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## CHILD TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA: ASSESSING THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND NATIONAL AGENCY FOR THE PROTECTION OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (NAPTIP)

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**Abstract:** *Nigeria has a history of human cum child trafficking. The prevalent sexual trade/ exploitations, child labour, street hawking of Nigerians home and abroad among others; are consequences of this menace. Thus, the paper sought to ascertain the role of the National Agency for the Protection of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) as a tool and the role of education in curbing the increased rate of child trafficking in Nigeria. The paper is exploratory; relied on secondary materials and built around Structural Functionalism theory. It examined the existing practices employed by the agency in order to ascertain its effectiveness in combating the said phenomenon. In doing so, it revealed that Nigeria has undertaken several mechanisms to address human/child trafficking problem within her borders. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that NAPTIP and other mechanisms against human trafficking will be effective without the emphasis on the roles of education. For this reason, the paper recommended, the need for the Nigerian government to ensure that NAPTIP receives sufficient funding for its fights against human trafficking and as well, educational awareness and national campaigns against the menace. More so, there is need to strengthen the borders between Nigeria and her neighbours. In addition, there is need to address the root causes of human trafficking such as the issues of poverty, inequality and conflicts.*

**Keywords:** Child trafficking; Education; Forced Labour; Human Trafficking; NAPTIP

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## INTRODUCTION

Etymologically, all forms of human trafficking are traced to the 1200s and became more recognized in the 1400s with the advent of European slave trade in most African countries. As observed in Finkelhor (1990), during this period, the Portuguese transported people from Africa to Portugal and used them as slaves and Britain joined the slaved trade in Africa in 1952. Subsequently, in the 1600s, slave trade cum human trafficking was extended to countries such as Spain, North America, Holland, France, Sweden and Denmark (Finkelhor, 1990).

The 1700s marked the era of human trafficking for sexual purposes and was first legally recognized by the term 'white slavery'. As posited out by Kangaspunta (2003), white slavery deals with obtaining a white woman or girl, by the use of force, drugs, or by dishonesty, for sex which is unwanted by the woman or girl. The same scholar further maintained that international governments began to discuss 'white slavery' after the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade was made illegal in the 1700s. In the year 1807, Great Britain passed a law that made the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade illegal. In 1820, the United States of America was right behind Great Britain's example by making slave trade a crime that was punishable by death.

Prior to the spread of slave trade around the world, there were worldwide conferences on curbing the spread of white slavery between 1899 and 1902. For this reason, a world-wide agreement against the 'White Slave Trade' was created in 1904, with a focus on migrant women and children. In 1910, thirteen countries signed the International Convention for the Suppression of White Slave Trade to make this form of trafficking illegal (Crane, 1961). However, despite the new laws, human trafficking still existed internationally.

In the contemporary world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, coupled with the speed of globalization, human trafficking has gone beyond slave trade, as it involves the illicit transport of individuals by force or deception for the purpose of financial benefits which includes but not limited to sexual exploitation and labour. As observed in Wooditch (2017), it is estimated that about one million people are trafficked each year globally and that between twenty thousand and fifty thousand are trafficked into the United States of America, which is one of the largest destinations for victims of the sex-trafficking trade.

Consequently, based on the increased rates of human trafficking in the early 2000s, series of international campaigns were conducted. As observed in Kangaspunta (2003), 'Free the Slaves', an American charity organization of Anti-Slavery International was launched in the United States of America. This serves as one of the most influential movements in history. This organization highlighted the effects of human trafficking. Approximately, eighty percent of trafficking involves sexual exploitation, and nineteen percent involves labour exploitation. There are approximately twenty to thirty million slaves in the world today. Human trafficking is the third largest international crime industry (behind illegal drugs and arms trafficking). It reportedly generates a profit of \$32 billion every year. Of that number, \$15.5 billion is made in industrialised countries. Today, many charities and organisations help free and save the lives of those trafficked (Kangaspunta, 2003).

In the case of Nigeria, there have been numerous cases of human trafficking over decades. In form responses, the federal government was compelled to establish a more robust presence and effective agency to tackle and curtail the problem of human trafficking in Nigeria. This led to the formation of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and other related matters (NAPTIP) on 14th July, 2003. Despite all these measures however; human trafficking across the Sahel has persisted with an undiminishing intensity. Similarly,

despite all the humiliation, torture and deportation of several young Nigerian women from various European and other foreign countries, many more young women in Nigeria are committed and determined to find their ways to foreign nations and engage in prostitution and other humiliating or degrading professions (Ebirim, 2009). Within Africa, Nigeria is the largest single source of trafficked persons of Europe and Asia. Also, the trafficking in persons department report of the United States of America in July 2021 identified Nigeria as a source, transit and destination country for trafficked persons. It further mentioned that the victims of human trafficking are men, women and children (Anikwe, 2021).

### **Statement of the Problem**

For decades, Nigerian society has continued witnessing recruitments and transits for both internal and external trafficking of humans which range from women to child trafficking. Nevertheless, children constitute the teeming population of human trafficking in Nigeria. As observed in Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON, 2022), Nigeria has continued to experience internal and external trafficking of children which includes but not limited to the transportation of children from the rural to urban areas; trafficking of children across Nigeria's borders for forced or deceptive labour cum slavery while child trafficking activities revolve around domestic service, hawking, prostitution, baby-care, shop attendant, among others. It is equally reported that about 12million Nigerian children are forced into labour while 80percent of Nigerian children are victims of child trafficking. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) as cited in the National Action Plan on Human Trafficking in Nigeria (2022-2026) claimed that about 11,000 female Nigerians arrived in Italy from Nigeria as victims of sex trafficking in 2016 alone while Nigeria remains a choice source, transit and destination country for human trafficking with 35percent cases happening internally and 65percent externally.

In a bid to respond to the increased cases of human cum child trafficking in Nigeria, the Nigerian government has put in place different legislations towards curtailing the menace. A notable mechanism among such efforts is the establishment of National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and other related matters (NAPTIP) on 14th July, 2003 through an Act of the National Assembly-Trafficking in Persons, Enforcement and Administration Act (TIPPEA); As a supplement, National Technical Committee was set up in 2006 to integrate emerging and existing challenges of trafficking in persons. Subsequently, NAPTIP organized three (3) stakeholders workshop on November 23-25, 2020; January 25-27, 2021 and November 2-4, 2021 in a bid to develop, review, finalize and validate a new National Action Plan on Human Trafficking in Nigeria. The most recent effort of the Nigerian government in curbing human trafficking in Nigeria is the final version of the National Action Plan (2022-2026) presented to the Federal Executive Council for approval as a blueprint for all anti-human trafficking interventions and as well, serves as policy document in combating human trafficking in Nigeria (National Action Plan on Human Trafficking in Nigeria, 2022-2026). Other mechanisms to combat human trafficking in Nigeria include Devatop Centre for Africa Development (DCAD); Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF); Pathfinders Justice Initiative, Incorporation; Women's Consortium of Nigeria and Coalition Against Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children; Viable Knowledge Masters (VKM) and Edo State Taskforce Against Human Trafficking (ETAHT).

It is pertinent to note that the menace of human trafficking in Nigeria has defiled all kinds of responses cum legislations by the Nigerian government as Nigeria remains the largest single source of trafficked persons of Europe and Asia. Also, the Trafficking in Persons Department report of the United States of America identified Nigeria as a source, transit and destination

country for trafficked persons. It further mentioned that the victims of human trafficking are men, women and children (Anikwe, 2021). It is against this backdrop that this paper sought to examine the role of education as a panacea to human trafficking, as well as appraise the role of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Person (NAPTIP) in fighting this scourge.

### **Human Trafficking**

Scholars, through their theoretical formulations have synonymously used human trafficking to men trafficking in person and encompasses the act of recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labour or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion (Rahman, 2011).

As observed in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA, 2000) and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children, human trafficking connotes involuntary servitude, slavery or practices similar to slavery, debt bondage, and forced labor. In the view of this assertion human trafficking can include but does not necessarily require movement (TVPA, 2000). Thus, people may be considered victims of trafficking regardless of whether they were born into a state of servitude, transported to the exploitative situation, previously consented to work for a trafficker, or participated in a crime as a direct result of being trafficked.

In the view of Busch & Williamson (2013), human trafficking entails the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms such as coercion, of abduction, of fraud, or 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. As further posited by the scholars, such exploitation encompasses forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

To Van Hook (2006), human trafficking as a global phenomenon is restricted to a particular region or continent. As identified by the scholar, countries such as Bulgaria, Ukraine, Romania, and Moldova are the main sources of trafficking victims within the European Union (Van Hook, 2006). According to Hughes (2004), evidence gathered from reports compiled by non-governmental organizations in the former Soviet Union showed that Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus had the highest number of women recruited to so-called marriage agencies that sell out women for exploitation. Those countries were followed by Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, and Uzbekistan. Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal as source, transit, and destination countries for trafficked women and children in West Africa (Adepoju, 2005).

The trafficking of young children from rural areas to small cities has risen especially in Mali, Benin, Burkina Faso, Togo, and Ghana to the Ivory Coast's commercial farms. Ugandan girls are lured to the Gulf States with the promise of a job only to be sold into prostitution. South Africa is a regional hub for international trafficking, serving as a source and destination for trafficking; typically receiving women from Thailand, China and Eastern Europe in addition to African nations (Adepoju, 2005). Periods of political instability and conflict in countries like Cambodia and Burma provided trafficking perpetrators an opportunity to expand the crime and their profits. The networks that traffic and smuggle people through the Golden Triangle (Burma, Thailand, and Laos) are also linked to trafficking in weapons and illicit drugs (Munro, 2012).

Human trafficking operations are not limited to peripheral or developing parts of the world, but also form a large part of the black market in developed or "core" nations. Trafficking and

other criminal activities in Japan are often hidden from scrutiny by officials due to legally obtained entertainment visas. Destination and source countries for victims in Asia are Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, Myanmar, and Vietnam. Pakistan and North Korea also source a large number of victims in Asia (Akaha, 2009). In the United States, victims are trafficked from other countries as a destination location; with large numbers of victims from Vietnam, Russia, Romania, and Mexico. It is also important to note that there are a large number of victims from the United States that are trafficked domestically (Siegel, 2011). The United Kingdom, France, and Spain are also destination locations for trafficking victims, particularly in the sex and domestic servitude industries (Eneasato, 2021).

Human trafficking affects people of all races, religions, social class, and education. It often results in mental health disorders and life-threatening infections (Grodin, 2018). For example, a study of 207 trafficked women from 14 countries reported that 95% of women had experienced physical and/or sexual violence (Zimmerman, 2006). A study on trafficked Nepalese girls and women found that 23% of them tested positive for HIV (Silverman and Decker, 2007). Despite its negative social, health, and legal consequences, human trafficking is a growing business for criminal organizations. Poverty, social injustice, disasters, substance abuse, family breakdown, and homelessness are major push factors for victims. Globalization has created a larger gap between developing and developed countries with poverty and marginalization as the major push factors for victims.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) reported 12.3 million trafficked victims in 2005, 21 million victims in 2012, and 40.3 million victims in 2016 (ILO, 2017). The 2016 report of the ILO estimated that 40.3 million people in modern slavery, including 24.9 in forced labour and 15.4 million in the forced marriage. Out of the 24.9 million people trapped in forced labor, 16 million people in the private sector such as domestic work, construction or agriculture; 4.8 million persons in forced sexual exploitation, and 4 million persons in forced labour imposed by state authorities. The ILO considers the Asia-Pacific region to have the largest number of victims of human trafficking followed by Africa and Latin America. It was estimated that over 40% of trafficked victims were detected in their own countries and that 71% of the trafficked victims were women while 28% were children (UNODC, 2016).

### **Methodology**

The paper is exploratory in typology and aligns with qualitative orientation. It gathered data through various secondary sources which include journal articles, reports, textbooks and media publication, and analyzed them thematically while Structural Functionalism served as a theoretical guide. Structural functionalism as a theory is rooted in the work of Gabriel Almond in 1969, while other exponents of the theory include Gabriel Almond, David Easton, Bingham Powell and David Apter. Structural functionalism focuses on the functions performed within a political system and on structures through which they are performed. Structural functionalism provides a framework for analyzing whole systems. It stresses the interrelatedness of structures and functions that must be performed if the system is to persist or be adequately maintained.

In Gabriel Almond (1969) dialect, every political system performs certain functions. These functions include interest articulation, interest aggregations, rule-making, rule application, rule adjudication, political communication, political recruitment and socialization. More so, Almond and Powell (1966) equally classified these functions into three (3), capability functions, conversion functions and communication functions. Structural functionalism explains that social deviant behaviours, such as human trafficking, is a dysfunctional way for a person trying to achieve a good life through crime as the quickest means. In addition to the

structures, Almond and Powell (1966) showed that a political system consists of various functions; among them are political socialization, recruitment and communication.

Child trafficking has emerged as one of the largest organized crimes due to the amount of money it produces. Structural functionalism helps to answer “why”. Structural functionalism explains that social deviant behaviour, such as child trafficking, is a dysfunctional way for a person trying to achieve a good life through crime as the quickest means. It occurs when a person engages in deviant behaviour (human trafficking) when they are unable to reach socially accepted goals (money) by legal means. The theory assumes that the structure of society determines the vulnerability of its people (Winterdyk, 2019). For example, unstable political scenes, poverty, inequality and rampant unemployment, creates population of people that are willing to accept extreme working conditions or distant relocation just to have a job or escape their war-torn areas and lack of resources (Russell, 2018).

In Nigeria, child trafficking serves the function of creating income for both victims and perpetrators. Perpetrators manage trafficking like a business and gain positions of power as well as the profits that are made from the sale of actual slaves and the goods and services produced by the victims, all driven by poverty, the lack of opportunity and weak institutional laws. Subsequently, when people are provided with an opportunity for income, desperate for income and stability, people may overlook warning signs that the situation is too good to be true and unknowingly compromise themselves. In the process, they will accept offers to move to other countries for work or marriage and arrive at the destination unable to speak the language, which often results in exploitation. This has been the case with most Nigerian women who perform domestic work and find themselves without the necessary paperwork in countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (Okeh, 2019).

### **Role of NAPTIP in the Fight against Human Trafficking in Nigeria**

National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other Related Matters (NAPTIP) came into being on the 8th of August, 2003. The Agency which is the creation of Trafficking in Persons (prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act, 2003 is the Federal Government of Nigeria's response to addressing the scourge of trafficking in persons in Nigeria and its attendant human abuses in its entire ramification. It is also a fulfillment of her international obligation under the Trafficking in persons protocol supplementing the United Nations Transnational Organized Crime Convention (TOC) (NAPTIP Law Enforcement Act, 2003). The main objectives of the Act setting up NAPTIP are, to vest NAPTIP with the responsibility of enforcing all laws against trafficking in persons, including investigating and prosecuting persons suspected to be engaged in trafficking in persons, as well as coordinating the rehabilitation and counseling of trafficked persons (Anikwe, 2021).

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) is working with the Nigerian government to establish anti-trafficking measures. NAPTIP promotes public awareness among the population to identify what human trafficking looks like and to educate about the scale of the issue. NAPTIP also enforces prosecution measures with anti-trafficking laws that criminalize the act of sex and labour trafficking. The anti-trafficking law, the Trafficking in Persons Law Enforcement and Administration Act (TIPLEAA), creates a penalty of imprisonment of at least two years and a charged fine. Also, non-governmental organizations that are dedicated to raising awareness campaigns and other rehabilitation and reintegration systems for aid to survivors of human trafficking in Nigeria have created several programs.

In addition to the preventative measures of the government and NAPTIP, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) joined the efforts in combating human trafficking in Nigeria. Travel by air is the main form of transportation for human trafficking, as the data that traffickers moved 20% of 225,000 victims worldwide by plane between 2003 and 2016 shows, according to the UNODC 2018 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons. To decrease this number of people becoming victims of trafficking, UNODC, NAPTIP and the Federal Aviation Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) set up initiatives to inform the public of the issue and create opportunities for airline workers to stop potential traffickers. To achieve the mutual goal, in 2019, the U.S. Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs provided a \$400,000 grant to aid in the education of the public on human trafficking.

One way in which Nigeria is combating human trafficking is through an app called iReport. The Nigeria anti-trafficking agency created the iReport app in 2003. It allows its users to report and alert the local authorities about cases of human trafficking that they witness. In 2018, reports determined that the app resulted in the conviction of traffickers in three hundred and fifty nine (359) cases since its launch (Iloh, 2018).

To enhance the effectiveness of NAPTIP, the Agency works with other Government Agencies such as WOTCLEF, UNICEF, UNODC, IOM, ILO etcetera. In the month of July, 2006 a regional conference was jointly organized by The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in Abuja, with active participation of NAPTIP supported by UNICEF, ILO, IOM and the office of the special adviser to the President on trafficking in persons, especially women and children was signed by 15 member states from both ECOWAS and ECCAS. These states are; Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Under section 64 of the NAPTIP Act, a section was devoted to definition of number of terms (Aronowitz, 2006).

### **Some of the achievements of NAPTIP**

The term human trafficking is defined as “all acts and attempted act involved in the recruitment, transportation within or across Nigerian borders, purchase, sell, transfer, receipt or harbouring of a person involving the use of deception, coercion or debt bondage for the purchase of placing or holding the person whether for or not involuntarily servitude (domestic or sexual reproductive) in forced or bonded labour or slavery-like condition” (Eneasato, 2021). The definition of human trafficking in persons under this applies to any person irrespective of gender, age, place of origin or nationality. The definition of trafficker also covers attempt as well as participation and abetment, since the same provision has defined the word “trafficker” as a person or any entity that intends to commit, aids, abets or acquiesces to an act of trafficking.

The above points having been made is pertinent to juxtapose the functions of NAPTIP as stated above vis a vis its achievements. This will bring to light the extent to which the functions were realized. NAPTIP has the responsibility to enforce laws against trafficking in persons and to take charge and coordinate the rehabilitation and counseling of trafficked persons and for related matter. Apparently, researchers have made some concerted efforts to find solutions to human trafficking in Nigeria, but the problem still persists. However, it is also pertinent to state that some solutions proffered could not see the light of the day because of the lack of holistic approach to tackling the problem. Some of the limitations include, placing too much emphasis on prostitution, limiting human trafficking to a particular sex (i.e female), and few states such as Edo, Delta, Kano and Kwara. Therefore, for the effective

conduct of the functions of the Agency, NAPTIP has the following departments: Investigation and Monitoring, Legal and Prosecution, Public Enlightenment, Counselling and Rehabilitation, Administration and Finance, Research and Programme.

NAPTIP has been able to make some minimum achievements since its inception in 2003. So far, between February 2004 and December 2006 NAPTIP was involved in return of 757 trafficked victims including 6 babies. Seventy three (73) victims rescued and counseled in 2004, 337 victims, rescued and counseled in 2005, 348 victims rescued and counseled in 2006. Most of these victims are Nigerian females while a smaller number are Beninese, Togolese and Ghanaian (NAPTIP news magazine, 2005).

In 2009, the government convicted 25 trafficking offenders and provided care for 1,109 victims, seeing an increase over the previous reporting period. By and large NAPTIP has convicted 65 human traffickers, rescued and repatriated 4,000 victims since its inception in 2003 (Alaigbe, 2017). In addition NAPTIP ceased the practice of interrogating trafficking suspects at the same Lagos facility housing its shelter for trafficking victims. To better ensure victims' rights are respected, NAPTIP formed a committee in mid - 2009 to review victim care policies aiming to strike a balance between ensuring victims safety in shelters and promoting their freedom of movement. There are also efforts at protecting trafficking victims by Nigerian government through US security agents. Police, customs, immigration and NAPTIP officials systematically employed procedures to identify victims among high risk persons such as young women or girls traveling with non-family members. Data provided by NAPTIP reflected a total of 1,109 victims identified and provided assistance at one of NAPTIP's eight shelters throughout the country during the reporting period; 624 were cases of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation and 328 for labour exploitation. Various government agencies referred trafficking victims to NAPTIP for sheltering and other protective services: immigration referred 465; police referred 277; social services referred 192; and the state security service referred nine (U.S Department of State, 2010).

The 2003 trafficking in person's law enforcement and administration act provides for treatment, protection, and non-discriminatory practices for victim. The law specified no trafficking victim should be detained for any offense committed as a result of being trafficked. In 2009, the government took steps to relocate victims' quarters a considerable distance from detention areas of trafficking offenders, greatly reducing undue influence of traffickers over victims. Victims are allowed to stay in the government shelters for six weeks. If a longer period was needed, civil society partner agencies were contacted to take in the victim. Officials encouraged victims to assist with the investigation and prosecution of traffickers and victims served as witnesses in all of NAPTIP's successful cases (Human Right Watch, 2015). The government of Nigeria also sustained efforts to raise awareness of human trafficking over the years. NAPTIP's public enlightenment unit worked throughout on the national and local programme to raise awareness. Example in rural Benue, Kogi and Edo states, NAPTIP introduced grassroots programs and held its first annual race against human trafficking in Edo state with 5,000 runners. On the national level, it covered the 2009 model UN Conference for Secondary School Students with a theme of combating human trafficking (Iloh, 2018).

Furthermore, a nine-state tour was launched to establish state working groups against human trafficking. The objective of these and several related programs was to sensitize vulnerable people, sharpen public awareness of trends and tricks traffickers use to lure victims, warn parents and share ideas among stakeholders audiences ranged from 50 to 5,000 persons (Eneasato, 2021). NAPTIP worked with immigration services to monitor emigration and



immigration patterns for evidence of trafficking. The long established stakeholders forum continued, as well as, quarterly meetings in Abuja to foster collaboration among agencies. In August 2009, NAPTIP held a stakeholders workshop in Kaduna to set program priorities and cost estimates for implementing the national plan of action, which was established in 2008 (Ebrim, 2009).

### **Education as panacea to the menace of human trafficking in Nigeria**

There have been scholarly views over the years on education as a mechanism cum tool towards curbing the menace of child trafficking in Nigeria. As observed in (Ruff, 2017), by educating children and families about their rights and the dangers of human trafficking, they will be less likely to be manipulated or forced into the industry. Children will also be more likely to stay in school, enabling them to eventually get a good job that provides a fair wage (Ruff, 2017).

While commenting on the possible roles of education in curbing child trafficking in Nigeria, Koirala (2017) called for the attention of school administrators and staff on the need to be aware that cases of child trafficking are being reported in communities throughout the nation. They also must get involved by educating themselves on the signs of trafficking that they can see and report. Based on official data, human trafficking all over the world occurs due to the lack of family education. Children and adults who are illiterate or uneducated are more susceptible for victimisation. Therefore, education brings about enlightenment in people; it is a getaway from all the hardships in life (Koirala, 2017).

While citing the thought of Nelson Mandela on education as the most powerful weapon that can be used to change the world, Ellery (2019), called on the attention of school personnel cum administrators to be an integral part of the catalyst for change. The same scholar further asserted that everyone who is part of the school community, administrators, teachers, bus drivers, maintenance personnel, food service staff, resource officers, and other school community members have the potential to be an advocate for child victims of human trafficking, but, first, school community members must learn the indicators of the crime, its warning signs, and how to respond when a student is an apparent victim” (Ellery, 2019).

Education is what makes people aware about all the social ills present in the world today, human trafficking being one of them. Education not only makes people aware about the problem but it also lets people know the ways that we can take to prevent it from happening (Koirala, 2017). According to Chutikul (2019) education and knowledge of trafficking in persons among all members of society are keys to beating human traffickers. Education plays an important role in helping a survivor of human trafficking to get out of the trauma he/she is in. Education and counselling are huge steps that can help in rehabilitating the survivors and re-integrating them into the society. A survivor of human trafficking can be in serious trauma, but if the survivor is provided with education, he/she can get a chance to restart his/her life and try to divert his/her mind by gaining more knowledge through education (Koirala, 2017). Education of any form can be helpful, be it learning the basic life skills or specialization. Also, an institution or a school is a useful place to communicate and socialize with others which will help them forget their mournful past.

While commenting on the roles of education as a panacea to child trafficking, the United States Institute on Human Trafficking, considered sex trafficking as a supply and demand problem. In its view, the greater the demand for paid sex, including sex with minors, the more traffickers will seek to fill the supply with victims (Head, 2019). We live in a culture that looks the other way when it comes to prostitution. For many males, buying sex is considered

a rite of passage. But many men do not realize that the "women" they are buying sex from are actually underage and trafficked girls. If we teach boys about the realities of the industry before they graduate from high school, they are much more likely to think twice before buying sex when they are older.

According to Napier-Moore (2017), education against human trafficking is not an initiative that is going to happen on a large scale unless state governments get involved. For this reason, the scholar maintained that human trafficking prevention education should be offered in all and as well as the roles of the whole-community to educate parents, churches, law enforcement, teachers and medical professionals. It makes sense that we would want to shield our kids from discussions of sex and violence, but the best way to keep them out of this modern form of slavery is to tell them about it. The reality is, many of the kids who will be lured into the trafficking industry won't confide in an adult about it. In the words of Nwakpa (2019), this is because traffickers target the most vulnerable children - these often have low self-esteem, a history of abuse, are runaways or are in the foster care system. Any comprehensive plan to combat sex trafficking has to include teaching our kids about the problem. Young children need to understand physical boundaries and what constitutes inappropriate or unsafe adult behavior. Preteens and teens, who are often the targets of child traffickers, need to understand traffickers' recruitment tactics, which often involve older men first engaging in a romantic relationship with young girls before coercing or convincing them to engage in sex acts with other men (Okoyere, 2017).

Often, these girls do not consider themselves as victims. However, adolescent peer relationships are powerful and friends who recognize the warning signs could report their concerns to a trusted adult or convince a potential victim to end the relationship before it goes too far. The internet has also made every child a potential victim. Predators are increasingly using social media and dating apps to find and connect with victims. According to the FBI, "Pretty much every popular social media site out there is being used for recruiting potential victims of sex trafficking." We need to teach kids how to use technology and social media safely and what warning signs to look out for. We especially need to teach them that a trafficker can be anyone - even a coach or a neighbour - and there is no one "type" (Gallagher, 2016). It's also just as important to educate boys as it is to educate girls. A 2016 Department of Justice study found out that a third of the children trapped in the U.S. sex trafficking industry are boys. But because of the stigma associated with sexual exploitation, many boys do not come forward as victims (McCarthy, 2016). According to Meghan (2019), education does not only prevent future victims but also the buyers.

## **Conclusion**

The major aim of this study was to appraise the role of NAPTIP as well as, the role of education as a panacea in curbing the increased rate of human cum child trafficking in Nigeria. As discussed in the paper, it is obvious Nigeria needs to adopt measures that would provide a reasonable degree of protection from human cum child trafficking. Over the years, human trafficking has remained a social problem in Nigeria. Though, Nigeria has already undertaken several legislative and other measures to address human cum child trafficking problem within its borders, some of them had been introduced prior to the emergence of some forms of human trafficking. Therefore, it is unlikely that NAPTIP will be effective in the fight against all forms of human trafficking without the emphasis on the role of education as a panacea.

## Recommendations

- ❖ There is an urgent need for Nigerian government to ensure that NAPTIP receives sufficient funding for its anti-trafficking awareness campaign and that the issue of the different forms of trafficking is included into their agenda.
- ❖ There is need for educational awareness and national campaigns against human cum child trafficking: The alarming cases of human trafficking in Nigeria shows that people are not aware of the warning signs as well as the dangers of human trafficking. Thus, government at all levels, including all stakeholders need to educate the populace on the dangers of human trafficking. Education can start as early as in primary schools where young children would be taught about this menace.
- ❖ More so, there is need to strengthen the borders between Nigeria and her neighbours. It is no doubt that porous borders are one of the main factors impeding the mitigation of human trafficking in Nigeria. It is, therefore, important that all entry points and exit points of neighbouring countries be monitored, and measures should be put in place to prevent the illegal transportation and movement of people through these borders.
- ❖ In addition, there is urgent need to address the root causes of human trafficking such as the issues of poverty, inequality and conflicts. Thus, resources should be allocated by the federal government to tackle them. Therefore, addressing issues such as poverty, inequality and unemployment will assist in the fight against human trafficking.

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