



HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND THE QUESTION OF HUMAN DIGNITY: PHILOSOPHERS' VIEW

¹Oluwasegunota F. O. BOLARINWA & ²Babatunde OMOYENI

¹Department of Philosophy, Adekunle Ajasin University,
Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

email: oluomobola15@gmail.com/oluwasegunota.bolarinwa@aaua.edu.ng
gsm: +2348062481411

²Department of Philosophy, Adekunle Ajasin University,
Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

email: omoyeni46@gmail.com
gsm+2348163058446

Human trafficking is an aged-long problem in human society. It however assumed an alarming proportion in contemporary society particularly, in Nigerians' economic and socio-political relations with other nations of the world. Scholars of different orientations have attempted to provide lasting solution to this organised criminal activity that treats humans as article to be purchased, controlled and exploited. To date scholars' efforts have not yielded the desired results; hence, the nature and scope of the illicit trade is on the increase. This study therefore, sought an adequate philosophical foundation upon which the menace could be constructively handled. Hence, Immanuel Kant's Categorical Imperative is adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. The study adopts the qualitative method of philosophical inquiry. Specifically, it employed the critical, and analytical tools to interrogate human trafficking in Nigeria and proffer metaphysically inclined solution. The study revealed that the essence of human beings particularly, the humanity principle which enjoys a person to treat another as an end in itself and not as mere means is a solid and adequate foundation upon which interpersonal relations of moral agents could be based in handling constructively the problem of human trafficking in Nigeria. The study concluded that the respect for the dignity of the human person should not be compromised under the guise of economic advantage or other social benefits accruable to the practitioners of acts that exploit and dehumanise the human person.

Keywords: Human trafficking, human dignity, philosopher, question, Nigeria

Introduction

The value of human life is embedded in freedom in which the rights of others are upheld, the constituted authority is respected and obeyed by individuals within the confine of a secured society. The unprecedented unity, socio-economic and political development that follow this trend leads to positive contributions of such a society to the improvement of humanity. However, has this always been the case in the contemporary Nigeria as the incident of

¹ Professor Oluwasegunota F. O. BOLARINWA is of the Department of Philosophy, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko

² Mr Babatunde OMOYENI is a PhD candidate in the Department of Philosophy, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko



insecurity; insurgency, kidnapping, and human trafficking, among others, pervade the nooks and crannies of Nigeria? Why is it that these phenomena most especially, human trafficking, keeps on resurging in our contemporary society specifically in Nigeria? With the resurgence of these social menaces in Nigeria, we may want to contend that human beings are by nature anti-social. Hence, this study interrogates human trafficking as the basis of taking position on the nature of man.

Human trafficking is one of the social menaces across the world, most especially in Nigeria. It metamorphosed from the ancient slavery which is a legacy of colonialism that repudiated humanism, egalitarianism and communalism which are the basic presupposition of Africa. Although, slavery came to an end in the 19th century when freed slaves took political acts by government (First in Europe and then in America). The relationship between human trafficking and ancient slavery is evident in the illicit form of trade which is covertly executed by the human traffickers, dehumanization and victimization of their victims are the string of similarity between them. The deception, persuasion techniques and the use of coercion to recruit its victims in Nigeria have reached a fearsome crescendo as it has compounded the insecurity and health challenge to Nigerians. Consequent on this, the nature of human trafficking is studied critically in this work using philosophical approaches because the era of categorizing philosophy as a theoretical inclined discipline without any practicability in resolving life problems has gone as it is evident in this study. The question of what human trafficking entails, cannot be addressed in isolation of the nature, features, scope, causes and effects of human trafficking in Nigeria.

An Overview of Human Trafficking

Some terms are central to this study. One of such term is human trafficking. Hence, we critically look at what human trafficking and other concepts such as human, trafficking, traffickers, among others; what each of them entails in term of their relationship with human trafficking. Since, sentient agent that fuels trafficking is a human, we have to know what 'human' entails for avoidance of ambiguity. What human which is affiliated with trafficking stands for? According to John Sinclair (1992), Human means relating to or concerning people. This Sinclair's submission implies possessing the nature of persons who are socially intelligent. Going by this, we can aver that 'human' which is attached with 'trafficking' to form a word boundary 'human trafficking' is socially embedded. It is this social companionship of man that creates room for trafficking since man is a socio-political animal. Knowing this, we cannot but ask what do we understand by trafficking?

Michael Rundelt (2007) defines trafficking as the business of buying and selling things such as drugs or weapons illegally. The initial practice of trafficking is vividly captured in this Rundelt's explanation which is incongruence with the diversion of the traffickers from illegal transaction of drugs and weapons to illicit buying and selling of human being for selfish satisfaction of the traffickers regardless of the victimization and exploitation of their victims. Sarasu E. Thomas (2011) lightened up this better when he defines trafficking as the moving, selling or buying of women and children for prostitution within and outside of a country for monetary or other considerations with or without the consent of the person subjected to



trafficking. The victims are in most cases coerced, persuaded and recruited into exploitative activities by traffickers. According to Sinclair (1992), a trafficker in particular goods, for example drug is a person who buys or sells illegally. It follows from this that the sole aim of the traffickers is profit-making at the detriment of their victims. A victim is someone who has been harmed, injured, or killed as result of a crime, (Michael Rundelt, 2007). We can conveniently aver that victims of human trafficking are those individuals who have been injured or killed consequent on the activities of the traffickers. Having known this, there is need for us to know what human trafficking entails.

Matthew S. Friedman (2009) in *Conceptual Clarity in Human Trafficking Paradigm: The Bangladesh Experience*, gives the definition of trafficking in human being as given by *United Nation Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons* thus:

Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payment or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitations, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

The definition given above indicates that human trafficking is a conglomeration of several other vices such as kidnapping among others that combined to make it a hydra-headed problem. These problems are found in the three core elements in the definition as exemplified in the action, the mean, and the purpose of involving in human trafficking. The action as a core element consists of the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons. Recruitment is the process of finding people to join the armed forces or company or organization, (Michael Rundelt, 2007). This process discloses to us how victims of human trafficking are being conscripted into this illicit activity and a host of other social vices in Nigeria.

Corroborating this, Paul Adepelumi (2015) aptly puts in Nigeria prone conflict zone, Boko-Haram trafficked children and use them as soldiers and militias. They kidnapped young girls, sell them into slavery and forcefully married them. This goes a long way in revealing the illicit recruitment and kidnapping by the traffickers who subject their victims to forced labour and sexual exploitation among others. It is an indisputable fact that the recruitment perpetrated by the traffickers is not done in vacuum but via transportation means, for most of the recruited victims are either taken to cross-border to carry out the exploitative tendency of the traffickers. In fact, the plight of the victims starts at the stage of transportation which in most cases is illegal just like smuggling (migration).



Nicola Sturgeon (2006) elaborates the relationship between human trafficking and smuggling as he writes that smuggling is usually movement of people across a border for a fee. The relationship with the smuggler ends at the point of destination and the smuggled person is free. In trafficking the relationship is an ongoing one of exploitation and commodification from which the traffickers continues to profit. This Sturgeon's analysis reveals the extent of the limitation of the exploitation of the smuggled persons. But, this limitation does not amount to denying the fact that people who set out to be smuggled may likely become the victims of human trafficking through the use of threat, deception or force by the traffickers during their journey which ends in exploitation of divergent forms. Albert B. Adamson (2013) aptly puts: "Victims of sexual exploitation are usually those who have moved further away from their support group or displaced by unsuccessful migration to locations like border communities. Such victims are exposed to sexual violations in more proportion compared to those who are still within their family structure and those in the cities." This vividly showcases the form of slavery so synonymous to forced service that is embedded in sexual exploitation.

According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: "Forced labour or other services shall mean all work or service that is exacted from any person under the threat of penalty and for which the person concerned has not offered him or herself voluntarily."¹¹ This indicates the manipulation of the voluntary offer of the victims by the traffickers who during the initial recruitment allow their victims' volition to operate but eventually keep their victims in an exploitative condition using coercive mechanism such as threat enunciation, retention of passport and identity papers so that workers cannot leave or prove his or her identity and status. The schemes adopted by the traffickers cause their victims to be subjected to slavery.

David Weissbrodt (2002), quotes the League of Nations Slavery Convention of 25 September, 1926 on what slavery entails thus: slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised. The fundamental rights of the slaves (victims) of traffickers are reduced consequent on the traffickers' claim of ownership of their victims. The import of this is that the victims of human trafficking have no expectation of freedom in same manner that slaves are under the discretion of their master.

The Origin of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a global socio-economic phenomenon which pervades all human societies. It metamorphosed from the ancient slavery which is a legacy of colonialism that repudiated humanism, egalitarianism and communalism that are basic presuppositions of Africa. The question is: what do we mean by slavery? According to Sinclair (1992), slavery is the system by which people are owned by other people as slaves. This receives credence from United Nation Convention (1957) definition of slavery which states that slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised. Slavery as explained here implies a complete system of ownership in which the community recognised slaves as a separate category of beings without rights and as legally inferior to non-slaves who are entitled to freedom; the non-slaves who are slaves' masters have complete control over all aspects of the life of the slave including who slave marries, what the slave eats and wears, when the slave sleeps, and whether the slave is educated or provided medical treatment, and whether the slave can practice religion.



Trends of Human Trafficking

As a modern day slavery, human trafficking is embedded with tendency of using man as a means to the actualization of an ends. This is made possible by covert nature of human trafficking which propels its exploitative disposition in our society most especially in Nigerian society. The deception and threat used by the trafficker fuel the propensity of the expansion of human trafficking in Nigerian society. The questions that come to mind are: What really propels the trend of human trafficking in Nigerian society? What are the trends of human trafficking? Human trafficking is being propelled through both internal and external categories of trafficking. Internal trafficking is in the form of domestic servitude and street begging, while external trafficking is mostly about sex trafficking and domestic labour across border

The domestic servitude and street begging are parts of forced labour trafficking whose victims are within Nigerian society rendering services embedded in humiliation, ill-treatment, and exhausting working hours in the private homes where they are employed. They are often recruited with initial promises of a safe work space and a steady salary, only to later find out that they are paid less than minimum wage and have to work over time, to say the least. This domestic servitude in most cases is consequent on the practice of entrusting poor children to more affluent friends or relatives.

Also, the optimism of parents on their children escaping a situation of chronic poverty propel some parents to sell their children for better life and more opportunity which is ironically inclined. This shows that children are more found to be victims of this domestic servitude which in most cases include child soldiers that are either conscripted or adopted for militias purpose. Paul Adepelumi (2015), gives credence to this when he writes that in Nigeria prone conflict zone, Boko Haram trafficked children and use them as soldiers and militias. As prone conflict zone enables Boko Haram to trafficked children for militias, poverty and lack of parental care create an avenue for street begging which is part of internal trafficking in Nigerian society.

In Nigeria, most especially in the Northern part of the country, street beggars are found everywhere in public spaces, such as filling stations, restaurants, banks, super markets, mosques, churches, etc. Adepelumi (2015) elaborates this when he writes that:

Another type of trafficking in northern Nigeria is the trafficking for organised begging. Physically challenged or disable persons, such as the blind and crippled, are lured into the begging business in major Nigerian cities, such as Lagos, Ibadan, Kano and Kaduna, and Abuja. Recently, this type of trafficking has spread beyond the country's borders to the Middle East, in particular to Saudi Arabia.

Going by Adepelumi's submission, it is obvious that this is a trend of human trafficking in which the traffickers can be referred to as the master of the beggars. Anwaar Mohyuddin (2014), expatiates on this as he writes:

Beggar master (BM) is like head of a kingdom with his own territory, his own workers (beggars) and watchers (policing



personnel). He is the master trainer in the beggary. He is strict manager and administers his laws and authority ruthlessly. His team of beggars is selected by his own standards without deviation. He inflicts disabilities, if not natural, on his flock to gain sympathy of the almsgivers. At the same time, the BM looks after the beggars, Arranges for their upkeep and punishes them for trivia mistakes to enforce his authority...

This beggars' master may either be the biological parents, guardians, siblings, by a third party, including criminal gangs, distant relatives, neighbours, or family friends who are human trafficking's syndicates in disguise who forces children to get involved in street begging. This goes a long way in revealing to us that street begging constitutes child trafficking as majority of its victims are children. But that does not mean that adults are not among street begging victims as it is obviously seen in Nigerian cities. However, it is a fact that some of the street beggars are forced into it by their beggars master while few beggars joined it voluntarily consequent on economic condition (poverty) of the country.

According to Kaja B. Niewiaroska (2015) Forced trafficking (forced labour) is a recruitment, harbouring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labour or services, through the use of force, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. The involuntary servitude is really trending in Nigerian society most especially in the North Eastern part of Nigeria (Maiduguri and Yobe among others) where insurgency has forcefully involved some vulnerable people contrary to their consents in various forms of servitude. Adepelumi (2015) gives us an insight into this when he posits that in Nigeria prone conflict zone, Book Haram trafficked children and use them as soldier and militias. Apart from this, some economic service sectors, particularly restaurants and kitchens, and agricultural sectors in Nigeria and outside Nigeria often demand for cheap workforce which are readily available for them because of poverty and ignorance among others that have rendered some Nigerians vulnerable. Also, the victims of forced labour are in most cases abuse sexually.

Sex trafficking is one of the most common forms of human trafficking with more than half a million women being trafficked every year in Nigeria. Although, majority of sex trafficking victims are coerced into it but some of them join it willingly. Omoregie Pat Iziengbe (2004), elucidates this as he writes that contrary to existing literature that argues that many of these women were coerced into sex trade by traffickers, finding revealed that 12 women out of 15 of the survivors admitted they were aware of the nature of the job, while 10 of them approached traffickers themselves. In spite of this, the traffickers in most cases exploit their victims to the extent that no money realised from this activity will be accrued to sex trafficking's victims.

The impending effects of this are psychological trauma, contracting sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy that human trafficking syndicates who specialised in baby factory nurture for illicit transactions. What do we mean by baby factory? According to Olusesan Ayodeji Makinde (2015), baby factories are illegal shelters that harbour young women who give birth to children for trafficking and illegal adoption either at their will or



under slaver-like conditions. This means that children of the victims of traffickers are also subjected to victimization and exploitation like their parents. The victimization is done covertly by the traffickers to the extent that the traffickers in most cases forced their victims to donate their organs for transplanting of which the traffickers have been paid by their clients. The question is: what do we mean by organ donation (transplanting)?

According to Anika Sulainia et al (2016) Organ donation refers to donating human cells, tissues, or organs intended for human applications. The donors is a human being, living or deceased, who is a source of cells, tissues, or organs for the purpose of transplantation. This trend of trafficking is pervading Nigeria as some traffickers sell their victims' organs to clients or patients who are in need of them for survival. Also, there are some vulnerable people who donate their organs (parcel of blood among others) and collect money for that just like trade by barter. The fundamental questions that come to mind are: is donating organs to the needy most especially in situation of ill-health morally good or bad? What makes it good or bad? Is the victim's action of donation under the influence of freewill or determinism? The response to this is not far-fetched as it has been revealed from the above explanation. Thus, we can conveniently aver that saving the life of ill-health person is good in so far that it is not attached with illicit intention. But, it becomes morally bad if the donors consent are not seek prior to the donation. It follows that the nature and the intention of the donors determine whether organs donation is good or bad.

Methodology

The study employed qualitative method using conceptual-critical, expository, and analytical tools of philosophy to interrogate human trafficking. The conceptual critical method is used to clarify concepts such as right, autonomy and human dignity among others. The expository tools is used to reveal the historical background of human trafficking. Analytic philosophical tool is used to critique human trafficking. In a nutshell, these tools enable us to subject human trafficking to critical interrogation with textual supports from our literature reviews.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that supports this study is Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative. There are two versions of Immanuel Kant categorical imperative: the categorical imperative formulated as a universal principle and the categorical imperative formulated as a practical principle. The categorical imperative formulated as a universal principle stands as a parameter for distinguishing right actions from wrong actions by universalizing the maxim underscoring our action. Thus, Immanuel Kant (1949) contends that we must be able to will that a maxim of our action become a universal law. This is the canon of moral estimation of our action generally. Kant (1949) substantiates this thus: I should never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law. This means that one ought to act according to the maxim that one would wish all other rational people to follow, as a universal law. Pauline Kleingeld (2020) in *Contradiction and Kant's Formula of Universal Law*, Contends that: Formula of universal law gives no room for one's will to give limitless priority to one's own interests over those of others; as a matter of principle, and simultaneously will a world in which one's interests are completely subordinated to those of others acting on the same principle. This means that subordinating interests of others to one's own (on one's maxim)



verse versa is contradictory. In a nutshell, the formula of universal law only requires all rational agent to do unto others as they would want them do unto them. The import of this to traffickers is that they ought to consider within themselves if their actions are going to take in transacting human beings is justifiable when placed on the principle of universality. It is obviously cleared that human trafficking activities will find it difficult to pass or scale through hurdle of the principle of universalization.

Moreover, Kant's second categorical imperative formulated as a practical principle explicates morally reprehensible level of human trafficking. Anders Bordum (2002) quotes Kant on the practical principle thus: Now, I say that man, and in general every rational being, exists as an end in himself and not merely as a means to be arbitrarily used by this or that will. He must in all his actions, whether directed to himself or to other rational beings, always be regarded at the same time as an end. This implies that every reason endowed being with a will necessarily represents his own existence as a purpose in itself. The relevance and significance of human beings surpasses serving as means to ends. Upholding and observing this human vitality reflects humanity formula through which the essence of human being is considered an ultimate goal of life. The humanity formula does not refute the intention of actualizing one's end, but humanity should be used as an end in itself. Rational being whose existence depends on our will possesses humanity that must be respected.

Thus, subjecting these victims to victimization; using them as means to the actualization of their egocentric ends obviously reveals that traffickers are morally sick by discarding the underpinning precepts of the moral law of nature as predicated in the dignity of human life. The questions that come to mind are: What do we understand by law? What does natural law entail? Does natural law have any basic moral presupposition that has to be upheld by the traffickers? Do traffickers observe and uphold the basic assumption of natural law? How does natural law appeal to the traffickers? Does traffickers disregard and portrait nonchalant attitude to natural law? If it is yes, does this justify the attempt of exterminating and obliterating human trafficking from our society? What is the basis for obliterating this menace from our society? According to Vandun Frank (1993), the word 'law' denotes order; law is an order of things. This implies that law is the underpinning sequential arrangement of the orderliness underscoring things. This invariably reveals the functionality of law in strengthening and upholding the harmonious coexistence of things in nature most especially among rational persons through its stipulated rules and regulations that command the respectability of its subjects (Things; specifically, rational human beings). The repugnant attitude to the dictation and the stipulation of law inexorably propels the tranquillity among the diverse things in nature, most especially the rational beings who unavoidably obey it. This vividly reveals that law organises the orderliness and harmony of the society.

Corroborating this, Sinclair (1992) opines that law is a system of rules that a society or government develops in order to deal with business agreement, social relationships and crimes. This Sinclair's submission reveals the venerability of the social contract that are inescapable part of the functionality of the law of nature. Frank (1993) substantiates this when he writes that law also connotes respectability; law is an order of things that people ought to respect. The



law is metaphorically the light which directs people through its illumination; the insight that breeds harmonious coexistence among things in nature. Thus, the willingness of the people to respect the dictate of the law constitutes sense of duty to be observed and upheld by the people in accordance to the guidance of the reasoning's faculty of the people. This is evidently revealed in Thomas Aquinas' excerpt on what law entails as quoted by Joseph I. Omoregbe (1993) thus: Law is an ordinance of reason directed toward the common good and promulgated by the one who has the care of the community. The reasonableness and vitality of law is not the absence of its directive, instructive, imperative, harmonious and commanding functionality which ought to be altruistically inclined for the common good of all people in accordance to the stipulation of natural law. What do we mean by natural law?

According to Lysander Spooner (1982) Natural law is a principle that is naturally applicable and adequate for the rightful settlement of every possible controversy that can arise among men; being too, the only standard by which any controversy whatever between man and man can be rightfully settled. This means that natural law is universally applicable to all rational beings for the maintenance of peaceful coexistence. The peace, safety and welfare of mankind are given prominence by the natural law in term of revealing to the rational beings the requisites for harmonious cohabitation of mankind. Going by this, we can aver that the peace and harmony that underscore the socio-economic and political development of a society is not unconnected with the natural order of the individual rational beings in accordance to the tenet of natural law. No wonder, Frank (1993) opines that natural law accordingly is the natural order of persons, or to be more precise, the natural order of natural persons.

The naturality that underscores both the natural law and the natural persons goes a long way showing us the orderliness that exist between them is consequent on the rationality of persons toward the dictate of the natural law. The participation of the rationality of persons in the natural law invariably constitutes basis for morality in the natural law discourse. In fact, Omoregbe (1993) quotes Thomas Aquinas who synonymises the concept of natural law with the moral law thus: Natural law is nothing else but a participation of eternal law in a rational creatures... This participation in the eternal law by rational creatures is called Natural law. This implies the participation of rational beings in the eternal order and the guiding principle of action through which the dignity of human life and premium on humanity is adopted. The hint of this is that the participation of rational moral beings is underscored with the autonomy of the moral agents (Nigerians most especially the traffickers) through which the congruence between eternal law and the rational creatures is strengthened thus upholding the principle of natural law. The questions are; How are the principle of natural law discovered? How do we come to know them?

Aquinas succinctly discloses the modality for discovering the principle of natural law as Omoregbe (1993) quotes him thus: The primary principles are self-evident and are known by synderesis. The first and the most fundamental principle of the natural law is that good should be done and pursued and that evil should be avoided. All other principles of the natural law derive from this fundamental principle. This invariably indicates the need to do whatever action that is good without qualification (good will) but to refrain from bad actions that are impulse



inclined, because impulsive actions are egoistically embedded. Going by the negative impacts of human trafficking in our society, we can conveniently affirm that it is the instinctive impulses that serve as determine factor which propels traffickers to conceive their fellow human beings (Nigerian innocent victims) as non-natural persons by using them merely as means for the actualization of egoistically illicit ends; the traffickers deprive their victims most especially their Nigerian innocent victims fundamental human rights. The right to freedom and the right to life among others are demeaned by the activities of human trafficking in our contemporary society most in Nigeria. The humanity which is part of the natural order inherent in the law of nature is debased in each of their Nigerian innocent victims thus repudiating and obliterating the natural order of the world. What do we mean by the natural order of the world? Does our world has natural order or law at all?

In response to this, Frank (1993) writes that:

The natural order of the world is defined by the fact that it is composed of many separate persons, each a distinct entity with distinct physical coordinates and characteristics, the movements, feelings, emotions, actions, deeds, works and words of which are distinct from those of other persons. Thus, if and when a person respects the order of the world then he is at least doing his best not to confuse persons with other things or any one person with any other person. If and when a person confuses persons with other things or one person with another then he is at least not succeeding in respecting the order of the world or he is knowingly or wilfully refusing to respect it.

The import of this Frank's submission on human trafficking is that the traffickers do not respect the natural order of the world because they confuse persons (Nigerian innocent victims) with other things (Means to the actualization of egoistic end). This goes a long way telling us that the traffickers discard and repudiate the natural order which is embedded in the natural law. This in fact, constitutes unlawful action which signifies injustice metaphorically. Frank (1993) writes that: "The worst kind of injustice occurs when one person wilfully and knowingly disregard the distinction between persons and other things, treating persons as if they were non persons."³² Going by this Frank's submission, it is not an extravagant saying that human trafficking propels injustice by subjecting their fellow human beings (Nigerian innocent victims) to exploitation, dehumanization, and victimization, the traffickers are not in any way respecting the natural law which is the bedrock of the world order, thus injustice has enveloped their activities which goes a long way telling us that human trafficking is not metaphysically and morally praise-worthy. It is high time that this menace is obliterated from our society, most especially from Nigeria by maintaining the discrimination of the natural order which conceive persons as ends in themselves and not as things to be used merely as means for the attainment of illicit and egocentric benefits (ends).

Social Implications of Human Trafficking- Negative Image of Nigeria

Human trafficking which is a pandemic cankerworm which its upsurge and resurgence in



Nigeria is not the absence of social companionship among rational beings in Nigeria. The position of Aristotle that “man is by nature a social animal” and that one who does not partake of society is “either a beast or a god” corroborates the fact that man is socially inclined by nature. It is this socially embedded nature of man that propels the formation of society that provides shelter for man through social integration among people of diverse interests. It is this social companionship that forms a rational base for morality. Explicating this, Wale Olajide (2003) posits that in all this, we are assuming however a rational base for morality, namely, that man is a social being who by the dictates of his dispositions must interact not only with animate but also inanimate beings that inhabit and share his world.

Also, the relationship between two societies or countries is not devoid of social companionship that exists between them. It is an indisputable fact that the diplomatic relationship between two countries is determined by underpinning assumption of the people that form those societies. The questions that come to mind are; Does the social assumption that underscore human trafficking strengthens the social relationship between people (Nigerians)? Does it facilitate the social relationship between Nigeria and other countries? If response is no, then what are the inherent features of human trafficking that lead to the obliteration of the social companionship among Nigerians? How does human trafficking ruin the diplomatic relationship between Nigeria and other countries socially? How does human trafficking paint the image of Nigeria among the comity of nations? Does human trafficking’s activities strengthen trust among Nigerians?

It is an indisputable fact that the negativity of human trafficking in Nigeria is worrisome as it has hampered healthy social relationship among Nigerians within Nigeria not to talk about relating with the nationals from other countries. The traffickers obliterate social relationship consequent on their anti-social means of getting and managing their exploitation on their preys (victims) in Nigeria. The traffickers in Nigeria breach line of trust that abides between them and other Nigerians most especially the Nigerians who have the habit of giving out their wards to the affluence members of their family. It is obviously cleared that most of these affluence relations either turn these ward to housemaid or errand wards as explicated in this Yoruba adage which says; “Omo olomo ni an ran nise ile torutoru”. Meaning “Children of other person are usually sent dead-night's errand”. The connotative implication of this is that other people's children are in most cases sent to execute dangerous task that the affluence relations rarely send their own wards. This implies that majority of the affluence relations are in most cases traffickers in disguise who collaborate with the syndicates (employers) of the victims of human trafficking thus selling out those children or wards like commodities to those employers for domestic labour among others.

Moreover, the victims of the traffickers are in most cases taken to other countries where the employers are found exploiting the essence of humanity in each of the victims thus demeaning the dignity of human beings. The suppression and repudiation of the ontological essence of humanity in each of the victims of human trafficking succinctly indicates the level of insecurity that pervades a country such as Nigeria. It is indisputable that people tend to run away from a place or country that is faced with insecurity. It is not extravagant saying that human trafficking



has made some countries to disallow their citizens coming down to Nigeria in order to establish any tangible company in the country. The government of the nationals' country in most cases requires them to leave Nigeria. Going by this, it is apparently clear that human trafficking has nothing to offer Nigeria than being harmful to the highly cherished image of Nigeria among the comity of nations. In fact, Nigeria has been classified and ranked higher among the crime prone zone (country) in the world.

The implication of the dent that human trafficking has on the image of Nigeria indisputably constitutes an impediment to the free movement of Nigerians across the borders consequent on the rampant of the activities of this phenomenon in Nigeria as a transit country. Regrettably, some countries expatriate some Nigeria nationals to Nigeria and there are some other countries that deny Nigerians access of VISA to their countries. This goes a long way indicating how human trafficking paints Nigeria and Nigerians red and black among the comity of nations. The social distance and discrimination breeds by trafficking reveal that it has to be eradicated from our contemporary society most especially, Nigeria.

Hence, the traffickers ought to turn a new leaf through the practicability of their rational wills that help in setting ends that have final purpose for justifying the moral worth of the moral agents. The traffickers ought to rejuvenate and embrace positive duty by strengthening helping hands to their fellow rational beings in the world most especially in Nigeria rather than subjecting them to exploitation, victimization and dehumanization. They ought to refrain from trafficking activities (neo-slavery, exploitation and victimization) in conformity with the stipulation of placing humanity at high premium in congruence of repudiating the dignity of human life.

Moreover, rational beings in our contemporary society who have not fallen victim of human trafficking ought to live about superficial life which constitutes illusion to human life. They must know that not all that are glitter are gold incongruence to Yoruba adage which says: "Oun gbogbo to ndan ko ni wura." This services as an alertness to all and sundry that appearance is different from reality. The innocent people should know that traffickers may disguise as their intimate friends who give them baits just to coerce them human trafficking thus becoming victims of this menace. The people ought not to take baits from unknown person without being careful.

The traffickers and the trafficked in disguise victims ought to know that as the innocent victims of human trafficking are subject to change and permanence, in likewise manner, both the traffickers and the trafficked in disguise victims unavoidably subject to change and permanence too. The trafficked in disguise victims ought knowing that changes which manifest in their time as ordered by law of nature are taking place in their lives. Thus, there is need for them to turn a new leaf by shunning human trafficking which though has little on the permanent nature man but goes a long way obliterating human life(The Dignity of human life and humanity) through changes that arise free it.



Conclusion

Human trafficking in no doubt goes against the precept of the dignity of humanity by exploiting and dehumanizing its victims which is incongruous to the tenet of moral principle. The image of our contemporary society most especially Nigeria among the comity of nations is also greatly tarnished by the heinous activities of traffickers in Nigeria. These inevitably prompt the urgent need for total obliteration of human trafficking from Nigeria. Consequent on this, all hands ought to be on deck to ensure that the dignity of humanity is attained in Nigeria. The moral conviction of all Nigerians ought to be rooted in the ultimate consideration and respect given to the ontological essence (humanity) of all rational beings in Nigeria. Actions of all Nigerians ought to be morally counted and justified. Nigerians most especially the traffickers, the traffickers in disguised victims and their collaborators ought to consider the fact that there are some physiological and mental features that undergo change while others are constant. The import of this is that they should know that space and time dispense justice in favour of the dignity of humanity no matter what. Thus, trafficked in disguise victims i knowing that nature has its final reap on all sentient rational beings no matter how smart such beings claim to be.

Nigerians most especially the traffickers ought to know that the existence of human beings has a different and far nobler end, for which and not for happiness, reason is properly intended, and which must therefore be regarded as the supreme condition to which the private ends of man must, for the most part be postponed. They ought to possess and practice good will which is in conformity with moral principle of reason. It is by putting good will into practice that Nigerians most especially the traffickers would be able to form objective ends through which humanity in each rational beings is respected and esteemed in reverence to moral law (practical reasoning).

The congruence of the actions of Nigerians most especially the traffickers' actions with practical reason will in no doubt propel the treatment of their fellow human beings as ends rather than as mere means. The rational human being is not a thing and hence not something that can be used merely as a means but must in all his actions always be regarded as an end in itself. In a nutshell, traffickers ought not acting merely with the motive of satisfying their inclinations at the expense of the ontological essence (humanity) of their victims but rather act based on the fact that the will of their actions is good in itself and its value is incomparably higher than all the wealth, fame, status, and title. The import of this to the traffickers is that they ought to forgo the satisfaction of their inclinations (wealth, fame and status) which exploits, dehumanises and victimises their fellow human beings (innocent Nigerian victims) in order for their will to be good in achieving objective ends. Thus, the subjective ends of each of Nigerians most especially the traffickers ought to be foregone and discarded for humanity which is an objective end because humanity is an end that every rational being must have.

This serves as an insightfulness that Nigerians ought to consider themselves and their fellow human beings as ends in themselves; beings with intrinsic value acquired through practical reason which is in congruence with the supreme principle of morality. Thus, Nigerian government ought to treat her law enforcement officers most especially those required to guide Nigeria's borders as ends in themselves by paying them as at when due with encouraging



remuneration (salary). The security officers ought to jettison all forms of baits from the traffickers, the trafficker in disguised victims and their syndicates because by collecting bribe from any Nigerian, they (security officers) subject themselves to mere means for traffickers' egocentric and heinous ends to be achieved at the expense of the value and regard that ought to be ascribed to humanity out of reverence for moral duty. In conjunction to this, Nigerian government ought to do all that is within her capacity to ensure that humanity is respected in order to liberate victims of trafficking within and outside Nigeria. Also, it is the responsibility of Nigerian government to repatriate the repented traffickers and the victims of trafficking from foreign countries to Nigeria in combination with those in Nigeria for moral rejuvenation and rehabilitation of their characters. Doing, this will in no doubt amount to success in our efforts in eradicating human trafficking from of Nigeria.

Also, Nigerian government ought to ensure that the basic needs of Nigerians are met in order for the people to consider themselves as ends in themselves. It is crystal clear that this will inevitably prompt Nigerians to avoid being used merely as means for the actualization of the egoistic ends of the traffickers. The Nigerian parents ought to conceive their wards as rare wisp that belong to the kingdom of end rather than being classified and conceived as instrumental beings. Thus, Nigerians ought to shun and do away with superficiality and narrow mindedness by being critical with ideas and opinions from people regardless of their intimacy and affiliation with them in order to ensure that they are not used merely as means but as ends in themselves. Thus, Nigerians' belief and knowledge about both the aliens residing in Nigeria and Nigeria's nationals ought to be guided by logicity of Nigerians in all ramifications of their lives. It is pertinent to aver that doing this does not require Nigerians to get involved or develop xenophobic feelings that can lead to hatred for strangers.

Finally, global solution cannot be deemphasised as human trafficking is a global phenomenon. Hence, the Nigerian government ought to strengthen her collaboration with the global community in combating human trafficking and other menaces affiliated with it. Nigerian government ought to collaborate with other countries in rejuvenating the basic moral principle which has been truncated by the trend of events unfolding all over the world. Nigerian government ought to raise moral standard that align with global community's morally consented principle through which appropriate punishment is apportioned to the apprehended traffickers, trafficker in disguised victims and their syndicates thus uphold justice which is virtuous. Therefore, all stakeholders in Nigeria must come together irrespective of their divergent opinions and beliefs, to help in fighting this menace that has eaten deep into the fibre of our moral demands.

Referencess

- Adamson, A. (2013). Crossing border. *International Migration and National Security in International Security*, 31(1), 165-199.
- Adepeumi, P. (2015). The root causes of human trafficking in Nigeria. *Human Development*, pp. 5.
- Bordum, A. (2002). *The categorical imperative: Analysing Immanuel Kant grounding for a metaphysics of morals*. Copenhagen. pp. 34.



- Frank, V. (1993). *The pure theory of natural law*. Washington, pp. 112.
- Friedman, M. S. (2009). *Conceptual clarity in human trafficking paradigm: The Bangladesh experience*. C.T Praeger. pp. 2.
- Iziengbe, O. P. (2004). Purray boy. In *Human trafficking for sexual exploitation in Nigeria*. IFIRA Nigeria. pp. 4.
- Kant, I. (1949). *Ethical philosophy: Grounding for metaphysics of moral*. James W. Ellington (Trans), pp. 422.
- Kleingeld, P. (2020). Contradiction and Kant's formula of universal law, <https://www.researchgate.net>.
- Makinde, O. A. (2015). *Infant trafficking and baby factories: A new tale of child abuse in Nigeria*. Wiley Online Library, pp. 3.
- Mohyuddin, A. (2014). *Begging and human trafficking for sexual exploitation in Pakistan*. pp. 82-83.
- Niewiarowska, K. B. (2015). A global study of human trafficking legislation: Causes and effects. New York University Spring. pp. 7.
- Olajide, W. (2023). *On philosophy*. Concept Publications Limited. pp. 46.
- Omoregbe, J. I. (1993). *Ethics: A systematic and historical study*. pp. 185.
- Rundell, M. (2007), *Recruitment*. pp. 1242.
- Rundell, M. (2007), *Trafficking*. A and C Black Publishers Ltd., pp.1589.
- Rundell, M. (2007). *Victim*. pp.1660.
- Sinciair, J. et al (eds.), (1992). *Human*. HarperCollins Publisher. pp. 565.
- Sinciair, J. et al (eds.). (1992). *Slavery*. 1096.
- Sinciair, J. et al (eds.). (1992). *Trafficker* pp. 1244.
- Sinclair, J. et al (eds.). (1992). *BBC dictionary, law*. Harper Collins Publisher. pp. 656.
- Spooner, L. (1882). *Natural law: The science of justice*. A. William & Co, 283 Washington Strert. pp. 19.
- Sulainia, A. (2016). Organ donation and transplantation: An updated overview. *MAMC Journal O. Sodoof Medical Sciences*, 2(1), 20.
- Thomas, S. E. (ed.). (2011). *Response to human trafficking in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, South Asia*. Chandragupta. pp. 48.
- United Nation Supplementary Convention (1957). *The Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery*. <http://wwwz.ohchr.org/English/law/slavetrade.htm>.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, (2006). *Model law against trafficking in Person, in Trafficking in Human Beings and Peace Support Operations: Trainer's Guide*. United Nation Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. pp. 153.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Model Law against Trafficking in Person, in *International Labour Organization Convention No.29 Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour of 1930*, 1-2.
- Weissbrodt, D. (ed.). (2002). *Abolishing slavery and its contemporary forms*. New York and Geneva, pp. 4.