimes and others do not. However, it moves on to suggest that crime can increase and as well reduce without the number of those involved in crime (Kothari, 2008). The theory therefore, identifies prevalence of bias in the justice system, enabling environment, market availability as additional factors that spur people into committing crimes over the traditional ones of economic, social and political motives. The traffickers engage in cross border trafficking of women occur mostly when women are faced with displacements as a result of violence, war and humanitarian crisis. Displacement occurs when there are conflicts which the intervention has failed to reduce its tension or there are conflict that has escalated into violence and as the case may be. Violent conflicts, wars and humanitarian crisis are often times undeniable factors that encourage displacement of women.

### IV. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

#### *Concept Of Displacements*

Displacements mean a changes or shifts in the original position of a thing or a person. Internal displacements gained attention in the 1990s with no specific definition. In order to define internal displaced persons, two core elements are essential which are; (i) the involuntary movement and (ii) movement within the border of their state. Internally displaced according to the United Nations Secretary General (1992) are defined as persons or groups who have been forced to flee their homes suddenly or unexpectedly in large numbers as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or man-made disaster and who are within the territory of their county. Owing to internal displacements, citizens and habitual residents of a country that become internally displaced find themselves in situation of extreme vulnerability. They flee conflict, disasters and violence, and while en route their safety and security are particularly at risk (United Nations Reports, 1992). Women are frequently subjected to abuse and

sexual exploitation particularly if travelling alone while children maybe kidnapped, trafficked or forcibly enrolled as soldiers when unaccompanied and may not be able to find the necessities of life and thus survive.

In the bid to get shelter and have a bit of safety, these displaced persons get struck with traffickers who promise/assure the victims safety, livelihood and a greener pasture" on the other side. These women with little or no power to them are either coerced or forced into buying the ideas of their traffickers and begin to imagine a better condition of living at the end of the coast. From being internally displaced, they become trafficked and most times transported across borders in order to get to their much expected land that flows with milk and honey (United Nations Reports, 2000). While some die on the way, some eventually get to countries least expected and some get to their expected destination but with a different modus operandi of operation. As illegal occupant living in another country, they become instruments and tools for forced prostitution, sex slavery, forced labours and so on so as to satisfy their trafficker and earn a means of livelihood.

Women

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in July 2017 states that Africa, most especially Nigeria and Ghana "remain the sources, transits and destination countries for trafficking in persons, in particular women and girls, for purposes of sexual and labour exploitation", with "internally displaced women and girls as well as women living in poverty" being vulnerable to trafficking (CEDAW, 2017, p. 9). The USDOS mentions that Nigerian women and girls "are victims of domestic servitude and sex trafficking" and further notes: "Authorities identified Nigerian trafficking victims - often exploited by Nigerian traffickers - in more than 29 countries during the reporting period. Officials report an increase in Nigerian women and girls subjected to sex trafficking within Nigeria and throughout Europe, including in Italy, Austria, and Russia; an international organization estimated 80 percent of all female Nigerian migrants in Italy are or will become sex trafficking victims." (USDOS, 2017)

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in its Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016 indicates that concerning "adult victims, trafficking of women is more prevalent than trafficking of men" and goes on to report: "Women victims are mostly detected in Nigeria and Uganda, while at the regional level, they accounted for 27 per cent of victims in the year 2014 (or most recent). Trafficking of men is limited compared to trafficking in children and women." (UNODC, 2016, p. 112)

The International Movement against all forms of Racism and Discrimination (IMADR) points out that "[w]omen and young girls, owing to the feminization of poverty and discriminatory cultural practices, are even more exposed to the tactics of traffickers". (IMADR, 2015, pp. 2-3).

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and other organisations note the following in a joint report to the CEDAW Committee:

"Cases of trafficking, abduction, and forced marriages of women and girls are so common that they are no longer

newsworthy. Women are consistently being objectified and this is linked to cultural and religious practices that demand the subjugation and submission of women to men." (Aronowitz, 2009). In August 2016 an article by The Guardian provides the following overview on sex trafficking of women between Nigeria and Italy: "For nearly three decades, a thriving sex-trafficking industry has been operating between Nigeria and Italy. Many experts believe the trade in women started in the 1980s when Nigerians travelling to Italy on work visas to pick tomatoes realised that selling sex was far easier and more profitable than harvesting fruits or vegetables. Since then an estimated 30,000 Nigerian women have been trafficked from their home country into prostitution, finding themselves on street corners and brothels in Italy and other European states. More than 85% of these women have come from Nigeria's Edo state in the south of the country, where traffickers have historically exploited chronic poverty, discrimination, a failing education system and lack of opportunities for young women to sell false promises of prosperity in Europe." (The Guardian, 2016)

### *The Place of Women in the Society*

There is a general saying that „no women no nation“ hence the place of women in the society which goes beyond procreation cannot be over emphasized. In many west African societies, women are seen as source of wealth, which goes a long way to explain why their forbears married so many wives, because they believed that the more wives they had, the wealthier they become, because they have more efficient helping hands in the farm and these women were to bare many children who are also incorporated into the farming business, since their major occupation was farming. The women were seen as a source to boost the agricultural economy; they were effective in traditional commerce and participated in cross border trade. But today, the rural women own their farms, contributing 75% of food production, thereby creating jobs and poverty reduction across West Africa (Wikipedia, 2018).

Women notably mothers, plays the decision making role in the family. Though the men are believed to be head and an authority figure as well in the home, but the women are responsible for the management of available resources to ensure effective utilization of scarce resources. They are not just home makers but builders, they pay attention to details and are saddled with the responsibility to nurture and raise responsible children, who will in turn grow up as responsible adult and generations that build peaceful societies (Council of Europe Treaty Office, 2018). To that effect, there is a general saying in Igbo language that "if a child is good, he is his father's child but if his bad, he belongs to his mother". In today's contemporary world especially in Nigeria, women play a vital role in educating their children, according to global volunteer, it is undeniable that their contribution to a society's transition from preliterate to literate. Basic education is an important key to a nation's ability to develop and achieve sustainability targets. Research has shown that education can improve agricultural productivity, hence the status of girls and women, reduce population grow rates, enhance environmental protection and widely raise the standard of living (Council of Europe Treaty Office, 2018). However, the place of the women is not limited to the domestic/home front as women have displayed excellence in



exceptional and marveling ways in the professional arena. And as the usual saying „what a man can do a woman can do even better“, Nigerian women are effective, efficient, multitask and they produce accurate result to the extent that their male counterparts are often intimidated by the kind of result they produce even in the informal sector. Though women are underrepresented politically, yet they are a factor to be reckoned with and will continue to push to ensure total inclusion in politics and governance (Abiodun, Onafoworara, Nwannenaya, 2019). To every great leader there is a woman, either his mother, wife, sister, etc., whose prayers, counsel and admonitions has helped in moulding his personality and has set him apart. Although some West African societies still treat women unjustly and do not give them a pride of place and a voice, a woman is as important as a man in the society and her place a man cannot occupy. They are nation builders, problem solvers, peace makers, and can nurture and rebuild a damaged society. They have proved to be effective in agriculture, trade, the formal and the informal sectors, in leadership and governance, even in education (Sen, 2004). From the foregoing however, the place of a woman becomes threatened at the sight of conflicts that can lead to displacement. As efficient and effective a woman can be, she becomes too vulnerable to exhibit her potentials when she is displaced. At the face of displacement, the woman has little or no power to cater for herself or fend a livelihood for herself or even defend herself against people she smells as enemies (UNODC, 2009). It becomes quite easy for traffickers to come through to the woman faced with displaced as she will be easily/difficultly coerced and manipulated.

### ***Overview of Vulnerability of Women in Conflicts Zones***

Taking a stance from biblical quoting, women are considered as weaker vessels and they are specie created from a man and have to depend on the man while submitting to the man. This does not only explain the extent at which women is seen as vulnerable but also depicts the powerless situation the woman finds herself especially in face of troubles or disasters such as violent conflicts or wars (Sen, 2004). Women and children are targets of traffickers because of several reasons. Women at the climax of war, having being displaced have within her reach limited means of survival and the traffickers know this. So it will be quite logical to place before a displaced woman what she lacks and dreams of acquiring in a manipulative way so she can agree to the terms of the trafficker. If peradventure she is „no easy catch“, she can be easily coerced into submission as she conveys a little less physical strength. For trafficking activities such as prostitution and sex slavery, the woman brings more profit to the table of the traffickers than the male counterpart for her body structure paves way for commercial sexual transactions (Okunnu, 2000).

### ***Cross Border Trafficking of Women in West Africa***

African borders are vulnerable and porous and this can be traced to the balkanization of the continent during the Berlin Conference that held between November 1884 and February 1885. With these porous and mal demarcated borders and the alarming poverty rate within the West African States, transnational organized crimes become a major problem to be handled at all borders. One of the major transnational organized crimes that bedevil the West African borders is trafficking (trafficking of women and children. There is no doubt that the West African borders are indeed porous. This

is also corroborated by Okumu's writing that West African borders have become a safe haven for smugglers to penetrate due to the nature of West African borders. To him, the revenues generated from border crossing points have been used to perpetrate other criminal activities and social problems such as prostitution (Okumu, 2011).

However, Okumu's argument is one sided on the porosity of border as a rationale for human trafficking because he fails to acknowledge other push and pull factors for the rise of human trafficking. While Akinyemi (2013) note that globalization is the major cause of trans-border crimes. To them, the advent of globalization has increased the rate of criminals' activities and is perceived as an opportunity of gaining greater rewards outside their traditional domain. Julius further links that the increase of border criminal activities to high levels of income in Western Europe and North America. Thus, creating an opportunity for illicit trade of all kind such as drugs, currency, prostitution and many more (Julius, 2002).

On the contrary, De Andres (2008) is of the opinion that criminal trade is both sided, as countries export and import crimes as well. Also, in 2004 UN Secretary-General gives a report on ways to combat sub-regional and cross border crimes in West Africa. It is based on this report the following problems were identified: the continued weakening of the security sector, proliferation of roadblocks, explosive remnants of war (ERW), mass refugee movements and forced displacement and human right abuses in the sub-region. In response to managing the mayhem of cross-border crimes Wafula Okumu concludes that these realities requires urgent attention and need for adequate mechanism for border management as well as joint effort to deal with the problem in the spirit of regional and continental integration (Okumu, 2011).

Indeed, the rate of human trafficking cannot overemphasized in West Africa, as young children and women are majorly transit from rural to urban centres especially from Mali, Benin, Burkina Faso, Togo, and Ghana to Côte d'Ivoire to destination countries like Nigeria, Gabon and European countries. This is done through abduction of children, buying of children from poor parents, bonded placement of children as reimbursement for debt, placement for a token sum for specified duration or for gift items and enrolment for a fee by an agent for domestic work at the request of children's parents (IOM, 2014, NAPTIP, 2017). In a similar vein, Adepoju (2005) submits that Ghana is a transit route for Nigerian women trafficked to Italy, Germany, and Netherlands for commercial sex. This is evident in the high number of women and children trafficked to neighbouring countries for forced labour and prostitution. To him, Senegal is both a source and transit country for women trafficked to Europe, South Africa, and Gulf States for illicit work. (Adepoju, 2005). However, one major reason for this is the violent conflict in the region resulting in women trafficking from the warring countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone to be forced into trafficking activities such as prostitution in destination countries be it still in Africa or travelled to Europe or other continents (IOM, 2014).

Cross border trafficking share common elements with internal displacement and one could argue that the trafficked victims are mostly internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Internal Displacement Persons (IDPs) are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or desert their homes or places of habitual residence to other locations that are not their natural habitual residences. These persons at this stage have not crossed an international recognized border/boundary yet in a bid of looking for another abode (US Department of States, 2009). The distinctive feature is coercion or involuntary movement that takes place within national borders, caused by armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, and natural or human-made disasters. In other cases, some people are kidnapped and taken forcibly to another location, or traffickers use deception of lucrative jobs to entice the victims. Cross border trafficking and displacement (internal or external) intersect in other respects. Persons who have been internally displaced are more vulnerable to being trafficked either within the nation State or outside their natural habitat. Displaced persons often lack family and community networks as well as economic opportunities, thus making them vulnerable to promises of better situations elsewhere.

Until recently, sexual exploitation was by far the most commonly identified feature of THB, accounting for 79% of all cases (US Department of States, 2009). According to a working paper of the International Labour Organization (ILO), 75% of the reported cases were identified as sexual exploitation (Belser, 2005). In 2006 the United States Government estimated 600,000 to 800,000 persons being trafficked across international borders annually. However, according to UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and ILO, the number is much higher with approximately 2 million people being trafficked every year worldwide (Boonpala & Kane, 2002). Italy, for example, accounts for a high number of reported victims compared to other countries in Europe. In 2006, Italy reported 2,143 victims of trafficking.

Traffickers use many means to transport their victims. They use land routes that pass through several transit countries. Overland transport, on foot and in private vehicles that may belong to smugglers (in the desert) or public transportation (such as buses), has become one of the most important modes of travel used by African trafficking networks because it is more affordable and easier to avoid the authorities. Overland travel always requires a long stay in North African transit countries while awaiting a chance to enter Europe by sea (Transparency International, 2018). A typical noted route is leaving Nigeria for Niger, then heading for Libya by way of the Agadez region. Once they reach the Libyan coast, women and girls are taken by sea to Malta or Italy. Another discovered transit route passes through Mali and Algeria to Morocco. The route usually passes through the settlement of Tin Zaouaten, Mali, to enter Algeria through the city of Tamanrasset. From there, traffickers cross the border from Algeria to Morocco and proceed to Oujda. Once in Morocco, victims are sent to the coast of Andalusia on inflatable rafts or smuggled into the Spanish enclave cities of Ceuta and Melilla, concealed in the trunks or engine compartments of cars. From there they are sent to destinations all over Europe. Another route plies through Mali to Mauritania and from there cross the desert to Morocco, then attempt entry into Europe by the same means described above (Khan, 2000). Border crossings are usually traumatic to women because networks use them as a sort of bargaining chip to secure easy passage. Air travel is

another strategy used by the networks, though less often, to transport victims because of high cost and security. In this they use counterfeit documentation or passports stolen from people living in European countries. Traffickers make use of all accessible and available border routes while perpetrating their dealings.

#### ***Magnitude of Cross-Border Trafficking of Women across the Globe***

Globalization and technology advancements have also resulted in an increasing number of men being trafficked also, such as South Asians wishing to explore service opportunities in the Middle East who end up as low paid menial workers (Baarda, 2015). According to the U.S. State Department, India is both a source and transit country for trafficking, as well as one of the most popular trafficking destinations in South Asia. It is estimated that 10 percent of India's trafficking in persons is international while 90 percent is domestic, a pattern that differs from the more common paradigm of trafficking across international borders. Given India's size, trafficking tends to occur across state borders instead. Among the women and girls who are trafficked into India, most come from Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Cambodia, and Myanmar (CCARHT, 2017).

Many of the Indian women trafficked out of the country end up either in the Middle East for sexual exploitation or in Europe, the United States, or the Middle East as domestic and low-skilled labour. India's sex industry includes some sex workers, 20 percent of which are under age 16 and considered children, though different laws use different age limits. By international norms, children cannot consent to prostitution, so this large population of children must be considered within the purview of this research. The nature of trafficking differs across the 28 states within India (Belser, 2005). Trafficked persons are exploited in a wide variety of ways. These include use of victims for bonded labour, domestic work, agricultural labour, begging, organ trade, adoption, forced prostitution, entertainment, forced marriages, and child soldiers. While trafficking for any of these purposes can be found in many countries, bonded labour and forced marriages are more prevalent in India than most other countries (Chawla, Me and Pichon, 2009).

#### ***Influence of Trafficking Networks on African States' authorities***

Transparency International, an international non-governmental organization which is based in Berlin, in September 2011 provides general information on corruption and human trafficking (not focusing on any particular country): "Corruption is present at every stage of the trafficking process, beginning with a victim's recruitment and transport through to their exploitation. Corruption can facilitate the transportation of victims within countries and across borders without detection or requests for paperwork. Once the victims reach their destination and the exploitation begins, traffickers rely on corruption to maintain their silence and avoid arrest. US government findings suggest that globally less than one in 10 traffickers are ever prosecuted.

Weak institutions offer weak protection. Pay-offs to police, courts and other public sector officials result in state institutions being willing to turn a blind eye to trafficking gangs or even to participate in them. Studies show that

victims tend to come from countries where the public sector is perceived to be highly corrupt, as measured by our Corruption Perceptions Index. The relatively low risk of getting caught is matched by the lure of large profits from selling the victims into prostitution, forced labour and other forms of abuse. The International Labour Organization estimates that about US \$32 billion in profits are made each year from the sexual or physical exploitation of trafficked victims, affecting men and boys as often as it does women and girls.

The mix of profit and impunity through easily 'bought' protection from law enforcers and politicians has created a 'high reward/low risk' scenario for human traffickers and their accomplices. Trafficking networks often overlap with organised crime networks. According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, human trafficking brings organised crime groups their third largest source of profits, after drugs and arms." (Transparency International, 2011)

The USDOS in June 2017 mentions in its Nigeria trafficking report the following concerning corruption and reports of official complicity in trafficking offenses: "Corruption affected all levels of government and the security forces and there were reports of official complicity in trafficking offenses. The government took few steps to investigate or prosecute officials who committed violations, whether in the security forces or elsewhere in the government. In April 2016, an international organization reported that more than half of the areas surveyed to assess the treatment of IDPs in Maiduguri—including IDP camps, settlements, and host communities—reported instances in which camp authorities, including government officials and security forces, forced or coerced women to exchange sex acts for food or freedom to move in and out of IDP camps. A second NGO also reported sexual exploitation of IDPs by camp officials. In response to these allegations, the president instructed the inspector general to create a special panel to investigate cases of sexual exploitation reported by the second NGO, which resulted in the arrest of seven government officials and two CJTF members for alleged sexual misconduct towards IDPs, including sex trafficking. The investigations were ongoing at the end of the reporting period." (USDOS, 2017)

The USDOS further notes that the government "maintained anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts, but there were increased reports of government complicity in human trafficking" (USDOS, 27 June 2017). An article by Nigerian newspaper Vanguard published July 2017 quotes the former Nigerian Deputy President of the Senate, Ike Ekweremadu, who said "that human trafficking syndicates were powerful and operated with the collaboration of corrupt persons in agencies entrusted with law enforcement and protection of persons across the world." (Vanguard, 2017). The International Movement against all forms of Racism and Discrimination (IMADR), an international non-profit, non-governmental human rights organization devoted to eliminating discrimination and racism, in October 2015 notes that corruption can facilitate trafficking and explains: "A 2015 report by Human Rights Watch noted that 'Endemic public sector corruption continued to undermine the 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 requests for paperwork." Secondly, the political system characterized by institutional weakness and fragility, has created fertile ground for organized criminal groups to thrive (IMADR, 2015).

The Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN), a Catholic advocacy group that strives to influence responsible US policy in Africa, in July 2017 also mentions the influence of corruption on trafficking:

"Globalization allows traffickers to set up complex routes and systems within and across borders. The presence of these complex channels creates a challenge because it is understood that prosecuting one trafficker may only minimally hinder the network of traffickers. Corruption prevents traffickers from being held accountable and can also prevent victims from seeking justice. In fact, when corruption is found within political institutions, the laws in place are not implemented to their full capacity, if at all. Also, corruption leads law enforcement to succumb to bribery or charge victims outrageous amounts of money in order to have access to justice. Furthermore, gender inequality in a society impacts all other factors." (AFJN, 2017). Obasaju Stephen in his report published May 2013 claims some consular officers and law enforcement agencies are involved in trafficking: "Consular Officers in some Embassies and high commission are allegedly involved in this racket as they facilitate the provision of Entry Visa usually for a very big amount of money or sometimes free sex services in exchange for overlooking fraudulent documents and paper works." Law Enforcement Agencies like the immigration officers helps in clearance of fake travel documents and given safe passage in the airports and borders. The police officers also help in actual escort of people across borders." (Stephen, 2013:11)

The role of Juju is complex and should be understood in the context of African traditional religion and not as some sort of exotic practice. A great deal of this ritual activity is about cementing a deal, sealing a contract. Western practitioners at all levels (from enforcement personnel through to those in NGO support houses), confronting this for the first time in psychological services or in the court room, are often challenged by Nigerian trafficking cases where the victims are controlled by such practices and withhold information, claim not to remember or return to their traffickers. There is a clear need to demystify what is in play (Diagboya, 2017). Empirical data shows that while Juju can be used in the context of trafficking, it is traditional oath-taking that is dominant (Pearson, 2003). The traditional practices vary and may be specific to particular shrines. Researchers are also aware that these ceremonies are meant to be secret and undisclosed and, therefore, the reliability of data on how many victims of trafficking from Nigeria undergo these processes is presently not clear. It is probably safe to assume that there are more instances of this highly effective process than are currently being revealed within the Western enforcement context (International Labour Organisation, 2016).

The trafficked women report that these rituals may require them to give items of personal clothing or their blood, pubic hair or finger nails to the shrine 'priests'. These rituals can



clearly be frightening for the young women, ensuring their silence and obedience Global Sisters' Reports, 2015. Some women refuse to discuss the rituals or make only oblique reference to them. In some accounts of these rituals, the amount of debt is agreed during or before the ritual is performed and the oath-taking ritual serves as a contract between the trafficker and the one being trafficked for the purpose of 'allegiance, secrecy, confidentiality and repayment of the cost of her journey' as well as other expenses incurred in the process, all of which are solely determined by the trafficker – who is usually the sponsor or recruiting Madame." (CCARHT, 2017, pp. 62-64)

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following government initiatives are hereby recommended to nip the menace in the bud:

- Launching Integrated Anti-Human Trafficking Units: The government should endeavour to allocated funds to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to create some anti- human trafficking units across the nation to train and sensitize law enforcement officials.
- Launching integrated national plan of action: Several ministries are currently working on a joint revision to the 1998 Plan of Action for Combating Trafficking. It includes IAHTUs as part of its framework. The Ministries of Home Affairs, National Human Rights Commission, National Commission for Women and the Ministry of Women and Child Development should be all involved in this project in Africa.
- The legislations on human trafficking should be made severe and drastic to offenders.
- The governments in Africa should address the issue of massive unemployment and poverty in Nigeria.
- African governments should create enabling environments for entrepreneurship for the citizens.
- Governments should provide civic education to the citizenry to jettison acts of violence.
- Reduce the gap between the rich and the poor.
- Increase security surveillance at West African borders.
- Enforcement of existing laws on human trafficking in African states.
- Adoption of community policing in across the states in West African region while corruption should be adequately tamed.
- Both at national and state level governments in West African states through the offices of wife of President and wives of the State governors to embark on various programs that aimed to mobilized state and non-state actors to eradicate all forms of human trafficking by reducing both the vulnerability of potential victims and the demand for exploitation in all its forms.
- To ensure adequate protection and support to those who fall victim, and supporting the efficient prosecution of the criminals involved, to respect the fundamental human rights of all persons in African states.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Trafficking in human beings, especially women and female children, is a form of modern day slavery and requires a holistic, multi-sectoral approach to address the complex dimension of the problem. It is a problem that violates the

rights and dignity of the victims and therefore requires essentially a child rights perspective while working on its eradication. In the fight against trafficking government organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society, pressure groups, international bodies, all have to play an important role. Law cannot be the only instrument to take care of all problems. From the preceding lines it is apparent that human trafficking is prevailing among the women and children in India and therefore, there is a dire need of scientific enquiry to analyze this issue from multiple perspectives and explore the factors which are responsible for trafficking among the women and female children.

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