



## **Trafficking in Persons and Nigeria's External Image Crisis (1990—2020)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Trafficking in persons (TIPs) is a global social problem because every country is directly or indirectly affected. As a result of this ugly trend, several international, regional, and national treaties and conventions have been adopted to end trafficking in persons. However, Nigeria has been identified as a major source, transit, and destination country for trafficking in persons. This paper examines the causes and implications of trafficking in persons on Nigeria's external image crisis (1990—2020). The study adopts system theory as its theoretical framework; the secondary source was the method of data collection adopted. The study found out that unless the problem of poverty, unemployment, ethnic conflict, bad governance, weak legislation, inter-state conflict, etc. is addressed by countries, it would be difficult, if not impossible to end trafficking in persons globally. Based on the findings, the paper recommends that the federal government should empower particularly Nigerian youths and women to reduce their vulnerabilities, build capacities for self-employment and development, and protect and rehabilitate the identity of victims. The government should also make sufficient budgetary allocation to the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Matters (NAPTIP) which is involved in apprehending human traffickers.

**Key Words:** Trafficking in persons, External image Crisis, Draconian policies abroad, Tier 2-watchlist and notorious list.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Trafficking in persons (TIPs) is a global social problem because every country is directly or indirectly affected by traffickers, whether it serves as the country of origin, transit or destination of the victims. In corroboration, Joarder and Miller (2014) imports that trafficking in persons exists in both weak and strong states and those women, men and children are trafficked for purposes including domestic servitude, forced labour and forced sex work. In this regard, Nigeria is a major source, transit and destination country for women, girls and children to forced labour and sex trafficking in Africa and other parts of the world. This is as a result of the high level of poverty, corruption, bad governance,

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mass unemployment and activities of Boko Haram, the rebel organization affiliated with Islamic state, that engages in the trafficking of children as soldiers and abducts young girls for forced marriage to members of the organization (United States Department, 2018).

The incidence of trafficking in persons in Nigeria began in the 1990s as a result of the decline in the economy of the country and consequent increase in unemployment, poverty, inflation, low wages and general social misery among the masses. Consequently, many Nigerians especially the unskilled youths began to venture into Europe, Middle East and lately Asia in search of better economic opportunities. Some perish in the course of the adventure, while others who got to their destination found themselves engaging in certain odd jobs, prostitution or crime.

In line with this premises, the statistics from National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and other related matters (NAPTIP) show that between 2019 and 2022, 61% of human trafficking in Nigeria happens internally, while 39% is generated from cross-border trafficking. The International Labour Organization maintained that there are 40 million people in force labour or marriage, many of whom are trafficking victims (Stephen, 2021 cited in ILO cited). In addition, trafficking in persons is the third most common crime in Nigeria after drug trafficking and economic fraud (UNESCO, 2006). Corroborating this position, DOS (2018) describes Nigeria as a hotspot for human trafficking especially in the North East because of the large number of internally displaced persons and refugees in neighbouring countries who become- prey to traffickers. Arum & Janet (2018) cited in Essien, identified two types of human trafficking and they include internal and external trafficking. However, internal trafficking is the trafficking of persons within a country's borders. Example, when persons are trafficked from rural to urban areas or from one state to the other. While, external trafficking is the trafficking of persons outside the national borders, for example, when persons are trafficked from Nigeria to another Countries such as Cameroon, Ghana, Togo, Benin Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, or to Europe destinations like, Italy, Germany, U.K., Belgium, Netherlands, etc. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 10% of those forced into sex work in Western Europe are women from West Africa, and a good number of them are Nigerians (UNODC, 2018). To buttress the above postulation, Njoku (2005) posits that in 2004, 100,000 young Nigerian women were sold into sex slavery as prostitutes servicing "top guns and big boys" in Europe's flourishing underground sex industry. According to official of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and other related matters (NAPTIP), Alhaji Mohammed Babandede, 50,000 of them are from Edo state. In response to above reports, Essien (2013) argued that all states in Nigeria are involved in human trafficking, but some states are noted as suppliers of

trafficked persons. The states include Akwa-Ibom, Cross-River, Edo, Delta, Ebonyi, Imo, Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Anambra, Sokoto, Kano state, etc.

According to Adeniyi (2019), there are four (4) major exit points in Nigeria for traffickers, but the most commonly used is the one over the Northern border with the Niger Republic. Trafficked would travel either to Kano or Sokoto and then make their way to the border, cross either by arranged vehicles or motorcycles. However, Adeniyi further imports that there are little or no risks at these starting points in the migration adventure but the costs can be huge as migrants or trafficked persons have to pay bribes when crossing each of the borders despite the free movement protocols within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), particularly if they do not carry identification document. The primary purpose of ECOWAS is to remove obstacles to free movement of people, services and capital among member's states (Shedrack, 2022:99). The secondary route is between Lagos and Benin Republic. The risk is minimal with higher traffic in the opposite direction due to Beninese trafficked or migrants crossing into our country and joining Nigerians who travel both to cross the Nigeria or Niger border into Nigeria. However, the above structure is a long-established route since cross-border trade and movements (both formal and informal) have been ongoing for many years between Benin Republic and Lagos. More so, the third exit route for trafficked persons is Northeastern border with Cameroon. Most people that follow this route are those escaping Boko Haram insurgents and bandits as well. Furthermore, the most prominent route to Europe via the central Mediterranean is through Niger Republic via North Africa (Adeniyi, 2019).

As a result of this ugly development, the United States of America, through the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) 2000, placed Nigeria on her Tier 2-Watch list of countries involved in trafficking in persons (Shedrack, 2016). Trafficking in persons has negative effect on Nigeria's external image and has necessitated the establishment of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and other relate matters (NAPTIP) by Federal Government, and in collaboration with some organizations such as Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication on Foundation (WOTCLEF) founded by Mrs. Amina Titi Abubakar, wife of former Vice President of Nigeria between 1999 – 2007, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON), which came into existence in 1997 before the birth of WOTCLEF in 1999 and NAPTIP in 2003 to stem the tide. The primary objective of the above organizations is to eradicate trafficking in persons in Nigeria (Ukegbu, 2019). But it is now obvious that TIPs have come to stay irrespective of the responses from the Nigerian government via NAPTIP, WOTCLEF, WOCON and international community to curb menace. Therefore, the task of this paper is to examine the implications of TIPs on Nigeria's external image and

as well to identify the lacunas that have hindered the successful and complete eradication of TIPs in Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

It is pertinent to explain some basic concepts underlying this paper for better understanding.

According to Sandford and Robert (1976), the “words mean what you define them to mean”. Consequently, we hereby present the operational or contextual connotations of certain concepts used.

#### **Trafficking in Persons (TIPs)**

The word “trafficking” implies means transportation or travel. It also means to take someone to another country and force them to work, for example as a prostitute. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugee (UNHCR, 2000), trafficking in persons is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring 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 receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. However, exploitation here means, at a minimum the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. This comprehensive definition of trafficking in persons from Palermo Protocol sets the goals and parameters upon which nations can fight trafficking in persons. The definition according to Ukegbu (2019:90) equally shows that trafficking in persons has three constituent elements. This includes:

- i. **The Act (what is done):** recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons.
- ii. **The Means (how it is done):** through threat, coercion, abduction, deception and financial inducement, that is monetary payment.
- iii. **The Purpose (why it is done):** for the purpose of commercial exploitation, which include the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or servitude, removal of organs.

Additionally, the Protocol 2000 clarifies that even where the child (any person under the age of 18 years) may have given consent to exploitation, this should be regarded as irrelevant and that the recruitment and so on of children for the purposes of exploitation is also to be considered as trafficking in persons. From the foregoing, trafficking in persons is the act, means and purpose of buying and selling of persons for the single purpose of exploiting the individuals. This occur as a result of poverty, greed, conflict, etc because traffickers use lies, deception, education, marriage and better standard of

living in abroad to lure the victims. Traffickers also use friends, neighbours, fake newspaper adverts, fake recruitment agencies, abduction, internet, etc to attract the people (Janet and Arum, 2018).

### **External Image**

External image is the mental picture, idea, impression or the perception of a person's organizations, institution's or government's policies regarding them (Kottler 1994, Olujimi, 1998, Haywood, 1998, Salu, 1994). People's attitudes and actions towards a person or nation are highly conditioned by that person's or nation's image. External image is a mental picture in which a nation state portrays or projects with other nation-states in international relations which is an essential element for the assessment of national character. It is an aggregate of all the beliefs, ideas, impressions, perceptions or mental picture which other citizens have of a nation and its citizens. The things a country and its citizens do within and outside the country affect their global image negatively or positively. For example, a country where citizens involves in terrorism are usually seen and blacklisted as terrorist states while countries that their citizens involves heavily in hard drugs, trafficking in persons and advance fee fraud popularly known as 419, etc. also often stigmatized by other nations. On one hand, Chiakwelu (2010: 3) imports that the images we have of another country says a lot about how we view it as a tourist destination, a place to invest or a source of consumer goods. On the other hand, Akinterinwa (2013) opines that a good image constitutes a source of goodwill and patronage for a Country, which is considered by investors in determining where to direct investment funds and brings the level of unfriendliness down. However, the rest of world's perception about Nigeria will affect her pocket and economy because less people will be inclined to invest and travel to the country. Chiakwelu further argued that in 21st century of inter-connecting world, an image can help to lift up a nation and that is exactly why many nations are very protective of their images. It is truism because once an image of a nation is tarnished; it becomes an arduous if not an impossible task to reverse the trend.

In his contribution, Morgenthau (1973) see national interest as aimed at promoting national image, prestige and respect both at home and abroad. National interest helps to promote and protect the state's image through various strategies employed in the international interactions with states in order to ensure the preservation of the stated goals of society (Obi, 2006). A country's image is a roadmap in international relations, diplomatic market and foreign investment. Fawole (2003) avers that a country's image is cardinal emblem in the diplomatic market. Hence, Nigeria's image is critical to her global standing and nation building

In the light of the above, it is believed that the involvement of Nigerians in trafficking in persons has severe and wide range of implication on Nigeria's image and victims as well

## **Draconian Policy**

The word “draconian” means very strict measures to controls certain behaviours that are not acceptable in the country by the government while policy is a set of plans that is used as basis for making decisions by the government. In this regard, draconian policy is severe strict measures imposed and adopted by the government of the destination Countries in other to prevent trafficking in persons (TIPs) and crimes which causes insecurity in their Country. For example, in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 popularly known as 9\11, the United States and many other nations introduced stricter visa policies and border control processes as measures to ensure state security. In collaboration, Fauser, 2006, Vaquero and Lahav, 2008, Messina and Vasquez, 2007, avers that after 9\11 attacks, the West (U.S.A and her allies) perceives migrants or foreigners as potential terrorists, especially in the United Kingdom and Germany where reactions were “harsh and immediate”. The two countries introduced stricter security measures as they affect immigration and immigrants. Moreso, on January 27th, 2020, Nigeria was included in the list of 13 countries ban by Donald Trump, the former U.S president. On the other hand, Akinterinwa (2018), posits that the continued influx of migrants from Niger Republic into Nigeria, owing to desertification and attendant drought and food crisis, has resulted to clashes and feud between migrating Fulani herdsman mostly from Niger Republic and their hosting farmers from the middle Belt and Southern Nigeria where the herders or pastoralists migrated to search of pasture for their cattle. Busari (2019), holds the same view that the insecurity and armed banditry in Nigeria and some other African countries have been linked to the influx of migrants from Libya as a result of political crisis after the dead of late Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, no nonsense nationalist leader in Africa. He was killed by U.S. and her allies (such as Britain and France) because of draconian policy against them in regards to Oil wells.

## **Tier 2-Watchlist and Notorious List**

The word “Watch” means to look at someone or something for a period of time or paying attention to what is happening in a particular country for the security purpose while the watch list is a list of people or things to keep your attention on because they may do something, especially a list of people who may be terrorist. From the foregoing, Tier2-watchlist is a list of the Countries in the world that does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons (TIPs) globally but is making significant efforts to do so. These efforts include, convicting more traffickers, sanctioning the majority of perpetrators with significant prison terms, prosecuting officials suspected of being complicit in trafficking crimes, improving intra-governmental coordination on anti-trafficking operations, etc. This has been mostly done through the efforts of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and related matters (TIPs), non-governmental agencies such as Women Trafficking and Child

Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON), etc. The anti-trafficking capacity therefore pushed Nigeria to Tier2 watch list. However, Tier3-watchlist is the list of the countries that are not making significant efforts to end TIPs in their country while Tier1 Watch list is the opposite. The Notorious list on the other hand is the list of the terrorists Countries, drugs trafficking, illegal migration, trafficking in persons, cyber crimes, corruption, poverty, etc. For example, following the failed suicide attack by Nigerian, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab (a suspected member of Boko Haram) on American Airline on December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the U.S. enlisted Nigeria in her terrorist Watch list. The Heritage Foundation of Washington DC in 2002 ranked Nigeria 125 out of 155 poorest Countries in the World. Furthermore, the Transparency International on January 25, 2022 ranked Nigeria 154 in corruption perception index out of 180 Countries (Ezeobi & Francis, 2022).

### **Implications of trafficking in persons on the external image crisis of Nigeria**

#### **They include the following:**

**1. Notorious watch List crisis:** Trafficking in persons, drug trafficking and illegal migration, cyber crime, suicide attack, corruption and poverty place Nigeria and her citizens on notorious watch list regionally and globally. For instance, following the failed suicide attack by Nigerian, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab (a suspected member of Boko Haram) on American Airline on December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the U.S. enlisted Nigeria in her terrorist watch list (Vincent & Dada, 2022). Moreso, on January 27, 2020, Nigeria was included in the list of 13 countries banned by Donald Trump. According to Narea (2020), Nigerians would not be allowed to migrate to U.S. permanently but only on temporary visas, such as tourists, students and foreign workers. In this regard, Nnabuko (cited in Shedrack, 2016) argued that no matter your social, economic or political status, Nigerian's travelling abroad is subjected to some harrowing experiences at international airports. From the foregoing, Nigeria's name is in all the notorious watch lists including poorest nations even though the nature made all Nigerians rich with abundant mineral resources. The Nigerian economy is so bad that the UNDP Human Development Report in 2002 ranked Nigeria as the 26<sup>th</sup> poorest nation in the world. Furthermore, on a list of 177 countries, Nigeria ranked 159 behind Rwanda a poor country that has suffered one of the worst tragedies in human history. The Heritage Foundation of Washington DC in 2002 ranked Nigeria 125 out of 155 poorest countries.

In 2006, UNDP again rated Nigeria among the 20 poorest nations in the world. In the same vein, Transparency International (T.I) in its year 2000 report ranked Nigeria as the most corrupt country on earth. The same organization in 2014 ranked Nigeria as the third most corrupt country in West Africa after Guinea and Guinea Bissau. Furthermore on Transparency International, the

organization in January 25th, 2022 ranked Nigeria 154 in Corruption perception index out of 180 countries (Ezeobi & Francis, 2022). However, a report on trafficking in persons and migration to Europe shows that in 2014, 170,100 arrived Italy by sea, compared to 141,484 migrants that were ferried through the Mediterranean Sea from Libya in 2013. According to the report, the migrants had come from Syria (42,232), Eritrea (34,239), Mali (9,908), Nigeria (9,000), Gambia (8,691), Somalia (5,756) and some other nations (4,095). Among the migrants 64,625 were said to have applied for asylum Ojugbana (cited in Shedrack, 2016). In the case of Nigeria, most of the migrants were victims of human trafficking hoodwinked by syndicates as a result of their desperation to travel to Europe or Asia for better life. Sequel to this, the United States of America placed Nigeria on her Tier 2-warch list of countries involved in trafficking of persons. According to Joann Schneider, Deputy Director of the Office to combat and Monitor Trafficking in Persons, Washington DC, Nigeria did not comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. Moreover, an official of the European Union (EU), Richard Young, EU Deputy Head of Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, revealed in 2015 that there were 7,436 Nigerians illegal in the second quarter of 2015. Richard further imports that the agency recorded a total of 170,155 migrants that were illegally crossed to borders into Europe from various countries in the period. As a result of this ugly trend, trafficking in persons places Nigeria on notorious watch list as the major country of origin, transit and destination of human trafficking.

1. **Economic Crisis:** Trafficking in persons portrays Nigeria's image as a country in throes of economic crisis due to the large number of persons travelling abroad, both legal and illegal means for greener pasture or better life. In this regard, Zachariah (2004) argued that:

*From March 2002 – April 2004, the Saudi Arabia authorities deported 9,952 women and 1,231 underage unaccompanied children. Investigations revealed that the majority of the women deported from Saudi Arabia are from: Kano, Borno, Yola, Yobe, Niger, Kastina, Jigawa, Gombe and Taraba States.(27)*

By this, Nigeria is a major source country as well as transit country because of economic crisis and consequent increase in unemployment, poverty, inflation, low wages and general social misery among the masses. As a result of decline in the Nigeria economy, many Nigerians especially the unskilled youths begins to venture into Europe, Middle East and Asia in search of better economic opportunities. Some perish in the course of the adventure, while others who got to their destination found themselves engaging in certain odd jobs, prostitution or crime.

Against this backdrop, Agu (cited in (Shedrack, 2016), described the Nigerian economy as follows:



*Food is scarce and expensive. People died unaccountably. Salaries were not paid to workers. Hospitals, universities, primary and secondary schools closed either because of non-payment of salaries or because people wanted increase, still because of students' demonstrations. Government is seriously under attack. People did not want to know which government might be held responsible – whether the past or present. So, these displaced responses have had very serious impact on both the generality of people, and on the economy itself.*

The Nigerian economy was bad under President Goodluck Jonathan between 2011 – 2015, and it became worse under President Buhari administration (2019 – 2023), such that people began to die of hunger, due to increase in the price of goods and services, mass unemployment and under-employment, inflation, insecurity, killings, kidnapping, and as a result of this ugly development, majority of the Nigerians find it difficult to sleep as they are preoccupied with the thought of what to eat the next moment. Women suffer economic the most, and this makes them vulnerable to human trafficking even though Nigerians is richly blessed with abundant mineral resources.

As a result of the above mentioned, people in their desperation to obtain a better life for themselves and their families end up being preyed to unscrupulous people who offer them job opportunities and better life prospects. This is the reason many women apply to sham foreign job agencies or to study abroad or have employment as a waitress or a nanny, etc. only to be imprisoned, raped and forced into the prostitution industry when they arrive their destinations. The increasing case of trafficking in persons resulting from Nigeria's economic crisis portray the image of the country in bad light, hence its pariah status within the international community (Shedrack, 2016:25).

2. **Death Crisis:** The risky and illegal nature of the business of trafficking in persons exposes both the traffickers and the victims to death which portrays the image of the country in bad light. According to Okorie (2007: 75), the great numbers of these unfortunate Africans die in transit. The scholar further argued that Nigerians who are human beings, constituted the articles of trade by the human traffickers as they were stolen, packaged and sent to sex industry in Europe. The increasing cases of the number of Nigerians who die on transit and in prisons as a result of trafficking in persons, drugs trafficking, cyber crime, etc have reduced the country's status as the giant of Africa, hence losing her respect among the international community (Shedrack, 2016).

In the light of the above, the former Speaker of House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara cited in (Adeniyi, 2019), avers that “we cannot continue to open our eyes seeing our youths the hope of our country, losing their lives while embarking on a dangerous journey with little or no hope of reaching their destinations. Dogara further laments that the Mediterranean Sea has now become a

cemetery that has left deep wounds on the conscience of humanity. “Anyone forced into deep retrospection over these multiple regrettable tragedies cannot but ask these questions: what makes a young boy or girl to leave their families and subject them to this terrible ordeal? What are the possible solutions to this inhuman trafficking in persons? ‘Have the relevant authorities in Nigeria and Italy done enough to stop this crime against humanity? Asked Dogara”. However, Dogara further imports that the current challenges of trafficking is as a result of failure of both society and the state. according to Dogara, “We are all involved in this crime, either as perpetrators or those who are aiding and abetting human traffickers by standing aloof while they convince victims to embark on a supposed journey in search of a “better life” that has almost always ended in bitter life” if not death.( pp45 as cited in Adeniyi, 2019)

#### **4. Loss of Manpower and Brian Drain Crisis**

Most victims of human trafficking fall within the working force. As a result, the country of origin of the trafficked suffers a huge loss of manpower. The number of Africans travelling abroad, particularly Nigerians for medical services erroneously portrays Nigeria’s image as a country in throes of health crisis due to large number of patients involved. Ibekwe (2010) summarized the negative effects of brain drain on developing countries including Nigeria as follows:

*Brain drain in developing countries has financial, institutional and social costs; little return from their investments in higher education, increasing dependency on foreign expertise due to dwindling professional sector; diminishing ability of several developing countries to offer basic health care services to their subjects; widening gap in science and technology between the rich and poor countries, crumbling middle class population and disappearance of jobs and society (pp67).*

Nigeria health care is in a deplorable state partly due to inadequate number of experts as a result of the effect of brain drain. Anuforo (2010) posits that Nigeria really does not have the kind of public health system that the country needs. The life expectancy in Nigeria is about 55 years, while in other middle income countries, it is about 70 and higher income countries about 80 plus. Nigeria is yet to make any significant impact in its health industry.

While stressing on the issue of brain drain, the President of the National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives(NANNM), Dr. Michael Nnachi posits that over 57,000 nurses left Nigeria in five years (Nnachi, 2022), while 4,000 doctors left Nigeria on 9 December 2022 (Osagie, 2022). According to the former Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire, Nigeria loses 2 billion dollars annually to medical tourism, a figure higher than Nigeria’s total health expenditure in 2022. This occurs as a result of poor salaries, zero incentives, incessant strikes, etc. More so, professionals not only leave to seek succour

abroad, but her citizens taking a cue from her leaders continue to patronize medical help in foreign nations. From the foregoing, it is evident that brain drain is another dimension of human trafficking which deprives the country of the skilled manpower needed for rapid national development.

- 5. Vulnerability to HIV/AIDs:** Most victims of human trafficking are exposed to all sorts of illness and diseases as a result of sexual exploitation. However, some of them contract and spread deadly sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDs, sexually transmitted disease (STD), etc. Trafficking in persons has contributed to the increase of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Nigeria. According to Chairman of NAPTIP, Kano State Zone, Bello Ahmed avers that over 60% of victims of human trafficking repatriated into the country tested HIV positive (cited in Yunus & Rbiu, 2016). In corroboration, the Kwara State Ministry of Health Coordinator for HIV/AIDs, Mr. Salimot Lawal estimates that there are 1,800,000 AIDs orphans living in Nigeria (cited in Arum & Janet, 2018). These children become vulnerable to traffickers since they do not have somebody that could send them to school. The deported victims spread HIV/AIDs which tarnishes the image of the country.
- 6. Leadership Failure and Developmental Crisis:** Leadership failure is one of the contributing factors of trafficking in persons, drug trafficking, cyber crime, kidnapping, etc, and it creates wrong impression of the image of the country. The poverty of leadership has been the bane of successive regimes over the past five decades, which contributes to the problems of development in Nigeria. In this regard, Chinua Achebe (cited in Nwoye (2000) posits that the problem of Nigeria and indeed other African countries are essentially the problem of leadership. Giving credence to this observation, various United Nation's conferences and development reports have consistently emphasized the need for honest and dedicated leadership that will rise above selfish and primordial desire in order to address the monumental development challenges facing the continent. In his contribution on leadership failure and developmental crisis in Africa as a whole, Nigeria inclusive, Ake (1989) assert that the circumstances of our history have conspired to produce elites (leaders) which cannot function because it has no sense of identity or integrity and no confidence, does not know where it is coming from or where it is going to. From the above assertions, it is obvious that Nigeria is indeed far from having the kind of political leadership and developmental structures that will address the problems of trafficking in persons, corruption, drug trafficking, cyber crime, etc that portrays the image of Nigeria in bad light regionally and globally.
- 7. Draconian Policies Abroad (DPA):** The rate of trafficking in persons in Nigeria has placed the country on the map of notorious list in the world, as a major source, transit and destination in

West African sub-region and other part of the world, especially in Europe (U.S. Department of State, 2010, 2018 and 2021). The agency further avers that about 92% of Nigerians are trafficked to Europe for prostitution. The implication of unpalatable remark led to draconian policies abroad, and the reason Nigeria is treated with contempt in the West African sub-region. The visa ban imposed on Nigeria by America under the Donald Trump administration as well the recent arrest and conviction of Senator Ike Ekweremadu and the wife in 2022 by U.K. government for organ trafficking, are instructive. These are incident that portray the image of Nigeria in bad light in the international system.

- 8. National interest crisis:** National interest is the summation or totality of what a nation seeks to pursue or achieve in its relationship with other states (Shedrack, 2022). In his book ‘ Politics Among Nations, Morgenthau(1973) argues that ‘no nation can have true guide as to what it must do and what it needs to do in foreign policy without accepting national interest as a guide’’. Morgenthau sees national interest as aimed ‘at promoting national image, prestige and respect both at home and abroad’’. According to Obi (2006), national interest helps to promote and protect the state’s image through various strategies employed in the international interactions with states in order to ensure the preservation of the stated goals of society. In this regard, Agbor, 2012, Saliu, 2014, described Nigeria as an unsalable item in the diplomatic market. In his contribution, Fawole (2003) avers that a country’s image is cordial emblem in the diplomatic market. A country’s image is a roadmap in international relations, diplomatic market and foreign investments. As a matter of fact, Akinterinwa (2013) argue that a good image constitutes sources of goodwill and patronage for a country, which is considered by investors in determining where to direct investment funds and brings the level of unfriendliness down. However, the rest of the world’s perception about Nigeria will affect her national interest, pocket and economy because less people will be inclined to invest and travel to the Country. Chiakelu (2010) imports that in 21<sup>st</sup> century of inter-connecting world, an image can help to left up a nation and that is exactly why many nations are very protective of their images. It is truism because once an image of a nation is tarnished; it becomes an arduous if not an impossible task to reverse the trend. Ake (1989) attributed the problem of national interest crisis on the leadership failure in Nigeria. According to Ake, the circumstances of our history (colonial experience) have conspired to produce elite that cannot function because it has no sense of identity or integrity and no confidence, does not know where it is coming from or where it is going. In collaboration, Chinua (cited in Nwoye, 2000) argued that the problem of Nigeria and other African Countries are essentially the problem of leadership. In the light of the above, it is

believed that the involvement of Nigerians in TIPs is as result of bad leadership which affects national interest.

### **Push and Pull Factors of Trafficking in Persons in Nigerian System**

1. **Pervasive Poverty:** Poverty is the greatest cankerworm that erodes the social fabrics of our society today. Poverty is a major cause of trafficking in persons in Nigeria because when there is abject poverty in the land and in a bid to survive, the people are ready to do anything, both as an agent and as victims of traffickers. In this regard, Laczko Frank, Amanda Klekowski, Von Koppenfels & Jana Barthel (2002) imports that living in abject poverty in some of the African countries is the main reason women accept any kind of job in the West and this is closely connected to trafficking in persons. In the same vein, Steve (2001) describes poverty in Nigeria as follows:

*The bitter reality of the Nigerian situation is not just that the poverty level gets worse by the day, but that among every ten Nigerians, more than four lives in conditions of extreme poverty, earning less than \$320 per capita income per month which barely provides for a quarter of the nutritional requirements for healthy living(pp75)*

From the above submission, Audu (2014) posited that Nigeria has earned about \$400 billion from oil, between 1970-2000 and under President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (2010-2015) Nigeria earned #51 trillion from crude oil and yet, the number of Nigerians living in poverty – less than a dollar a day has risen to 70% from 36% and per capita income Gross Domestic Product has fallen to \$1,084 from \$1,113 in purchasing power parity terms. In 2002, the Heritage Foundation of Washington DC ranked Nigeria 125 out of 155 poorest countries. After 20 years of this unpalatable report on poverty rate in Nigeria, the World Bank Group on December 26th, 2022 imports that Nigeria and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa missed 2022 poverty reduction target due to pandemic and insufficient funds to satisfy the medium to long term goals of poverty. In its new study titled “Africa’s pulse: An analysis of issues shaping Africa’s economic future”, the Washington-based bank reported that poverty reduction trends which had already been disrupted by the pandemic. The pandemic has had a persistent influence on long-term growth, mainly impacting the poorest individuals and increasing extreme poverty. However, the above reports from World Bank indicates that Nigeria falls within countries with extreme poverty with over 75 percent of the population living below 1.25 dollars (N200) or less per day. In the same vein, Witterler Shepelmann (2009) imports that 41% of Africans still live on less than one dollar per day and 487 million labourers don’t earn enough to feed their families, yet another 1.3 million earn less two dollars a day, they need to work under

humiliating conditions with no labour rights and social standards to protect them. As a result of this ugly trend, 55% of Nigeria's street children and hawkers are trafficked persons (Osibanjo, 2015) cited in Shedrack (2016). These are children who are from poor backgrounds and, so due to lack of opportunities at home and with or without their consent are trafficked.

2. **Armed Conflicts or Wars:** Another reason for high migration and refugee numbers in Africa are wars. 40 %( percent) of all wars of the last decade were fought in Africa. Multiple inter and intra-state conflicts witnessed forced displacement, so-called ethnic cleansing and severe violation of human rights (Witterler-Shepelmann, 2009). Trafficking in persons thrive in war zone due to massive displacement of people and refuge in neighbouring countries. According to Kashim Shettima, the former Governor of Borno State, Boko Haram insurgency displaced about two million, one hundred and fourteen thousand persons in Nigeria as at December 2016. In Borno State alone, they have an official record of 52,311 children who become orphans and victims of human trafficking in persons through the activities of Boko Haram insurgency (Tukur, 2017 cited in Arum & Janet, 2018).

Moreso, some people in a war zone like Ukraine might take refuge in another country and only to end up being trafficked in their countries of refuge.

3. **Greed:** This is the excessive desire to acquire money, material things, power and other possessions for the sake of acquiring them, and more to the detriment of others. According to Ukegbu (2019), most people who fall victims to this social problem are those who have strong desire to amass wealth at all cost. In this regard, the report of former Director General of NAPTIP, Mrs. Julie Okah-Donli cited in Ezeamala (2015) posits that greed rather than poverty and unemployment are the real cause of trafficking in persons. Julie further imports that some victims sell their father's houses and pay money to well-known traffickers who usually promise them lucrative jobs abroad. However, if not for greed, they could easily invest such money in some business ventures in Nigeria which could have yielded some good money. Trafficking in persons continued to thrive in Nigeria due to human greed for money and wealth.
4. **Widespread Corruption:** Corruption undermines societal values and norms. A wrong thing is done in place of the right thing because of personal interest or gain. It is because of widespread corruption in Nigeria that it has become a major source, transit and destination country for women, girls and children to forced labour and sex trafficking in Africa and other part of the world. A country where the entire system is corrupt will find most of her citizens being involved in trafficking in persons.

Corrupt practices among the immigration and police officers at the borders encourage trafficking in persons because these officers collect bribes and allow the traffickers and victims

to go. Moreso, Jonson (2019) examines how corruption among the police encourages others to engage in human trafficking. Jonson's study showed that countries with more police corruption also experience higher rates of trafficking outflows. This is true because police corruption lowers the costs for traffickers to engage in recruitment and transportation in origin countries. Police corruption hampers legal and administrative rules in Nigeria. Even when there are extant laws to punish the traffickers or offenders, there is lack of political will to implement such laws because of corruption among the judges in law courts, especially under president Buhari administration.

5. **Political, Economic and Social Instability:** This is another cause of trafficking in persons because when a country is politically, economically and socially unstable, it creates room for poverty, unemployment, low standard of living, underdevelopment, etc. All these enumerated problems breed trafficking in persons. Muhammed and Nilufar (2022) While analyzing the impacts of political and economic instability in Ukraine and other neighbouring countries, Muhammed and Nilufar states that its effects have become a global issue because of the region's significant contribution to food and energy supplies. This is true because Russia and Ukraine are prominent players in global trade of food and agricultural products (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2022). Therefore, political, social and economic instability contributes to trafficking in persons, because people will be moving out of the country for greener pasture and they will definitely need assistance which the traffickers will readily offer in disguise.
6. **Gender/Racial Discrimination against Women:** 60% of those forced into sex industry in Europe are women from West Africa and a good number of them are Nigerians (UNODC, 2018). However, Arum & Janet (2018) avers that the debasement of women in West Africa including Nigeria makes women to be vulnerable to the traffickers. This is because in African setting, women are perceived to be inferior to men, thereby encouraging gender discrimination. From the foregoing, Anaikele & Olutayo (2011) argues that trafficking in persons is majorly a gender biased phenomenon since most of their victims are women and girls. According to Ukegbu (2019), the discrimination against women and blacks in some countries is the push factor of trafficking in persons. Similarly, Patterson & Zhou (2018) posits that women move within their countries to engage in exploitative work in domestic services and sweatshop operations, and they make up the majority of the millions of international migrants across the globe, a significant number of who end up in forced labour situations. However, when there is such discrimination, the women and the black people involved are seen as not important or worse still, less human and could be easily trafficked.

7. **Youth Unemployment:** This is another push and pull factor of trafficking in persons because many of the unemployed youth and adults as well are desperately looking for jobs and greener pasture in foreign countries due to economic hardship in their home country. As they go for those non-existing jobs outside the country, they easily fall victims of human trafficking. However, the inability of the government to provide enabling environment for manufacturing increases our dependency on finished products imported from other countries, and as well increase the number unemployed youths who become prey to traffickers. For example, in 2015 recession in Nigeria, 8 out of 100 persons were unemployed, subsequently, in 2018 the population of unemployed and underemployed persons rose to 20.9 million (Innocent, 2019). Lack of job opportunity, which is unemployment, is the reasons why people rush out of their countries for greener pastures.
8. **Bad Governance:** The failure of the federal government both present and past administrations to meet the yearnings and aspiration of the citizens is another factor that is responsible for trafficking in persons in Nigeria. Leadership failure is responsible for problems of political development in Nigeria. According to Audu (2014) cited in (Steve, 2001), African droughts and famines are neither sudden natural disasters nor are they simply caused by a lack of rainfall. They are the end results of a long deterioration in the ability of Africans to feed themselves, a decline caused largely by mistakes and mismanagement both inside and outside the continent. It is also said that if other countries are afflicted with natural disasters, Nigeria's own disaster is leadership failure. This metaphor may be exaggerated, but it is certainly not too far from the truth. Bad government creates rooms for elected leaders to embezzle the public funds contributes to problems of trafficking in persons in African continent especially in Nigeria.
9. **Ignorance/Illiteracy:** Traffickers usually approach illiterate parents who do not know the implications of releasing their wards to be taken away as long as money will enter their pockets. According to Nwagbo (2010), there are examples of women who have been promised a job abroad in a supermarket and they end up as prostitutes because they did not know that they cannot work in a supermarket if they cannot speak the local language. However, the majority of trafficked person are unaware of the forms of labour to which they will be subjected to. Most people trafficked to Europe for prostitution did not foresee entry into the sex industry. Ignorance is lack of knowledge or information about the activities of human trafficking or what is all about. There is also an ignorance of the health dangers lying at the core of trafficking in persons as it increased the number of HIV/AIDS in the country.
10. **Weak Legal Instruments:** Weak law enforcement and porous nature of our borders contributes to trafficking in persons in Nigeria. The law enforcement agents manned our borders



compromised by accepting bribe from traffickers. However, trafficking in persons is a crime against all known laws. It contravenes both natural and sacred laws. Moreso, in order to suppress these practices and bring perpetrators to justice, the response at national, regional and international levels have put in place a number of laws, treaties, conventions and protocols dealing with human trafficking, yet the ugly phenomenon still persisted.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **System Theory**

Several theories have been propounded and popularized by different scholars to explain the main causes of Trafficking in persons and its implications on Nigeria's external image. The theories include, Frustration-aggression Theory by John Dollard (1939) which was later expanded and modified by other scholars such as Aubrey Yates and Leonard Berkowitz (Anifowose 2011), Deprivation Theory (Gurr1970, Davis1959 and Nagel1974 ), Failed State Theory by Herbert (1961) has been modified by scholars like Zartman (1995), Fukuyama (2004), Beissinger and Yoiung (2002), Milikken(2003), Rotberg (2004), Social Security Theory (United Nations,1948), Basic Human Needs Conflict Theory cited in Nna and Pabon (2018), Structural functionalism Theory(Augusto Comte1798-1959, Herbert Spencer1920-1903, Emile Durkheim1902-1979, Karl Marx1843, Claude Ake 1981, Bade 1973,Aja-Akpuru Aja1998, Julius Ihonvbore2011 etc. The other proponents of the system theory are Talcott Parson (1937), David Easton (1965), Kenneth Boulding (1956), Oran Young (1968), Karl Deutsch (1963), Rapoport Anatol (1968) (Laszlo Wilbur (1972), Anatoh , David Ginger (1972), George Modesk (1970), Robert Lieber (1972), Leeds (1981), Nwosu Ofoegbu (1986), Lifien Field (1978), etc.

However, all the mentioned theories provided insight into existence of the phenomenon but are inadequate to explain their persistence in spite of measures exerted to curb the menace. From the above identified problems, this research adopts system theory as a suitable framework of analysis because of its ability to fill the gap in the extant measures of tackling trafficking in Persons (TIPs) in Nigeria. This theory is more appropriate than other theories to explain the justification for trafficking in persons, due to high level of poverty, bad governance, corruption, mass unemployment, etc in the society. As a result of this ugly development, people struggle to survive at all cost. The theory equally explain interdependence and cohesiveness of the society whereby actions or inactions, activities or changes on one part of a system influence or affect other parts or even the entire system. The term system theory or General System Theory (GST) was develop by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1968 as a response to the increasing fragmentation and duplication of scientific and technological research and decision making in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The concept of system theory did not own its origin to political science but was developed in biology by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1968, which was regarded as the

father of the General System Theory (GST) and made operational in the social sciences and other notable disciplines. It was later adopted in sociology by Talcott Parsons in 1937. However, David Easton in 1953 was the first scholar to apply the system theory to the activities of people, especially in politics to explain what happens in political system but later elaborated his conception in 1965 in his two works, a framework for political analysis and a system analysis of political life.

In this regard, Ludwig Bertalanffy (1968) defined system theory as a complex of elements standing in interaction. From this definition, Ludwig visualized the system theory as a way to tackle the increasing complexity of the world's problems. According to Carter (2011), a system is "an organized whole made up of components that interact in a way distinct from their interaction, with other entities and which endures over some period of time". Wilkinson (2011) points out that system theory is a conceptual framework formulated on the basis "that the component parts of a system can best be understood in the context of the relationships with each other and with other system, rather than isolation."

Moreso, Nwosu and Ofoegbu (1980) define system theory as an organized whole in dynamic interaction. A system according to Leeds (1981) is a grouping of separate but inter-dependent parts which form a complex whole to achieve some objective. For instance, changes in Global system affect continental level, regional level and the national systems, although the change may be stable or unstable. From these definitions, it can be deduced that system analysis emphasizes relationship to the whole rather than isolated parts (Agena, 2003:117).

However, proper understanding of basic assumption of system theory as developed by David Easton in 1965 may demand the following steps: -

1. Changes in the social or physical environment surrounding a political system produce "demands" and supports for action or status quo, directed as "inputs" towards the political system through political behavior.
2. These demands and supporting groups stimulate competition in the political system, leading to decisions or "outputs" directed at some aspect of the surrounding social or political environment.
3. After a decision or output is made (e.g specific policy), it interact with its environment and if it produces change in the environment, there is "outcome".
4. When a new policy interacts with its environment "outcomes" may generate new demands or support and groups in support or against the policy (feedback) or a new policy on some related matter.
5. Feedback leads back to step 1. Forming a never-ending cycle (system theory in political (Science, 2016).

Furthermore, on the basic assumption of system theory, Agha (2003:122) opines that the inputs which emanates from the environment of the political system includes those demands made upon the system in the form of the people demanding for better standards of living, increased pay package for workers, provision of infrastructural facilities and the respect for the fundamental rights of the citizens. The system equally needed support from the environment such as payment of taxes by the people, talking up appointments to serve in positions in government, etc. Another attributes of David Easton's system's model is output which emanates from the system to the environment comes in form of decisions and actions such as rules, regulations, legal system, administrative, decisions and actions. Finally feedback is the channeling of information about societal reaction to decisions emanating from the system. The net result of the feedback will show whether the system is dysfunctional or eu-functional. This means that if the system is functioning effectively and responding to demands and input in the environment, there will be stability and development in the political system. The failure of the political system to address the demand from the environment will result in breakdown in the system, thereby making the political system to be dysfunctional.

### **Application of the Theory**

From the foregoing, this theory is applicable to the study because of the challenges the NAPTP official and other securities agencies encountered in curbing trafficking in persons as a result of the inability of the political system to respond to the demands and input in the environment. Therefore, as a result of this ugly situation, incapability of the Nigerian government to respond to the demand in order to address the problems of trafficking in persons and other related crimes such as terrorist activities, drug trafficking, cybercrime, smuggling of illegal goods, arms smuggling etc, militate against stability of the Nigerian political system. Hence the failure of the Nigerian government to address the problems of poverty, mass unemployment, get rich quick syndrome, corruption, bad leadership, illiteracy, political instability, limited opportunities, etc leads to dysfunctional political system which adversely affects Nigeria's National, development and planning. Finally, the theory having explained why people venture into trafficking in persons, it is capable of providing solutions on how to eradicate human trafficking in Nigeria and improve our external image.

### **Conclusion**

Based on our discoveries due to myriad reviewed literature in this research, it is imperative to note that widespread corruption, pervasive poverty, armed conflict, gender discrimination, bad governance, ignorance, weak legal instruments, etc is the major factors that are responsible for trafficking in persons in Nigeria. The above mentioned problems contributed to economic crisis, death crisis, placing Nigeria on notorious watch list, loss of manpower, spread of HIV/AIDS, leadership failure, etc. which portrays the image of Nigeria in bad light in comity of the nation. However, we recommend the following as the

ways of addressing the problems of trafficking in persons in Nigeria and improving our national image as well.

1. The federal government should provide funds to all anti-trafficking agencies such as NAPTIP, the police and immigration to support their actions and improve efficiency in order to ensure speedy prosecution of trafficking cases in the country.
2. The Nigerian government should give a humane face to the poverty alleviation programmes in the active participation and access available to all especially women at the lowest level of poverty.
3. The government should create anti-trafficking watchdog committees in rural areas across Nigeria.
4. Federal government should implement the memorandum of understanding signed between the federal government, transit and destination countries.
5. The federal government should implement a peer review mechanism at the ECOWAS level to ensure that every member state is working hard to improve its economy in order to eradicate poverty.
6. Federal government should co-operate with UN agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF) to implement the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, which mandates free and compulsory education for every child up to junior secondary school level.
7. Federal government should set up policies to create jobs and skill acquisition programmes for young graduates and school dropouts in Nigeria.

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