

## **THE ROLE OF POVERTY IN THE PREVALENCE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

The paper examined the role of poverty in the prevalence of human trafficking in Nigeria with particular reference to Sokoto State. The study was carried out within the ambit of Relative Deprivation Theory and adopted the primary and secondary methods of data collection. The study which interrogates the interface between poverty and the prevalence of human trafficking in Sokoto State, Nigeria, found out that poverty, greed and ignorance are largely responsible for the prevalence of human trafficking in the State. The research concluded by recommending that human trafficking can be effectively eradicated through the development of a robust and dynamic counter human trafficking strategy which focuses on a comprehensive synergy among relevant stakeholders aim at supporting the efficient prosecution of criminals involved; to serve as a deterrent to others as well as alleviate poverty and empower the people. As such it recommended creating and making available employment and other economic empowerment opportunities to the people, access to quality and affordable education, especially among rural dwellers and the less privileged in the society, in order to channel their energies towards productive ventures and discourage the practice of human trafficking in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Poverty, greed, Ignorance, Human trafficking, prevalence

## **1. Introduction**

Poverty is a condition in which a person experiences chaos due to the absence of material things that he needs in order to survive while unemployment is the absence of opportunity to generate money for a living in exchange of someone's time, effort and talent. Human trafficking entails a forceful or deceitful recruitment of people; especially young and able bodied people for forced labour, prostitution, domestic and other forms of exploitation. It also involves the exploitation of the desperation and ignorance of parents particularly those in the rural areas; to procure women and children for commercial and exploitation purposes.

The protocol of human trafficking assumes that adults and children of both sexes can become victims of human trafficking. It also postulates that individuals free will of victims must have been manipulated, constrained, subdued in some manner to allow for manipulation (Ashcroft, 2004).

There is very little doubt that, human trafficking is a lucrative business and may be one of the most difficult to combat. Its corrupting effects on government and institutions are barely perceptible because they are less visible than those caused by gun running and drug trafficking. Exploiting the poverty and low status of women and children in the society, middlemen are able to supply and meet the demand for cheap labour and sex in violation of human rights and international conventions.

Accordingly, trafficking in persons is a major violation of human rights, particularly that of women and children. It is a major contributory factor to the exploitation of human beings for commercial and business purposes. Human trafficking is therefore, a societal problem involving almost every Community or State in Nigeria either as a source, transit or destination. It is therefore not limited to a section or part of a population in the country.

The United States (US) State Department Trafficking in Persons Report 2009 described Nigeria as a source, transit and destination country for the trafficking of human beings for the purpose of forced labour and commercial sexual exploitation. Within Nigeria, women and girls are primarily trafficked for domestic labour. Trans-nationally women, girls and boys are trafficked into Nigeria from other African Countries and from Nigeria to Countries within and outside Africa (Nwogu, 2005). Every year hundreds of thousands of women and children are trafficked across borders for the purpose of exploitation. Their survival and development are threatened and the right to social

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and other essential services; protection from exploitation are abused and denied. Poor economic opportunities have indeed led families into more desperate measures as seen in the increasing number of women, young boys and girls and children are being trafficked from one part of the Country to another and from neighbouring Countries into Nigeria and from Nigeria to other Countries for exploitation purposes(NAPTIP, 2018).

The 2010 national poverty numbers (statistics) for Absolute, Relative, Dollar/day and Food poverty indicated that about 70% of Nigerians live below the poverty line and Sokoto State has the highest statistics of poverty in the country as more than eighty percent (80%) of the population live below the poverty line. The unemployment rate in the state is about 73.9% (NBS, 2017). This is based on the various measurements indicated above showing the incidence of poverty across States of the federation that are above and below National average. For example, the percentage of people in Sokoto living in poverty ranges between 56.6%, 81.2%, 86.4% and 81.9% for Food, Absolute, Relative Poverty and Dollar per day measurement based on an adjusted Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) respectively-(National Bureau of Statistics, 2018). It is against this backdrop that this study focuses on the role of poverty on human trafficking in Nigeria with particular reference to Sokoto State. The paper is structured in five sections: the introduction, literature review, methodology, presentation and discussion of results and finally, conclusion and recommendations.

## **2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

Trafficking in human beings, especially women and girls, is not new. Historically it has taken many forms, but in the context of globalization, has acquired shocking new dimensions. It is a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon involving multiple stakeholders at the institutional and commercial level. It is a demand-driven global business with a huge market for cheap labour and commercial sex confronting often insufficient or unexercised policy frameworks or trained personnel to prevent it.

Ozurumba (2012) looked at poverty and human trafficking in Africa: implications for educational development in the Niger Delta. Although, slavery has been abolished from the world, the trade in human beings otherwise known as human trafficking still continues. Consequently, hundreds of thousands of African women and children of school age are being forced into situations of labour

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and sexual exploitation both on the continent and abroad every year as a result of the scorching poverty in the land. At the international scene, trafficking in persons has been identified as a serious threat to human security and development by governments, non-governmental organizations, pressure groups and the United Nations. Undoubtedly, for many African countries, the problem has only recently been acknowledged. Finally the paper recommended that African governments, non-governmental organizations community based organizations and the media should sustain the current public and media interest in human trafficking through more public education programmes based on research, conferences, workshops and intervention strategies.

Enaikele and Olutayo (2011) examined human trafficking in Nigeria. They see Nigeria as a country of origin, transit and destination for human trafficking. Their study articulated the potential vulnerability of the victims, appraise the link between trafficking and human immune deficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) pandemic, assess the potency of the Nigeria legal instruments to curb human trafficking and recommend possible solutions. Because of unemployment, victims are frequently lured with promise to get a job with fat pay. Trafficking victims are exposed to unprotected sexual intercourse with multiple partners. They are also hired for pornography and bestiality. These experiences make them vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV/AIDS and other female reproductive health challenges. The Nigeria local laws and the international conventions and protocols, which she is signatory to, all have legal potencies to curb trafficking.

Chauhan (1978) posited that, there is a positive correlation between poverty and crime involving very high earnings and very low risks. He observed that the highest percentage of criminals came from low socio-economic conditions. Furthermore, he observed that it is not necessarily true that all persons who come from under-privilege class are criminals. The crucial factors in poor homes are that parents cannot even fulfill the legitimate needs of their children. This financial incapacity makes parents vulnerable to the deceit of traffickers, who deceive them, which they are going to give their children jobs, only to end up getting them into forced labour or prostitution

Ojong (2002) on her part attributed the cause of human trafficking to the vicious circle of poverty prevalent in Africa. To her, the vicious circle of poverty connotes interrelated network of deprivations. These deprivations as she maintained showcase the poor as a ready market for traffickers

### **2.1 Relative Deprivation Theory**

Relative deprivation theory refers to the idea that feelings of deprivation and discontent are related to a desired point of reference (i.e. reference groups). In other words, feelings of relative deprivation arise when desires are blocked by society. Relative deprivation theory is applicable to socio-political, economic and organizational problems. For example, the theory encourages the exploration of an individual's feeling of deprivations that may result from comparing his or her situation with that of a referent person or group as well as the behavioral effects of deprivation feelings (Morrison, 1971).

Relative deprivation basically distinguishes between egoistic deprivation and fraternal deprivation:-

- (a) Egoistic deprivation refers to a single individual's feeling of comparative deprivation.
- (b) Fraternal deprivation also called group deprivation refers to the discontent arising from the status of the entire group as compared to a referent group. Fraternal deprivation may strengthen a group's collective identity (Singer, 1992).

### **2.2 Poverty and Human Trafficking in Nigeria: A focus on Sokoto State**

Poverty is a global phenomenon threatening the survival of humanity, the incidence of poverty in Sokoto State, Nigeria has reached an alarming level and is blamed on non-clear government social policies. Indeed, the inability of successive governments to streamline and harness the enormous potentials for improved service delivery in all the existing structures of poverty eradication has resulted into persistent poverty. Sadly, Traffickers have exploited the quest for better and alternative source of survival and desire for material wealth at all cost and the vantage position of Sokoto as a gate-way to neighbouring countries enroute Europe, Asia and other parts of the world perceived to be 'greener pasture' to introduce human trafficking as a new dimension of wealth creation into the psyche of the people.

Accordingly, the reality of the Nigerian state as a state in economic and political comatose, where millions of the youths see migration out of the country as a solution to their economic

misfortunes is a subject of concern; just as an army of jobless people take to crime such as drug and human trafficking. Due to the collapse of certain structures such as the economic structure, to address poverty, welfare, a system to address unemployment, low wages and salaries and attendant result of human trafficking made Nigeria to acquire a reputation of being the leading African country in human trafficking. Nigeria is a country of origin, transit and destination for human trafficking (Falola, 1999). The phenomenon of human trafficking has considerably increased throughout the world and most especially in Nigeria. Generally speaking, human trafficking conditions in most African countries have greatly deteriorated, particularly during the last few decades. Real disposable income have declined steeply, malnutrition rates have risen sharply, food production has hardly kept pace with population growth and the quality and quantity of health and education services have also deteriorated (Biyi and Ogwumike, 2003).

### **2.3 Trends of Human Trafficking in Nigeria**

Nigeria is a source, transit and destination country for trafficking and also experiences internal and external trafficking of women and children. Internally, trafficking takes the form of recruitment and transportation of children from rural to urban centre and other forms of exploitative conditions, while the external trafficking is across the shores of Nigeria. Both are exploitative and happen under slave-like conditions. Internal Trafficking involves trafficking of persons mostly from rural to urban while External Trafficking involves the trafficking of persons from Nigeria to Europe, Asia: Saudi Arabia and other parts of the Middle East, America and other African countries such as Libya, Mali, Gabon, Tunisia, and Moroccoe.t.c. This is done through major road, air and sea routes as outline below:

- Nigeria-Cotonou-Togo-Morocco by road; Europe (by air)
- Nigeria-Ghana-Morocco-Libya-Spain (by Road)
- Kano-Kwara-Kaduna-Saudi Arabia (by air)
- Abuja-Maiduguri-Chad-Libya-Spain (by road)
- Akwa-Ibom-Cameroun-Gabon (by road and sea)
- Lagos-Spain-Germany (by air)
- Lagos-Liberia (by air)
- Lagos-Cote D/voire (by road)
- Lagos-US/London (by air)

- Shaki (Oyo)-Guinea-Mali-Cote D/voire (by road)
- Edo-Italy (by air)
- Kano-Sokoto-Niger Republic (by road)

**Table 1: Available Records of Victims of Human Trafficking (Data) between 2003-2010 from Nigeria Immigrations Service Sokoto Command**

	2003		2004		2005		2006		2007		2008		2009		2010	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
January	2	3	3	-	3	4	-	-	6	7	-	-	2	-	8	4
February	-	11	-	2	30	-	10	-	60	7	65	10	-	-	22	-
March	-	-	-	2	10	-	-	3	6	-	10	7	-	3	-	3
April	7	19	3	-	2	5	-	4	4	8	6	4	7	-	10	-
May	-	-	-	4	7	6	10	-	7	-	5	3	6	-	2	7
June	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	6	3	3	-	2	4	-	-	14
July	4	-	4	7	-	-	2	-	-	-	3	-	-	4	-	-
August	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
September	-	8	30	-	1	7	3	-	-	10	4	8	-	2	-	10
October	-	-	-	-	30	8	70	-	8	-	30	-	20	3	20	7
November	3	-	20	-	30	-	70	10	9	7	10	8	10	-	20	6
December	-	10	-	8	10	-	50	-	10	-	20	6	20	2	10	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>57</b>

**Source: Nigeria Immigrations Service Sokoto State Command**

The table 1 above shows the number of victims of human trafficking rescued by Officers of the Nigeria Immigrations Service (NIS) Sokoto Command between the years 2003-2010. The data indicates that human trafficking activities exist in the State and the number of victims rescued in Sokoto State every year hover around eighty (80) to two hundred and fifty (250) within the period under review. This number is excluding the ones rescued by Nigeria Police and other security Organizations. This also confirms the prevalence of human trafficking in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

**Table 2: Available Recordsof Suspects/Traffickers between 2006-2017 from NAPTIP Sokoto Zonal Command (Traffickers Data 2017)**

No of Suspects	State of Origin	Sex: M/F	Age Range: 18-60yrs	Month & Year	Place of Arrest
4	Edo	4(M)	4	June	Sokoto
13	Edo	5(M) 8(F)	13	July	Sokoto
9	Edo	9(M)	9	August	Sokoto
18	Delta	5(M) 13(F)	18	October	Sokoto
7	Lagos	7(M)	7	November	Sokoto
28	Edo	28(M)	28	December	Sokoto
79			79		

**Source: NAPTIP SokotoZonal Command 2017**

Table2 above shows that nine (79) Suspected Traffickers were arrested by NAPTIP inSokoto; among them are seven (58) males and (21) females who traced their origin to Edo, Delta and Lagos States. This means that men are mostly involve in human trafficking as Traffickers. It also means that Traffickers who are mostly from the Southern part of Nigeria, have been in the business of human trafficking and were arrested in different parts of Sokoto State do consider Sokoto as a point of convergence for ‘business’ as well as a source, transit and destination of human trafficking in Nigeria.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Description of Location of Study**

Sokoto State is located in the extreme Northwest of Nigeria, near the confluence of the Sokoto River and the Rima River. A State (North-Western) based in Sokoto was established in 1967 and occupies 25,973 square kilometers. As at 2006 it has an estimated population of more than 4.2 million.This covered what is now Niger State, which was split off in 1976, Kebbi State (split off in 1991), and Zamfara State, which was split off in 1996. Sokoto State lies to the north-west of

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Nigeria and shares its borders with Niger Republic to the North, Katsina State to the East, Niger State to the South-East, Kwara State to the South and Benin Republic to the West.

The region's lifeline for growing crops is the floodplains of the Sokoto-Rima river system (Sokoto River) which are covered with rich alluvial soil. For the rest, the general dryness of the region allows for few crops, millet perhaps being the most abundant, complemented by rice, corn, other cereals and beans. Apart from tomatoes few vegetables grow in the region. The low variety of foodstuffs available has resulted in the relatively dull local cuisine.

### 3.2 Types and sources of data

Primary and secondary data was used for this study. The primary data was obtained from staff of NAPTIP and Save the Child Initiative in Sokoto state, Nigeria Immigrations Service Sokoto Zonal Command, Ministry of Social Welfare and Culture and Poverty Alleviation Agency Sokoto State directly during the field work via survey questionnaire, in-depth interview and observation, this is because there is a greater scope for reliability of the information.

### 3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for the study is one hundred and forty three (143) respondents and thirty (30) victims derived from the various organizations dealing with human trafficking and 8 management officials who constituted the key informants interviewed making a total of one hundred and fifty one (149). This study adopted both the probability and non-probability sampling techniques.

### 3.4 Instruments of Data Collection and Techniques of Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data were used in collecting data for this study through survey instrument questionnaire, and through an in-depth interview and observation so as to enrich the data collected for the study. In this research, data elicited from the questionnaires were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficient with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 20.0.

### 3.5 Hypothesis

**Null:** Poverty has no significant impact on human trafficking in Sokoto State

**Alternative:** Poverty has significant impact on human trafficking in Sokoto State

#### 4. Presentation and Analysis of Results

The results of the in-depth interviews conducted were analyzed together with the questionnaires and presented below:

##### 4.1 Victims Assessment

**Table 3:Victims Assessment (Bio-data)**

<b>Sex Trafficked</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	11	36.7
Female	19	63.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age Trafficked</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Below 15yrs	7	23.3
15-19yrs	14	46.7
20-24yrs	5	16.7
25-29yrs	3	10.0
30-34yrs	1	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>State of Origin of Victims</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Niger Republic	5	16.7
Togo Republic	3	10.0
Benin Republic	6	20.0
Kogi	1	3.3
Katsina	1	3.3
Sokoto	8	26.7
Edo	3	10.0
Kano	2	6.7
Nasarawa	1	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Family Size of Victims</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1 – 5	5	16.7

5 – 10	14	46.6
10 – 15	8	26.7
15 and above	3	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Number of Siblings of Victims</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1 – 5	1	1.3
5 – 10	23	76.7
10 – 15	5	16.7
15 and above	1	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Position in the Family of Victims</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	2	6.7
2	7	23.3
3	3	10.0
4	3	10.0
5	12	40.0
Others	3	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Author's computation, 2018**

Table 3 shows victims' socio-demographic characteristics. The data reveals that majority of the victims 19 (63.3%) are female, while 11 (36.7%) are male. Also, 14 (46.7%) of the victims ranges between the ages of 15 – 19 years. In terms of the State of origin of victims, majority 8 (26.7%) said they are from Sokoto state and six 6 (20.0%) said they are nationals (natives) of Benin Republic, while 5(16.7%) said they are nationals (natives) of Niger Republic and 3 (10.0%) said they are indigenes of Edo State and nationals (natives) of Togo Republic, 2 (6.7%) are from Kano State and 1 (3.3%) said they are from Kogi, Katsina and Nasarawa states. This indicates that there exists both internal and external trafficking in Sokoto State.

In addition, majority of the victims 14 (46.6%) are between 5 – 10 family members, while 8 (26.7%) are between 10 – 15 members. Similarly, in terms of the position of victims in their

respective families; the table shows that 12 (40.0%) said they fall at position 5 (fifth position), while 7 (23.7%) fall at position 2 (second position).

**Table 4:Victims Response on the Number of Times she/he was trafficked**

<b>Views</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Once	19	63.3
Three times	7	23.4
Severally	4	13.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Author’s Computation, 2018**

Table 4 shows the number of times victims of human trafficking were trafficked. Majority (19) (63.3%) of the victims said they were trafficked once while 7 (23.4%) were trafficked three times. This means that majority of the victims were trafficked only once as at the time this research was conducted. It also means that some victims have accepted human trafficking as a means of livelihood. Hence their willingness to be trafficked as many times as possible and as the opportunity unfolds.

**Table 5:Victims Response on the ways they were lured into Trafficking**

<b>Views</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
I was told of a job offer but did not know it was a lie	11	36.7
Promise school and better living condition	17	56.6
Was to prostitute or do force labour	2	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Author’s Computation, 2018**

Table 5 shows Victims response on some of the ways Traffickers used in luring (deceiving) them into human trafficking. Majority of the Victims 17 (56.6%) said they were promised school and scholarship to pursue their education and better opportunities in life, while 11 (36.7%) said they were told of a job opportunity but it turned out to be a ploy to subject them into different form of exploitation. This means that most of the victims were not empowered with relevant information about human trafficking and lack basic means of livelihood which made them vulnerable to deception by Traffickers.

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One of the informants interviewed explained some of the ways in which victims are deceived into human trafficking. He said that: “Indeed, most of the Traffickers or their agents are relations, friends and well known citizens within the community. The peculiar nature of our African culture and tradition which promote extended family system is being exploited by the Traffickers to deceive unsuspecting parents to recruit children (victims) into human trafficking”

Another informant also said that: “Some of the Traffickers who recruit the victims into human trafficking are relations, friends and or business associates. A good number of the Traffickers are mostly people who engage in buying and selling of goods and services within the community. In fact, they are mostly familiar persons to the victims’ families or to the victims themselves”

One of the informants said that: “The Trafficker adequately understand what is happening within the community and this give them the leverage (advantage) to plan strategies on how to lure and convince the unsuspecting victims and their parents or guardians to surrender their children or relations in ‘trust’ to them”

Another informant also said that: “Based on the information available to me, Traffickers are people well known in the community where they recruit unsuspecting victims. In fact, they (Traffickers) sometimes recruit victims through agents; middle men and women who are known and reside in the community. They use this channel to operate under cover. It is on the strength of familiarity that the care givers (guardian and parents) willingly submit their children and some of the victims present themselves to Traffickers and from there the process of human trafficking begins”.

While the above presentation is true, however contrary to the claim above a key informant interviewed said: “there are also instances where some parents send their children to city or towns to work for money for the family, while some victims are sent to the cities without any connection or knowing anybody that will provide accommodation for them. Many of such people many at times fall in the hand of Criminals or Traffickers who deceive them under the guise of helping them to achieve their goals in life or give them a bright future. As a result of this development, one can be entrapped as a victim of circumstances”.

#### **4.2 Nature of Human Trafficking in Sokoto State**

##### ***Table 6: Respondents’ awareness of human trafficking in Sokoto State***

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Yes	132	100.0

**Source: Author's Computation, 2018**

Table 6 shows that all 132 (100%) of the respondents are aware of the incidence of human trafficking in Sokoto State. This means that the respondents studied are aware of contemporary developments with regard to the incidence and nature of human trafficking in Sokoto State. In agreement with the above views, all the key informants attested to the fact that human trafficking exists in Sokoto state. One of the informants interviewed said that: "Trafficking in Sokoto today revolves around poverty and ignorance. Many people do not know that what they are doing constitute human trafficking nor do they know the impact or effects of human trafficking. All they know is that they do not have money and want to have it at all cost in order to meet up the growing needs of their respective families"

Another informant also observed that: "Human trafficking involves activities that results in a forceful or deceitful recruitment and conveyance of persons from one location to another either within or outside the shores or boundary of a Community, State or country for the purpose of exploitation. Human trafficking also means that the person who is involved may not have the capacity to make an informed choice or decision, when the process of trafficking is initiated and sustained"

Also commenting on the practice of human trafficking in Sokoto State, Nigeria, one of the informant interviewed said that: "Human trafficking is modernday slavery; it is more or less about recruitment, transfer and harboring of people for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation could be in form of sexual, labour and even organ harvesting. Many victims of human trafficking from different parts of the country and from neighbouring countries are trafficked into Sokoto as their destination while others only stop-over in Sokoto as a transit route across Niger Republic to Libya-Morocco to Europe. Human trafficking is second only to drug trafficking and armed smuggling. It is an organized crime, most profitable and is very common today in Sokoto State, Nigeria"

The analysis above confirmed the research assumption that suggest that “the nature of human trafficking in Sokoto State Nigeria involved the forceful or deceitful recruitment of young and abled bodied people for prostitution and other forms of exploitation” It also established the objective of this study which seeks to ascertain “the nature of human trafficking in Sokoto State, Nigeria”.

**Table 7: Respondent views on factors responsible for human trafficking in Sokoto State**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Poverty, greed and ignorance	56	42.4
Unemployment and quest for materialism	17	12.9
Illiteracy and lack of western education	5	3.8
Child labour and quest for domestic service	32	24.2
Abuse and exploitation of some children brought into sokoto in the name of ‘Almajiranchi’s	8	6.1
Pornographic and Prostitution business	14	10.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Author’s Computation, 2018**

The table above shows what constitute human trafficking in Sokoto State. The result collected indicated that majority 56 (42.4%) of the respondents said that poverty, greed and ignorance are the major causes of human trafficking, 17 (12.9%) of them said that unemployment and quest for materialism causes human trafficking, 5 (3.8%) of the respondents said that illiteracy and lack of western education, 32 (24.2%) of them blamed prevalence of human trafficking in the State on quest for cheap child labour and domestic services, 8 (6.1%) of them blamed it on the abuse of children brought into Sokoto State in the name of Almajiranchi, While 14 (10.6%) of them blamed the prevalence of human trafficking in the State on the upsurge of political vanguards (hooliganism), Strip/Club Dancers and prostitution as means of wealth acquisition. This means that poverty, greed and ignorance are the major factors that constitute human trafficking in Sokoto state as confirmed by majority of the respondents studied.

Information gathered from the interview conducted shows that majority of the key informants opined that: “Traffickers are primarily engaged in human trafficking as a result of greed, excessive quest for materialism and peer pressure. People nowadays use all available means to make sure they get quick money. The quick money syndrome and the desire to ‘catch up’ with the socio-economic and political status of contemporaries is a factor. Indeed, they are moved by the ostentatious lifestyle of their peers”

In addition another informant sees community’s attitude as a factor motivating Traffickers into human trafficking. She said that: “The community leaders nowadays shy away from their age-long tradition of promoting excellence, morality, dignity of labour and discipline. They nowadays celebrate people who engage in crime such as human trafficking as a business; provided they can donate such ill-gotten wealth towards the need of the individual leaders or for the community. They no longer call to order parent who are in the habit of releasing their children to hawk or beg for alms on the streets without adequate monitoring and supervision. Traffickers most often exploit this lacuna in the society to recruit these vulnerable children on the streets into human trafficking. In fact, some of the leaders and members of the communities assist Traffickers in the process of recruiting victims of human trafficking. This is also an act of greed that needs to be checked”

The informant further stated that: “It is unfortunate that today our sense of moral value and judgment has degenerated to a level that the crime of human trafficking is more or less acceptable in our society. It therefore encourages Traffickers to sustain the business and makes it difficult to curb the prevalence of human trafficking in Nigeria”

Another informant also shared the same views expressed above. He said that: “It is unfortunate that parents send their children to ‘Almajiri’ Schools without knowing who and how the welfare needs of the children will be provided. The Religious Teachers (Mallams) on the other hand, do not know the parent of children placed under their care. As such, in order to relieve themselves from the burden of providing the welfare need of the children (disciples), the ‘Malams’ release the Children into the society to beg for alms in order to supplement the welfare need of the

children (disciples). It is rather unfortunate that some of them are vulnerable and exposed to the risk of being lured, trafficked, abused and exploited”

He went further to state that “Unfortunately the society today accepts human trafficking as a norm; the community no longer frowns at it. The matter is even made worst when members of the community understand that many people, who have been involved in human trafficking, continue in the illegal business without any form of prosecution against them by the law enforcement agencies. This tends to encourage the illicit business”

**Table 8: Respondents views on their knowledge of the prevalence of human trafficking in Sokoto state.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Yes	122	92.4
No	7	5.3
No response	3	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Author’s Computation, 2018**

The table above indicated that an overwhelming majority 122 (92.4%) of the respondents are aware of the prevalence of human trafficking in Sokoto state, 7 (5.3%) of them said they are not aware, 3 (2.3%) of the respondents did not respond. This means that majority of the respondents studied are aware of the prevalence of human trafficking in the State.

One of the informants interviewed provided a perspective on the prevalence of human trafficking in Sokoto thus: “Human trafficking here involves mostly women and children. The prevalence of human trafficking in this state has been a thing of concern, because we have been receiving useful information from some victims which led to the arrest of some Traffickers. The ladies (women) are mostly trafficked to different cities in Nigeria to work as house maids; where they work without opportunity to go to school and some are subsequently trafficked abroad, exploited by their employers and later moved into sex industries, to work as commercial sex workers”

An informant also said that; “the crime rate of human trafficking here is rising day by day because so many people find it difficult to take care of their children or themselves, so they give out their children out to either their relations, family friends and other business associates in the name of House Help, food vendors and other menial jobs as a means of improving family’s income. This turns out to be means of exploitation as some of them are introduced into commercial sex work, pornographic performances and other form of exploitation for the purpose of generating income for the Trafficker. Another dimension is the ‘Almajiri’ Children who are often used to beg for alms, hawk goods on the streets and as domestic servants. Some of these children are at risk of being trafficked and exploited by Traffickers”

Another informant said that:“Sokoto is a strategic international route or border town (gateway) to some countries where Traffickers from different parts of the country explore Sokoto as a transit route to Europe through Niger Republic-Libya-Morocco and across the European coastal waters to Italy, Spain and other European countries”

**Table 9: Respondents view on the incidence of poverty in Sokoto State.**

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	132	100.0

**Source: Author’s Computation, 2018**

Table above shows that al 132 (100.0%) the respondent are aware of the incidence of poverty in Sokoto State. This means that all the respondents studied are aware of the incidence of poverty in Sokoto State. The findings above corroborated with the findings of the interview conducted where all the key informants stressed that poverty in Sokoto state is wide spread across the State. The incidence of Poverty among women and young children is high as they are considered most vulnerable to socio-economic depression.

**Table 10: Correlations of the Relationship between poverty rate and human trafficking**

Variables	VAT	Tax Audit and Investigation
Poverty rate	Pearson Correlation	1
		0.961

	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
	N	132	132
Human Trafficking	Pearson Correlation	0.961	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	
	N	132	132

**Source:** SPSS output

Table 10 above shows that the correlation figure is positive and significant (0.961), therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative accepted that there exist a positive and significant relationship between poverty rate and human trafficking in Sokoto State. This means that, as poverty rate increases, activities of human trafficking also increase.

#### 4.3 Major findings

To ascertain the role of poverty in the prevalence of human trafficking in Sokoto state, the views of 132 (100.0%) of the respondents said they are aware of the high incidence of poverty and human trafficking in Sokoto State, Nigeria. While majority 56 (42.4%) of the respondents said that poverty, greed and ignorance are the major causes of human trafficking, 17 (12.9%) of them said that unemployment and quest for materialism causes human trafficking, 5 (3.8%) of the respondents said that illiteracy and lack of western education, 32 (24.2%) of them blamed the quest for cheap child labor and domestic servants as the factors responsible for the prevalence of human trafficking, 8 (6.1%) see the abuse of children brought into Sokoto in the name of Almajiranchi, as the source of human trafficking and 14 (10.6%) of them see human trafficking as the exploitation of youthful energies and potentials through engaging victims in commercial Prostitution, Strip/Pornographic Performances and political hooliganism.

#### 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Human trafficking has intensified in Sokoto State, Nigeria, due to widespread poverty, economic desperation, greed and ignorance among people in the State. Over the years Traffickers have taken advantage of the proximity of Sokoto as the gateway to neighbouring West and North African countries Enroute Europe, Middle-East and other countries of the world; couple with the high incidence of poverty in the State to recruit people into human trafficking. Based on the findings, the study recommended that, government should formulate policies and programmes

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that would address the effects of poverty, create opportunities and empower the people to be self-reliant and punish erring offenders as a deterrent to other people who engage and drive the crime of human trafficking as a means of wealth creation at all cost.

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