Journal of **Poverty, Investment and Development** (JPID)

ADDRESSING HUMAN TRAFFICKING SCOURGE THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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SPONSORED BY THE TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND (TETFUND), NIGERIA

Abstract

Purpose: Human trafficking is a fast growing international organized crime which is draining Nigeria of its vibrant and talented youths and the nation's future leaders. In spite of the various strategies of stemming the menace, the business still persists due to the fact that the people living in the red-spot areas are not involved in the efforts towards tackling the menace. Hence, the adoption of community-based participatory education programmes involving the study's residents' full participation to address the menace.

Methodology: The study adopted a quantitative and qualitative approach involving Focus Group Discussion (FGD) using one hundred and sixty participants selected through cluster sampling technique in two locations of Shaki and Ago-Amodu of Oyo State, Nigeria. Two research questions and one hypothesis were employed and analysed through the use of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) statistical test.

Findings: Among other findings, this study identified poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, lack of stiffer policy by the government as factors encouraging human trafficking menace. However, it is recommended that the government should pass and implement stiffer policy such as life imprisonment for offenders and organization of regular educational training that would involve the people living in the communities notable for the act to broaden their knowledge towards the evils of human trafficking. Also the youths should form strong vanguard towards monitoring the activities of the traffickers and embark on public awareness programme to eradicate the menace in their communities.

Keywords: Community-Based Participatory Education Programme, Participatory Education, Human Trafficking, Human Trafficking Menace and Traffickers.



INTRODUCTION

The Northern protectorate and the Southern protectorate of Nigeria were amalgamated in 1914 to ensure that the country become a political entity under Lord Lugard's administration. The essence of the amalgamation among others was to promote ethnic unification of the various people in the country for effective administration and to generate fund to run the administration of the country.

Despite that, the various ethnic groups had been living together and tolerating one-another, occasionally, there were disagreements, that were resolved amicably among them. However, effective national development is being hampered by a number of social problems such as drug addiction, kidnapping, human trafficking, etc. Existence of human resources will show the development prowess of a country, and countries in general should not toy with the available human resources as they contribute greatly to the development of such country. Specifically, human resources are the dynamic factors of production, his knowledge, energy, skill and ingenuity are being applied in the exploration and exportation of raw materials as well as the production of final goods.

From the foregoing, it is expected that Nigeria which is one of the developing economics of the world, blessed with vast human resources cannot afford to play with this all important factor of growth and development especially when the country is looking forward to be ranked among the best economies of the world; but quite a substantive number of Nigeria human resources especially those within the labour force bracket and future generations are being daily wasted through human trafficking activities which keep on increasing at an alarming rate (Agbu, 2003).

Nigeria, as one of the developing nations of the world, is bedeviled by a number of social problems threatening the efforts of the country at reaching its peak such as social vices, ethnic clashes, herdsmen-farmers clashes, kidnapping, human trafficking to mention but a few. Prominent among the social problems is the issue of human trafficking which is an endemic problem in the country. Human trafficking involves exploiting vulnerable people like needy women, children and young men with offer or promises of employment and better life abroad. Many of the victims are engaged in cheap labour such as domestic servants, hawkers, beggars, prostitutes or put into other forms of servitude akin to slavery (The Advocacy Project, 2008).

There are internal and external trafficking. Internal trafficking involves the movement of victims from one part of the country to the other for domestic servitude or prostitution while external trafficking involves the movement of victims to other countries in the Europe and Middle East. Human trafficking has been going on with the trafficking of people from rural communities to major cities such as Lagos, Abuja, Warri, Benin and Port Harcourt predominantly for exploitative domestic chores and prostitution.

Nigeria has been described as a country of origin, transit and destination for human trafficking. African countries like Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, Cameroon, Gabon, Benin Republic, Libya, Algeria and Morocco are some of the destination points for trafficked Nigerians. Countries like Belgium, Spain, Germany, United Kingdom on the other hand are the destination points in Europe. Venezuela in South America is a recent addition to the destination points while Saudi Arabia is the destination point in the Middle East (Shelly, 2010). Nigeria has



road links with Niger Republic and it provides the route to North Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

The prevalence of the foregoing therefore, leaves much to be desired in the country's attempt at being reckoned with globally, considering the fact that most of the people living in the communities are illiterates that are being easily deceived by the traffickers. Consequently, community educational approach was used to address the menace of human trafficking which is the focus of this paper.

Conceptualizing Human Trafficking

The United Nations (2000) defined Human trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat or the use of force or other means of coercion, of abduction or fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability or 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. Exploitation include at a minimum, prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practice similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs. Human trafficking has been described as a modern day slavery since the victims are cheated and lured into prostitution. It is an illegal and immoral buying and selling of human beings as commodities to meet global demand-driven business with a huge market for cheap labour and commercial sex (Clinton, 2012).

Nigeria has been described as a country of origin, transit and destination for human trafficking while African countries such as Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Mali, Gabon etc are some of the destination points for trafficked Nigerians. There are internal and external human trafficking but internal trafficking of women and children is not a new phenomenon as it has been going on with the trafficking of people from rural communities to major cities, such as Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, Warri predominantly for exploitative domestic work and prostitution (Dave-Odigie 2008).

Commenting on the statistics on human trafficking scourge, Oluniyi (2012) believed that there is no accurate statistics of the magnitude of human trafficking. Reason for this is the fact that majority of the people that are trafficked are never detected by immigration officials. However, the number of victims involved in human trafficking across the globe ranges between 27 and 30 millions as at year 2012 (UNODC, 2012, Clinton, 2012). The aggregate profits that human trafficking generates on a global scale according to Shukla (2012) is approximately 32 billion US dollars. These unpleasant statistics suggest that human trafficking has become one of the biggest money-making businesses after drug trafficking globally.

Among the perceived factors responsible for the increasing rate of trafficking in Nigeria are the high rate of poverty, unemployment with promises of greener pasture abroad, greed and quest for quick wealth, ignorance and misery, laxity of security agents in discharging their duties and porous borders with Nigeria's neighbouring countries among others. Human trafficking victims face physical risks such as drug and alcohol addiction, contacting STDs, sterility, miscarriage, forced abortion, virginal and anal trauma. Most of the trafficked girls are bound for oppressive domestic work and often raped and beaten along the ways while boys were frequently trafficked along the deep sea, through commercial fishing boats, some of which stay at sea for up to two



years, and most of these victims never returned while any of them that became ill was frequently thrown over-board.

Upon arrival at their destinations, victims are placed in conditions controlled by traffickers while they are exploited to earn illicit revenues. The traffickers also prey on victims' fear that authorities in the foreign country will prosecute or deport them if they ask for help (I.L.O Doc, 1996).

However, a number of global initiatives are being used by Nigeria to tackle the menace such as the ratifying of the United Nations Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons in 2001 and the passing of the national law in 2003 that established the National Agency for the prohibition (NAPTIP). But, the trade is sill thriving as the efforts of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Person (NAPTIP) is being blocked as most people that are involved wield powerful influence with which they circumvent the law (Iriekpen, 2013) Also, posters, handbills are distributed and seminars and workshops held to curb the menace.

Community-Based Participatory Education

Community-based participatory education programme is an education of the community, about the community and for the community that relates directly to local topics, problems or issues. It provides practical action which relates to individuals or groups and identified the needs and result of problems which stem from the community. Community-based participatory education programme aims at raising the knowledge and attitude of the people towards eradicating human trafficking problems and its goal is to instill in the community knowledge about the problems in the community so that its inhabitants can come together to solve the problems. Communitybased participatory education programme is a form of instruction where trainees learn professional competences in a community setting, focusing on the people and their everyday problems. Ogwu (2002) posited that during the training in the community, people learn about social, moral and economic aspects of human trafficking.

The community-based participatory education programme in this paper emphasizes participation and interaction among the various interest groups, and all participants are stakeholders. This programme emphasizes participatory mode of action based on an inventory of the stakeholders and their interest in an interactive manner. It elicits their in-put in developing the curriculum, that is, through interview, consultations and post-hoc evaluations (Shelly, 2010).

Participatory educational activity is an interactive approach to learning in the community which is based on real life experiences and it incorporates dialogue between teachers and students as well as parents and the community at large in order to critically analyse the causes of the problem. Its goals are not only to increase knowledge and skills but also to provide the basis for problem-solving activities after the teaching sessions have ended (Sims and Wages, 2005).

The Problem

Despite the concerted efforts by the government, individuals and non-governmental organizations at curbing the menace of human trafficking yet, the situation continues unabated as over 27 million people are being trafficked to Europe yearly, generating over 32 billion US dollar (Clinton, 2012).



Studies have shown that a large number of people are involved in the act. For instance, as many as 500,000 persons are trafficked into Western Europe yearly, 7million in Africa with Nigeria and Ethiopian as leading countries. 50,000 Nigerians are trafficked annually to Europe with 20,000 which is (80 percent) of foreign prostitutes in Italy as Nigerians while at least 30 Nigerian girls are trafficked to Mali daily (Oyeleke, 2012, Nuhu, 2012). Thus, human trafficking has become one of the biggest money-making businesses after drug trafficking with young adults as merchandized for seemingly cross border crime.

The increase in the menace might not be unconnected with the inability of the previous efforts to curb the menace. In most cases, efforts are being made at the surface level through the massmedia without directly involving the people in the grassroots where the bulk of the activities is actually taking place. Consequently, this study adopted a community-based participatory education programme which brought the researchers and the people living in the communities together as they are the most effective people to identify the problems and find positive solutions to address the menace unlike the previous strategies that are only carried out at the surface level through mass media without directly involving the people in the communities where the bulk of the activities is actually taking place.

As a result, the following research questions and hypotheses are generated to guide the study:

- (i) In what ways are victims lured into human trafficking?
- (ii) Is there any risks involved in human trafficking? If 'Yes', what are they?
- Ho₁: There is no significant main effect of community-based participatory education on participants;
 - (a) Knowledge of human trafficking issues,
 - (b) Attitude to human trafficking issues.

Literature Review

In this study, two theories that are relevant to the study were used. The theories are the Bandura Social Learning Theory and the Lev Vygostky's Social Constructivist Theory. Bandura Social Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviour, attitude and emotional reactions of others. Bandura (1977) social learning theory states that behaviour can be changed through exposure to various forms of experiences and that people can be induced to change their behaviour by presenting them with new information about the characteristics of existing behaviour. He believes that a person's environment always shapes his/her learning and that human behaviour, development and learning are products of interaction with and experience acquired in the environment.

Similar to Bandura's Social Learning Theory is that of Lev Vygostky Social Constructivist Theory that stated that individual development is derived from social interaction which is shared by the groups and eventually internalized by an individual. He stated that individual makes meaning through interactions with each other and within the environment. Thus, meaningful learning and shaping of individual behaviours occur when individuals are engaged in social activities. In this theory, responsibility for learning resides with the learners and the teacher is to help learners get the understanding of the content and become effective implementers of what



they have learnt. Hence, both the teachers and the participants (learners) are equally learning from one-another.

Both theories are of benefit to the current study as they stressed that participants/learners would learn more and gain more experiences when they actively participate in the training as they would have acquired the skills and knowledge that would make them address the problem of human trafficking in their communities even after the end of the training.

This study also enabled the government and the stakeholders to realize that the people living in the communities should be actively involved in any strategy that would be adopted in addressing the menace of human trafficking unlike the previous strategy of propaganda in the mass media which the government always use in addressing the menace.

Studies

Studies such as Anthony, Maliki and Asuquo (2009), Emmanuel and Ogbonnaya (2012) and Oyeleke (2012) have been carried out on the various strategies for combating human trafficking based on school setting. However, the foregoing efforts are limited in developing positive knowledge and attitude toward human trafficking especially at the community level, hence the need for a more radical and participatory programme that would directly involve the grassroot where the menace is endemic to come together to combat human trafficking in the communities. Consequently, there is the need for strategies such as community-based participatory education programme and participatory approach to re-orientate people and inculcate in them the right attitudes, values and skills towards human trafficking. One of such strategies that could effectively address human trafficking is community-based participatory education programme which is an off-shoot of participatory action research. Participatory action research involves the active participation of the stakeholders. This approach enables the researchers and the participants to work collaboratively in order to bring about positive change since the participants will remain in the communities after the training to develop their areas.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative and quantitative approach at examining the role of communitybased participatory education in tackling the scourge of human trafficking in Nigeria. Samples were drawn from Saki and Ago-Amodu environs of Oyo State notable for the act of human trafficking associated with border areas. Thus, a total of eighty (80) respondents each were selected from the two locations through cluster sampling technique. Eighty respondents were drawn from male and female artisans, drivers, traders, farmers, etc whose age ranges from 20-55 years.

Two interactive sessions of focus group discussions were held with the participants for the purpose of acquainting them with the purpose of the paper and to enable the samples express their opinion and knowledge on the various ways by which victims are lured into human trafficking, the risks that are involved in the business and the main effect of the treatment on the participants constituting the research questions and hypotheses for the study which was validated through experts' advice. The reliability was equally estimated through pilot study comprising 30 respondents drawn from outside the study areas. The reliability value is 0.86.

The Responses of the Samples



Qualitative Report

This part is devoted to qualitative analysis of the responses gathered from participants during the focus group discussion which were collated to form the qualitative analysis.

Answer to Research Questions

Research Question I: In what ways are victims lured into human trafficking?

Among the convergent views held by participants are deception, empty promises of good jobs with fat salaries abroad. The others believed that mere promises that victims would be sent abroad to learn vocational trade and mere promises of greener pasture abroad were enough to make them fall victims.

All these findings bother on poverty and ignorance of realities of the situation abroad by the victims. From the findings, it is clear that victims are lured into the business and they are forced to discharge duties involuntarily. The trafficked youths and energetic Nigerians abroad for forced labour have negative impact on the economy of the country as the youths that would have contributed to the economic development of the country are being trafficked. Specifically, the scourge of human trafficking not only has negative impact on the victims but also on the nation at large. This finding is in accordance with Agbu (2003), Oluniyi (2012) and Shukla (2012), that believed that victims are lured due to their ignorance of their ordeal abroad.

Research Question II: Is there any risk involved in human trafficking? If yes, what are they?

Convergent views revealed that victims always end up in being prostitutes abroad and that most of them easily contact deadly diseases from abroad like Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDs) and other sexually transmitted diseases (STD). Divergent views disclosed that most victims always end-up being miscreants and nuisance in their areas.

The implications of these findings show that these categories of working populace that should contribute their quota to the development of the country could easily contact dangerous diseases that would affect their health and their productivity. Moreso, they could even become miscreants or armed robbers in their areas which could affect the security of the country. The above findings correspond with that of Lyday (2001), Agbu (2003), Oluniyi (2012) and Nuhu (2012) that stated that the menace would drastically affect economic development of the country as its energetic citizens always fall victims of the menace.

Quantitative Report

The quantitative result of the study is presented based on the hypotheses formulated for the study, treatment and participants knowledge and attitude to human trafficking issues.

Ho₁: There is no significant main effect of treatment on participants;

- (a) Knowledge of human trafficking issues.
- (b) Attitude of human trafficking issues

In testing the hypotheses, data collected were analyzed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), presented in tables I and II.



Table I

| Source of Variance | Sum of | Df | Mean | F | Sig. | Eta |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----|----------|--------|-------|---------|
| | Squares | | Square | | | squared |
| Corrected Model | 12069.408 | 8 | 1508.676 | 20.133 | .000 | 5.6. |
| Pretest | 1470.379 | 1 | 1470.379 | 19.621 | .000 | .115 |
| MAIN EFECTS: | | | | | | |
| Treatment Group | 5022.081 | 1 | 5022.081 | 67.017 | .000* | .307 |
| Gender | 3429.912 | 1 | 3429.912 | 45.770 | .000* | .233 |
| Location | 58.530 | 1 | 58.530 | .781 | .378 | .005 |
| 2-way Interaction | | | | | | |
| Treatment Group x Gender | 62.257 | 1 | 62.257 | .831 | .363 | .005 |
| Treatment Group x Location | 1.506 | 1 | 1.506 | .020 | .887 | .000 |
| Gender x Location | 311.704 | 1 | 311.704 | 4,160 | .043 | .027 |
| 3-Way interactions: | | | | | | |
| Treatment x Gender x Location | 630.595 | 1 | 630.595 | 8.415 | .004* | .053 |
| Error | 11315.536 | 151 | 74.937 | | | |
| Total | 23384.944 | 159 | | | | |

* Significant at P < 0.05.

Table 1 shows that there was a significant effect of treatment on the knowledge scores of the participants (F(2,157 = 67.017, P < .05)). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and it can be concluded that the treatment is of significant effect on participants knowledge of human trafficking.

Ho₁(b): There is no significant main effect on participant attitude to human trafficking issues

| Source of Variance | Sum of | Df | Mean | F | Sig. | Eta |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----|---------|--------|-------|---------|
| | Squares | | Square | | 0 | squared |
| Corrected Model | 444.046 | 8 | 55.506 | 4.657 | .000 | .198 |
| Pretest | 22.279 | 1 | 22.279 | 1.869 | .174 | .012 |
| Main effects | | | | | | |
| Treatment Group | 212.010 | 1 | 212.010 | 17.788 | .000* | .015 |
| Gender | 10.633 | 1 | 10.633 | .892 | .346 | .006 |
| Location | 26.256 | 1 | 26.256 | 2.203 | .140 | .014 |
| 2-Way Interactions | | | | | | |
| Treatment Group x Gender | 16.476 | 1 | 16.476 | 1.382 | .242 | .009 |
| Treatment Group x Location | 138.981 | 1 | 138.981 | 11.661 | .001* | .072 |
| Gender x Location | 14.714 | 1 | 14.714 | 1.235 | .268 | .008 |
| 3-Way Interactions: | | | | | | |
| Treatment x Gender x Location | 6.048 | 1 | 6.048 | .507 | .477 | .003 |
| Error | 1799.729 | 151 | 11.919 | | | |
| Total | 22.43.775 | | | | | |

Table II

* Significant at P < .05.



Table II shows that there was a significant effect of treatment on the attitude of participants, (P (2.157 = 17.788; P < 0.05)). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and so, there is a significant main effect of treatment on participants attitude to human trafficking issues.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results show that there was a significant main effect on the knowledge and attitude of the participants due to their exposure to the community-based participatory education programme. This shows that the participatory approach adopted in this study was effective and significant to the study.

The participatory approach was adopted in this study due to the need to stimulate the participants to express their views and proffer solutions on the issues of human trafficking. Falade (2007) emphasized that participants are the analysts of their problems and that once they are properly sensitized and given appropriate facilities, they could best provide solutions to their problems as revealed by this study.

The findings from this study revealed that the participants were enthusiastic during the course of the exercise and they were more interested and committed to the participatory activities. Considering the negative impacts of human trafficking on the victims and the country's socio-political and economic activities as revealed in the findings in this study, there is no gain-saying in the fact that the menace of human trafficking has drastic effects on sustainable development in the country. Hence, the government should have a policy that will recommend stiffer penalties like death sentence or life imprisonment for traffickers.

Succinctly, the place of poverty and unemployment in the illicit trade of human trafficking cannot be over-emphasized since a number of victims resulted from mere abject poverty and unemployment that are glaring in the country. Consequently, the National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP) of the Federal Government should be empowered and properly monitored to ensure effective discharge of its duties. Also, the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) should also be pursued while the activities of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) should be empowered economically to solve employment related challenges. Again, the emphasis on entrepreneurial skills should be vigorously pursued to a logical conclusion to ensure that individuals could take care of themselves.

On the issue of ignorance of the victims, the level of literacy needs to be increased now that the country is pursuing the "Education For All" policy for its citizens to eradicate illiteracy in the country. Hence, the Universal Basic Education with the aim of eradicating illiteracy, ignorance and poverty must be vigorously pursued since the programme is supposed to be "free and compulsory", so the government must fund and monitor the board to enable it achieve its laudable objectives and consequently help to promote educational development in the country.

More importantly is the issue of prostitution that involves many Nigerian ladies. This bothers on the greedy attitude of the victims due to the "get rich quick syndrome" of the victims that do not mind the dangerous hazards that they could be subjected to through contact with the diseases. Thus, there is the need for attitudinal change on the part of Nigerians to avoid being trafficked. Moreover, the aspect of security cum law-enforcement agents should be seriously appraised by the government so as to free such from the pangs of corruption and to engender efficiency on



their part after their welfare might have been catered for. Any erring security agent, found aiding the traffickers should be dismissed from service and prosecuted to serve as deterrent to others.

Most importantly, the government should hold the bull by the horn by passing and implementing stiffer policies such as life imprisonment for offenders and organize regular educational training programmes that would involve the people living in the communities to broaden the knowledge of the people towards the evils of human trafficking.

The youths should also form a strong vanguard towards monitoring the activities of the traffickers and embark on public awareness programmes to eradicate the menace in their communities.

If all the aforementioned recommendations are effectively pursued by the government, there is no doubt that the community-based participatory education adopted in this study would help the government to tackle the problem of human trafficking and other social vices and ensure that the country wakes up from her slumber.

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