

Interrogating Human Security and Human Trafficking Along Nigeria-Niger Borders 2015-to 2022

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ABSTRACT

Human trafficking is a crime that has persist despite the effort of government in combating the challenge. Various governmental actors at the local, national and international levels have collaborated in combating this menace yet, it still thrives. This has made scholars to beam their searchlight at the factors responsible for its origin and persistence. The Rational Choice Institutional theory was adopted as the theoretical framework. This study aimed at the identifying the causes of this menace between Nigeria and Niger Borders from 2015 to 2022. The Illela and Jibia borderlands in Sokoto and Katsina States in the North-Western Nigeria are the focus of this research. Data was collected through interview as a primary source of data. The qualitative data was analyzed using Nvivo to describe the interview responses. The study concluded that poverty is the major factor that responsible for human trafficking in Nigeria. Poverty among other factors has reduced the economic prospects of individuals as such those desperate for better lives are deceived by traffickers usually offer them employment opportunities and improved livelihoods.

Keywords: Human trafficking, poverty, human security

1. Introduction

Human trafficking poses a significant human security challenge that is proving to be a formidable obstacle for many developing nations. Key stakeholders in the security and justice sectors are actively engaged in endeavours to identify and analyse the underlying factors contributing to the escalating incidence of human trafficking. Prominent entities such as the United Nations, the European Union, and various regional organizations, along with Non-Governmental Organizations, have undertaken collaborative efforts to seek remedies for this pervasive problem.

In the context of Nigeria, the Nigeria Immigration Service and the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons are designated agencies empowered to address this pressing issue. Despite their efforts, however, the prevalence of human trafficking continues to increase. These agencies have apprehended numerous victims and traffickers, establishing camps for the arrest and rehabilitation of victims. Legal actions have been taken against offenders, resulting in convictions and imprisonment; nevertheless, the persistence of this challenge underscores the need for a comprehensive examination. This study aims to assess the factors contributing to human trafficking between Nigeria and Niger from 2015 to 2022.

1.1. Research objectives

To investigate why certain factors account for human trafficking along Nigeria-Niger borders despite various policy implementations,

1.2. Research Questions

Why do some factors account for human trafficking along Nigeria-Niger borders?

2. Literature review

Human trafficking is a major challenge between Nigeria and Niger border which constitute transit point. The menace serves as a problem which is within the purview of human security. Thus, the empirical review of this study is hinged on the two major variable with four empirical referents. Trafficking between national borders are of different strands. The first major strands are forced labor and sexual servitude. Forced labor involves unscrupulous employment, bonded labor, and involuntary servitude. Bonded labor involves debt and bond to keep a victim under subjugation (Office to monitor and combat trafficking in persons, 2008).

Another strand involves involuntary servitude which include abuse of contract, weak laws governing employment or recruitment of migrant labor and when a victim has legal cost or debt imposed on him/her in exploitative manner on a laborer. In addition, involuntary domestic servitude involves trapping of domestic workers in servitude using coercion or force physically or emotional abuse. Forced child labor and child soldier are also part of involuntary servitude. The third strand are sex trafficking and prostitution, child exploitation for commercial sex and child sex tourism. These involuntary servitudes make victims sell their bodies for pittance and proceed taken away by the trafficking network (Office to monitor and combat trafficking in persons, 2008). The study above on forced labor and sexual servitude was conducted in the United States of America to identify and define the challenges of human trafficking in that country. This study benefits from the conceptual and theoretical findings of the work reviewed but differs from it because this work is on Nigeria, which is a developing country.

The forms of human trafficking espoused by the United States Office for the monitoring and combating trafficking in persons are also related to Nigeria and Niger border. The management of these forms of identified human trafficking practice was examined in this study to ascertain whether there are policies in place for combating specific forms of human trafficking between Nigeria and Niger border.

From the review above, broad issues to be handled under forms of human trafficking are forced labor and sexual servitude. Issues under them are unscrupulous employment, bonded labor, abuse of contract, weak laws governing employment or recruitment of migrant labor, victim's legal cost, debt imposition in exploitative manner on a laborer, trapping of domestic workers in servitude, use of coercion or force physically or emotional abuse, forced child labor, child soldier, sex trafficking, prostitution, child exploitation for commercial sex and child sex tourism.

Human security is another variable discussed in this study. The concept of human security is used to refer to the security of human lives. Sakiko and Carol (2012) add that this definition helps to assert the concept's position as the central objective of national and international security policy of nations. This perception is different from the state centered view of human security which has been rejected by scholars over its inability to understand human vulnerabilities in the modern

world. In other word you cannot talk of peace and security without addressing the vulnerable situation that motivate people to crime such as poverty and absent of sustainable livelihood.

According to Kaldor (2007), human vulnerabilities are pervasive and are now under the heavy threats of new wars in a world where non state actors that do not follow the rules of conventional warfare and have no regards for international laws and principles, hold sway. These new wars are not the only threats to human security as other threats such as poverty, diseases, natural disasters, and homelessness among others are dominant in today's world.

Haq (1995) posits that human security is a new paradigm of security. He submits that the world is entering a new era in which the very concept of security will change-and change completely. Security will be interpreted as a people thing, not just about a territory. Security will be based on individuals and not just nations. Security would be guaranteed through development and not through arms. It should include the security of all people everywhere - in their homes, in their jobs, in their streets, in their communities, in their environment" (Haq 1995 p. 115). The contention on this position is that is it possible? The capital outlay to be provided for this mode of securing citizens is likely not to be affordable to the government. It is likely to work out in developed nation, but not in developing nations that are struggling with education, health and agriculture that need more capital outlay. Though it is a possibility if corruption is eliminated in governance of developing countries.

Human security according to Gasper (2010), has become increasingly widely used since the mid-1990s. To Ryerson and Amitav (2008), the concept itself was variously traced to the early 1990s. While the primary focus was on state policies and the search for new international security and development agendas in the post-Cold War era, human security is now increasingly being used in policy advocacy by civil rights and society groups on a broader range of contemporary issues from poverty, civil war to migration, climate change and other issues of human right (O'Brien and others 2010; Gasper 2010).

Although, there are several research programs on human security, there is no universally accepted definition of the concept, and it is still highly contested by scholars in different school of thought. Human security is used in different contexts. Sakiko and Carol (2012) assert that the concept itself originates from the numerous debates about general security when the cold war ended, and the Post-Cold War era began.

The main idea in the different views of human security is that human life is the objective of security policy or the referent object that takes primacy. This is a claim that has serious implications for almost all aspects of theories and practice on security which had for many decades been built around the primacy of the state. The deviation in this regard is primacy of human life as against primacy of the state.

To give the concept a multiple direction Rothschild (1995), adds that human security extends downwards to the security of groups and individuals, mid-wards to states and upward to the collective security of international systems (Rothschild 1995, 55). This position lends credence to theorizing on international security, but yet to trickle down to individuals, except those in the corridors of power in both developed and developing nations of the world.

Modern attempts at conceptualizing human security by different groups of actors for different purposes, agendas, settings, and analysis either in theoretical or practical settings has influenced the lack of consensus on the meaning of the concept. Sakiko and Carol (2012) categorized the

competing groups into two – broad and narrow. To the broad school, human security means people can exercise these choices freely-and that they can be relatively confident that the opportunities they have today will not be lost tomorrow (UNDP 1994, 23).

The broad conception emphasizes on human vulnerability and therefore covers all forms of threats from all sources. This includes, in addition to organized political violence recognized in the narrow concept, other forms of violence, as well as threats of natural disasters, disease, environmental degradation, hunger, unemployment and economic downturn. This group holds that human security is threatened by other factors aside violence, for instance, poverty endangers human life in the same way wars and violent conflicts do. The UN documents on human rights since 1994, the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report (HDR), the European council and the Barcelona Group, the commission on Human security, governments belong to the broad school of thought on human security.

The focal point remains that human security encompasses all threats to human life, freedom, and the dignity of a person. In the light of this, hunger, natural disasters, employment, political suppression, diseases and pandemic, climate change, inequality and bad standard of living are issues of human security because the human life, freedom and dignity is at stake. The character of human security is based on the freedom from fear and freedom from want principle of human rights. Sakiko and Carol (2012) adds that the UNDR (1994) is often identified as the force behind the modern use of the term in modern times and using the difficulty in the conceptualization of other social constructs, the UNDR (1994) asserts that human security as a concept is best identified through its absence than presence.

On the other hand, the narrow school focuses on threats of violence, particularly organized political violence, and is used by the Human Security Network at the UN, the annual Human Security Reports, and academics such as MacFarlane and Khong. They conceive human security as “freedom from organized violence and has two dimensions. Firstly, it is committed by an identifiable perpetrator and secondly, it is not random but rather is organized in a way that makes that violence potent (MacFarlane and Khong 2006, 245). These theorists see all crimes as organized. There could be mob or anomic group who do not know one another. A situation could trigger violence spontaneously as such the second assumption of MacFarlane and Khong (2006) is a logical fallacy.

The UNDR (1994) defines human security in two ways. Firstly, human security refers to the primary safety from existential threats such as hunger, disease, and political and economic repression. Secondly, it means the protection from sudden and abrupt albeit secondary disruptions in the patterns of daily life of an individual irrespective of the settings. These threats can be man-made or natural, from state sources or non-state sources, individual or collective (Sakiko and Carol, 2012). According to the UNDR (1994), human security has 7 important dimensions:

- a) Economic security (an assured basic livelihood derived from work, public and environmental-resources, or reliable social safety nets).
- b) Food security (ready physical and economic access to basic food).
- c) Health security (access to personal healthcare and protective public health regimens).
- d) Environmental security (safety from natural disasters and resource scarcity attendant upon environmental degradation).
- e) Personal security (physical safety from violent conflict, human rights abuses, domestic violence, crime, child abuse, and self-inflicted violence as in drug abuse).
- f) Community security (safety from oppressive community practices and from ethnic conflict).

g) Political security (freedom from state oppression and abuses of human rights).

To add to the definition offered by the UNDP (1994), the Commission on Human Security (CHS) (2003), attempted to formulate a middle ground between the narrow and broad school of thoughts on human security but failed to itemize different threats to human security. Rather, it reiterated the same issues highlighted by the UNDP (1994). The only deviation is the emphasis on the role multiple actors – non state actors – play in the management of human security and people empowerment as important for human security. Balancing the narrow and broad version, the CHS (2003) contends that state security and human security are mutually reinforcing, complementary and dependent on each other.

2.1. Factors responsible for human trafficking

Many scholars have discussed the linkage between human trafficking and human security provisioning. Edoghogho O, (2021) studied the security implications of human trafficking on national development in Nigeria. Qualitative method was used for data gathering. The data was descriptively analyzed using human security as its theoretical prism. The writers argue that human trafficking cannot be ameliorated, when the government is unable to provide the basic needs of citizens in the country. The situation described above breeds unemployment, poverty, hunger, and illiteracy. This serves as pull factor that motivates the migration of persons abroad for better condition of living which human traffickers use as bait for hooking their victims.

Adesina (2013) investigated the linkage between poverty and child trafficking. The study employed restricted opportunity theory which argues that lack of parental support and poverty expose children to the possibility of being trafficked. The study found out that the major causes of child trafficking are poverty, ignorance, unemployment, weak legal framework designed for tackling trafficking and vulnerability of citizens in rural communities to trafficking in Nigeria.

Wuyah and Mailamba (2022) the study investigated the linkage between poverty and the prevalence of human trafficking in Nigeria using Sokoto State as the temporal and spatial preoccupation. Relative Deprivation Theory was used as the focal lenses. Both primary and secondary methods were used for the collection of data. The finding points to the fact that poverty, ignorance, and greed are responsible for human trafficking that is prevalence in the State.

Sawadogo (2012) assessed the weakness of West African regional security framework and the challenges of cooperative in enhancing the rights and dignity of human beings in the subregion. Abiodun, Akinlade, Olumilua and Oladejo (2021) in their paper entitled, the state and challenges of human trafficking in Nigeria: implications for national peace and security posit that Nigeria is an originating, transit, and destination of trafficked victim. Acute poverty, recession in the economy, unemployment, conflicts, prevailing weak legal system, globalization, and inadequate legislation are major causes of human trafficking within and outside Nigeria.

Umana (nd) carried out a research on the forms and effects of human trafficking in Nigeria. In the survey design the study population comprised trafficked Nigerian citizens, staff members of NAPTIP the NGOs working in the area of trafficking and major international collaborators in Nigeria. Drawing sample of 1450 participants using simple random sampling technique, structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The study argued that that the various forms of human trafficking are luring of potential victims with the notion of learning a trade, being enrolled in school, and being provided business opportunities abroad. The mental health of victims

is also impaired as such the trauma they suffer caused them to tend to have low self-esteem, depression, and threat of death as a result of assumed stigmatization by the society.

Iyanda and Osundina (2014) examined youth unemployment and the incidences of human trafficking in Nigeria and the Gambia. The study explored human security provisioning as a theoretical focus. The study measured unemployment using unemployment rate and human security provisioning using food security, poverty rate and purchasing power parity. Comparative survey research design was adopted and both primary and secondary data were sourced. It used ordinary least square estimator of regression analysis. The finding shows that there is inverse relationship between food security youth unemployment in the Gambia. However, purchasing power parity has significant effect on unemployment rate in Nigeria. The study concluded that both countries have high positive association between youth unemployment and the ability of the countries to provide human security. Thus, employment provisioning is the key to stemming the tide of human trafficking in both countries.

2.2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework adopted in this study is Rational Choice Institutionalism. The study of institutions is combined with rational choice perspectives in rational choice institutionalism, a subset of institutional theory. In this method, the influence of institutions on people's behavior and decision-making processes is combined with the presumption that people make rational decisions (Hall and Taylor, 1996). It aims to comprehend how institutions, as systems of laws and regulations, mold the incentives and limitations that political players experience, ultimately affecting their decisions and actions.

The fundamental premise of rational choice institutionalism is that people act in a way that maximizes their utility and bases their judgements on logic. This theory holds that people assess the advantages and disadvantages of several options before deciding on the one that will maximize their expected utility or satisfaction (March and Olsen, 1984). Institutions are important because they give people a framework for evaluating the results of their activities and directing their strategic behavior. Through the formulation of policies and procedures, institutions also have an impact on how players behave. The institutional framework creates the ground principles, outlining what is acceptable and unacceptable in a specific situation. Institutions do this via structuring actors' interactions, decision-making processes, and incentives (Hall and Taylor, 1996). The strategy of political parties, the behaviors of candidates during campaigns, and the level of electoral competitiveness, for instance, can all be significantly impacted by election systems and party financing laws. Rational choice institutionalism is unique in that it emphasizes the study of institutions as equilibrium systems. This perspective's proponents seek to pinpoint the equilibrium outcomes that result from interactions between institutions and actors (Hall and Taylor, 1996). They examine how institutions affect behavioral patterns and the consequences that develop inside a political system by means of their norms and procedures. Researchers can get insights into the stability, evolution, and operation of institutions by comprehending the equilibrium dynamics. Robert Taylor and Peter Hall have significantly influenced the growth of rational choice institutionalism. They present the main ideas of this strategy in their famous work and defend its compatibility with other school of institutionalism (Hall and Taylor, 1996). They emphasis the significance of researching both the formal and informal norms that shape political behavior, as well as the significance of rational actors' strategic decision-making within institutional frameworks.

In conclusion, rational choice institutionalism provides an important paradigm for comprehending how institutional frameworks and rational actor behaviour interact. This method sheds light on how institutions influence people's decision-making and strategic behavior by fusing rational choice theory with the study of institutions. We now understand more about the intricate connection between rationality, institutions, and political outcomes thanks to scholars like Hall and Taylor who helped build the rational choice institutionalism school of thought.

3. Methodology

Data collection entails a procedure(s) of bringing together data through different strategies such as primary or secondary sources to generate information on the proposed subject of study. This study utilized the duo methods to collect data from the study area.

As the name suggests, it is the collection of primary data by the researcher. Primary data advances the researcher's knowledge to better understand the main phenomenon under investigation. The primary data for this study was collected directly from the respondents through interviews. Interview were conducted with personnel of Nigeria Immigration Service, National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the area of human trafficking such Save the Child, Network Against Child Trafficking and Labor (NACTAL), border community members and victims.

The researcher understand interview to revolve round face-to-face interaction between researcher and the informants. In other words, it is a data gathering instrument that shall enable a researcher to collect data through a face-to-face interaction, at times by telephone conversation (Obasi, 1990). Interview is also seen as encounter between a researcher and respondent in which the latter is asked series of questions relevant to the subject of the research. The respondent answers constitute the raw data. Lawal (2006) posits thatthe conversations exploited in the interview serves as rich source of data on the respondent's experiences, opinions, aspirations, and feelings about the research. This method was adopted because it permits wide segment of the population both literate and illiterate ones.

In this study, secondary data collection method was used, and data was also sourced from reports of the Nigerian government, Nigeria Immigration Service, National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), IOM, UNODOC and UNDP reports authentic newspaper reports and statutory documents. Other sources are past literature, journal articles, textbooks and institutional publications and reports, among others, to obtain related information about human trafficking.

A sampling method is the procedure for selecting a sample from a population. That is the target group of individuals from which the sample will be drawn. A sample is the subset of the population being studied. It represents the larger population and use to draw conclusions about such population (Olutayo, 2013).

A sample group are those who take part in the investigation and referred to as participant. Thus, human trafficking, the target group or participants include border security such as Nigerian Immigration Service, National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Person, NGOs and members of border communities who were purposefully selected from the two borders Jibia and Illelah, Zonal and State Offices of NAPTIP in Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina and Kano States and National headquarters of these agencies.

This study adopted purposive sampling techniques, this is a sampling method that is judgmental and subjective in nature. Purposive sampling is non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and objective of the study (Ashley, 2017). A purposive or judgmental is a sample that is selected based on knowledge of the population and purpose of the study (Olutayo, 2013).

In purposive sampling informant are selected according to prescribed criterion established by the researcher. This may include their status or previous knowledge which endowed them with special knowledge of the subject under investigation. Snowball was also used, in snowball sampling, informants were asked to put researcher in touch with their friends or associates. This approach was used to extract information from border securities, NGOs, and human trafficking victims.

A sample is perceived as a set of individuals or participants chosen from a larger population for the purpose of a survey (Glasow, 2005). A moderate sample size is important to minimize high degree of sampling error, thus, this indicates the need for selecting a suitable sampling size. There are several debates on suitable sample size for qualitative research. Most scholars posited that the concept saturation is the most important factor to think about when making sample size decision in qualitative research (Mason, 2010). This is the point at which data collection process no longer offer any new or relevant data Glasser and Strauss (1967) recommends the concept saturation for achieving appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. Other scholars also recommend other guidelines. For ethnography, Morse (1994) suggested approximately 30-50 participants. For grounded theory Morse (1994) suggested 30-50 interviews, while Creswell (1998) suggested only 25-30 for phenomenological studies.

These recommendations can help the researcher estimate numbers of participants needed but the required number of participants should depend on when saturation is reached. The recommendation of Creswell (1998) of approximately 25-30 participants was adopted in this study. The border security concerned with prevention of human trafficking such as NIS and NAPTIP were choosing from the borderline of Jibia and Illelah in Katsina and Sokoto State respectively, in addition States and Zonal Offices were contacted for in-depth interview.

Table 1. Interview schedule for security management personnel

S/n	Code name	Organisation/Status	Designation/Location
1	Inf. ATNAPTIP 1	NAPTIP Zonal Office, Sokoto	Zonal Commandant
2	Inf. ABNAPTIP 2	NAPTIP Zonal Office, Sokoto	Head of Legal Unit, Sokoto Zonal Office
3	Inf. RBGSTC 3	Save The Child	State Coordinator
4	Inf. MHSNIS 4	Nigeria Immigration Service	Chief Superintendent of Immigration
5	Inf. UOANIS 5	Nigeria Immigration Service	Superintendent of Immigration
6	Inf. BINIS 6	Nigeria Immigration Service	Officer, Ilelah-Konni Border
7	Inf. ANAPTIP 7	NAPTIP	Administrative Secretary
8	Inf. BSGNACT 8	Network Against Child Trafficking	Sokoto State coordinator
9	Inf. AANACT 9	Network against Child Trafficking	National President
10	Inf. MBMNIS 10		
11	Inf. ASANAPAT 11	National Agency of Prevention Against Trafficking	Kebbi State Command
12	Inf. LNAPTIP 12	Rescued Victim	NAPTIP office, Kebbi Command
13	Inf. PNAPTIP 13	Rescued Victim	Osun state

14	Inf. AMNIS 14	Nigeria Immigration Service Katsina.	Chief Superintendent of Immigration
15	Inf. UBNIS 15	Nigeria Immigration Service, Kebbi command.	Yauri control post
16	Inf. ABNAPTIP 16	NAPTIP	Zonal Commander Kano
17	Inf. HYNAPTIP 17	NAPTIP Zonal office Kano	Head Investigation /Joint Border Task force
18	Inf. PERV 18	Rescue victim	Imo state
19	Inf. CBARV 19	Victim	Port Harcourt
20	Inf. PARV 20	Rescue victim	Ogun State
21	Inf. PORV 21	Rescue victim	Delta State
22	Inf. IPRV 22	Recued victim	Imo state
23	Inf. AARV 23	Rescued victim	Ogun State
24	Inf. MARV 24	Rescue victim	Ogun State
25	Inf. ABUNIS 25	Nigeria Immigration Service Katsina	Superintendent of Immigration
26	Inf. IMNIS 26	Nigeria Immigration Service Katsina Zone	Assistant Superintendent of Immigration
27	Inf. MANAPTIP 27	NAPTIP	Katsina Command
28	Inf. HERV 28	Rescued Victim	NAPTIP office, Katsina Command
29	Inf. AINIS 29	Nigeria Immigration Service Katsina.	Officer
30	Inf. MDFV 30	Food Vendor Kongolon	Kongolon Border
31	Inf. FARM 31	Resident	Jibiya Resident Magama
32	Inf. KIRM 32	Resident Mai Mujiya Trader	Mai Mujiya Niger
33	Inf. IUOR 33	Resident Magama/ Okada Rider	Jibiya
34	Inf. AATK 34	Koglon	Teacher
35	Inf. SMISK 35	Islamic Scholar	Kongolon
36	Inf. JJPK 36	Pastor	Kongolon

A total of 36 interviews were conducted officially. However, other sideline interviews were conducted to check for deviant responses from other respondents. Suspects in the custody of security agencies were also interviewed during the field work.

The data collected was analyzed using thematic content analysis. The interviews were interpreted, transcribed, and analyzed. Patton (2002:6) defines content analysis as “any qualitative data reduction and sense making effort that takes a volume of qualitative materials and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings”. With the use of this technique, the research descriptively analyze data systematically and objectively, making valid textual inferences from them by identifying specific characteristics as they relate to human trafficking, border management and human Security provisioning which are the crux of the study. The findings from the border communities was comparatively analyzed to bring out the emerging patterns in human trafficking crimes because of varying factors that exist in the communities. The analysis was carried out using NVivo 12 software. The analysis turned out four themes, several sub-themes and sub-sub themes.

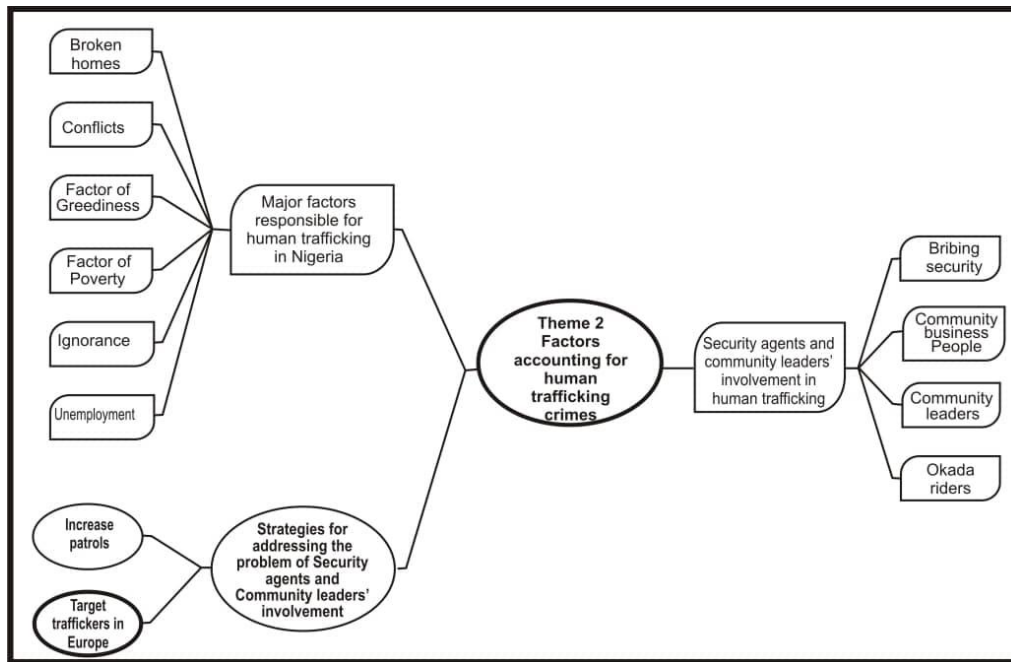
Results

4.1. Factors Accounting for Human Trafficking Crimes:

Human trafficking is a complex crime influenced by a multitude of factors that contribute to its occurrence. Poverty and economic disparities create vulnerable conditions where individuals are desperate for better opportunities. Traffickers exploit this vulnerability by promising jobs,

education, or a better life, only to subject victims to exploitation. Conflict zones and regions with political instability provide fertile ground for human trafficking to thrive. Displaced populations, breakdown of social structures, and weakened law enforcement create an environment conducive to trafficking activities. This perception was also discovered in the study's finding as shown in the figure 1.

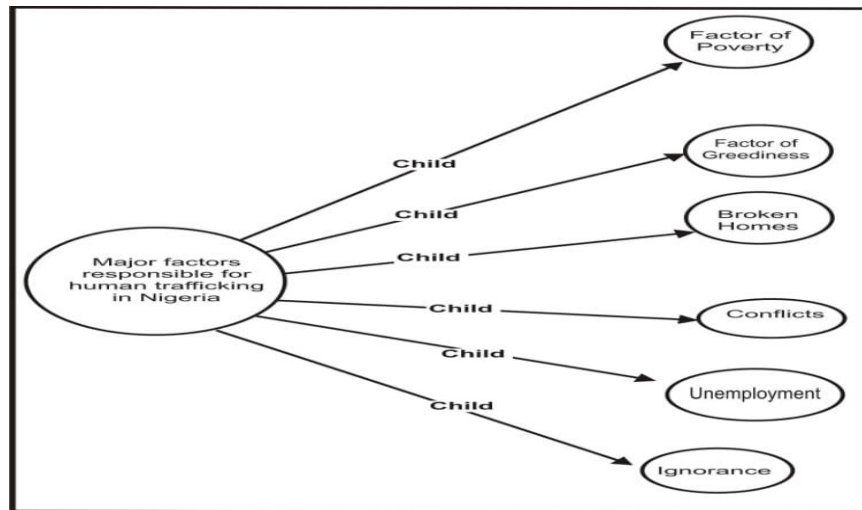
Figure 1: Theme 2 main findings on factors accounting for human trafficking crimes



4.2. Major Factors Responsible for Human Trafficking in Nigeria

Understanding Major factors responsible for human trafficking in Nigeria is crucial for developing effective strategies to combat trafficking and support its victims. Widespread poverty, unemployment, and limited economic opportunities are key drivers of human trafficking. Many individuals, particularly from rural areas, are lured by promises of employment or better lives, only to be trafficked and exploited. Corruption within law enforcement agencies and weak governance create an environment where traffickers can operate with minimal risk of prosecution. Bribery and collusion enable traffickers to evade detection and perpetuate their criminal activities. In line with the objective of this study, the major factors responsible for human trafficking in Nigeria were identified in the findings and discussed in the subsequent sections as sub sub-themes as depicted in figure 4.24.

Figure2: Findings on major factors responsible for human trafficking in Nigeria



4.2.1. Broken Homes

Broken homes, characterized by disrupted or dysfunctional family structures, can contribute to the vulnerability of individuals to human trafficking in Nigeria. While it is not a direct cause of trafficking, it can create circumstances that increase the risk of exploitation.

Broken homes often result in a lack of parental guidance, supervision, and emotional support for children. This can leave children vulnerable to external influences and manipulation by traffickers who exploit their emotional needs and offer false promises of a better life. The issue of broken home as a factor responsible for human trafficking in Nigeria was identified in this study. For instance, one of the rescued victims, informant AARV 23 narrated it thus:

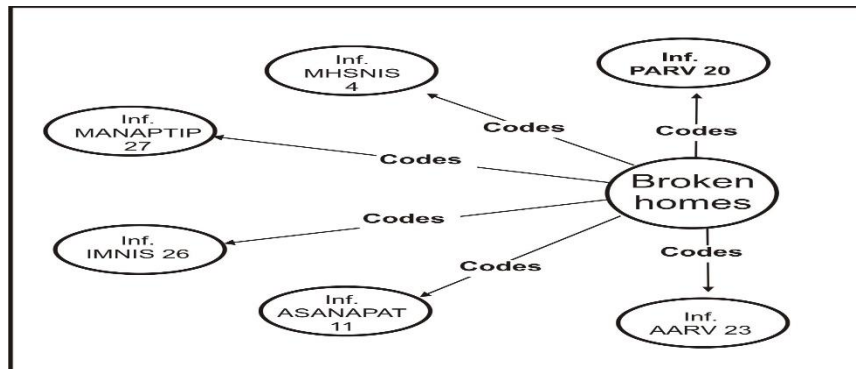
Our mother and father are separated I learned hair dressing and work to help my mother life was so difficult so a friend in Libya linked us up with a lady in Libya who ask us to send our pictures and later arranged for us to travel to Libya by sending us money for the journey unfortunately we found our self in this situation.

Corroborating this perception, one of the source, informant ASANAPAT 11 said, “There are many factors or causes exposing victims to human trafficking such as broken home”. In the same vein that Informant IMNIS 26 briefly describes it thus:

Another issue is that broken home where the two parents separated. Recently, some girls were rescued who confessed that she was exposed to this crime because their parents were separated, their father abandoned them, and their mother could not cope to provide for them.

Also confirming this, informant MHSNIS 4 disclosed that, “Another thing is broken homes as narrated by some victims who claim their father and mother were not together and they were neglected by their father”. Buttressing this observation, Informant PARV 20, one of the rescued victims, stressed that, “I am from a family of 5, my mother and father are separated I learned hair dressing and work to help my mother life was so difficult”.

Figure 3: Perception on broken homes as a major factor responsible for human trafficking in Nigeria



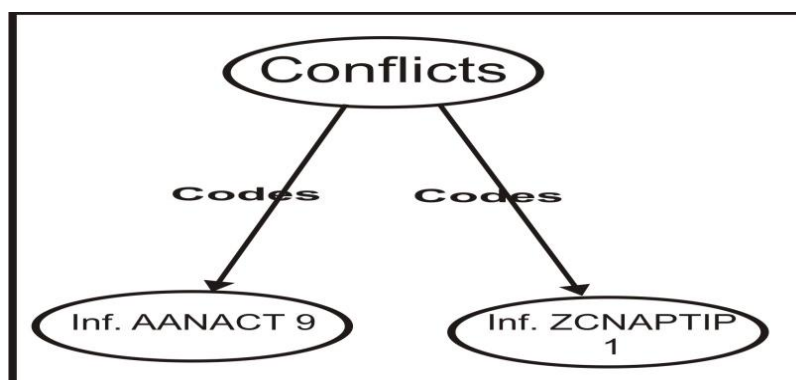
4.2.2. Conflicts

Conflicts, particularly ongoing and protracted ones, significantly contribute to the prevalence of human trafficking in Nigeria. Conflicts disrupt communities, displace populations, and create conditions of instability and insecurity. Displaced individuals, including women, children, and marginalized groups, are particularly vulnerable to trafficking. They may be forced to leave their homes and communities, losing their support systems and becoming easy targets for traffickers who exploit their desperation and lack of protection. In relation to this, informant AANACT 9 copiously disclosed thus:

Conflict, Insurgency, and Insecurity has also expose people to trafficking. Fifteen years ago, we never received children from North-East but in the last 4 years we have received over 5000 victims from the North-East largely because of insecurity and displacement by the Boko Haram and now the trend is shifting to the North-West because of banditry and cattle rustling in the region. The situation is now forcing them to move to Algeria in the name of mining, there's a lot of people from Zamfara who were there to engage in mining and are now forced to move to Algeria. Last week I was in Maiduguri where about 120 displaced people returned from Algeria, they are majorly from Borno, Yobe and Gombe state.

Buttressing this observation, Informant ZCNAPTIP 1 stressed that, “Displacement because of insecurity and banditry were the major cause. The IDPs camps usually serve as recruitment centres for human trafficking”.

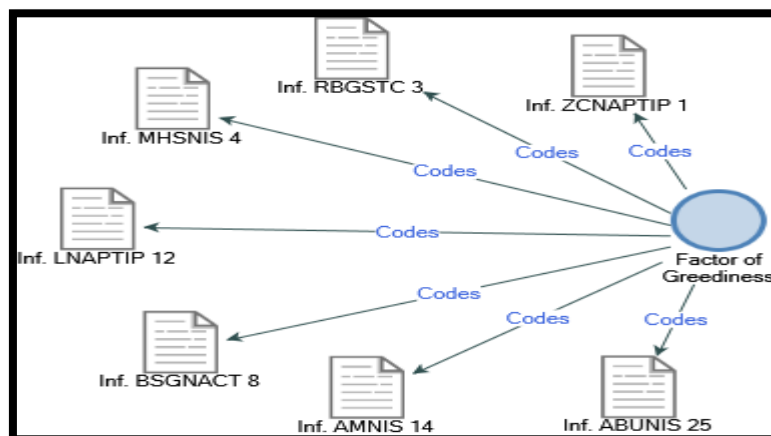
Figure 4: Perception on conflicts as a major factor responsible for human trafficking in Nigeria



4.2.3. Factor of Greediness

While greediness itself may not be a direct factor responsible for human trafficking in Nigeria, it can contribute to the facilitation and perpetuation of trafficking activities. Greediness, often exhibited by traffickers and individuals involved in trafficking networks, can drive their motivation for financial gain and exploitation. Expressing the view on greediness of the family and the victims, informant ABUNIS 25 highlighted that, “greed have led many people to think that there is a greener pasture in traveling abroad. Greed is another factor, for example the case of a nurse who was trafficked even though she was happily employed”. Conforming this, informant AMNIS 14 also disclosed that, “Exacerbated by poverty, greed, and search for greener pasture”. Raising the salient points that confirmed the issue of greediness, informant BSGNACT 8 stated thus, “Greed is another factor driving the business as even people who are self-employed or have white collar jobs tend to abandon their job and expose themselves to human trafficking, Insecurity and displacement”. From the perspective of one of the rescued victim, informant LNAPTIP 12 disclosed that, “I am quite aware of the risk involved but I don’t have other alternative to bring out my family from this present predicament”. This viewpoint is reflected in the perceptions of other interviewees such as MHSNIS 4, RBGSTC 3, and ZCNAPTIP 1 respectively.

Figure 5: Perception on greediness as a major factor responsible for human trafficking in Nigeria



4.2.4. Factor of Poverty

Poverty is a significant factor that contributes to human trafficking in Nigeria. The relationship between poverty and trafficking is complex, as poverty creates conditions of vulnerability that make individuals more susceptible to exploitation. High levels of poverty in Nigeria result in limited access to education, healthcare, and formal employment opportunities. This lack of economic prospects leaves individuals desperate for better lives and susceptible to the false promises of traffickers who offer employment or opportunities for improved livelihoods. Addressing the root causes of poverty is essential in combating human trafficking. Efforts should focus on poverty alleviation, improving access to education and vocational training, promoting economic empowerment, and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities. This critical factor that is influencing human trafficking was confirmed by informant AANACT 9 who said, “Vulnerability because of poverty, uneven distribution of resources which place some segment of society in disadvantage situation particularly rural dwellers”. Another confirmation of this was by one of the rescued victims, informant AARV 23 who said: Life was so difficult so a friend in Libya linked us up with a lady in Libya who asked us to send our pictures and later arranged for us to travel to Libya by sending us money for the journey unfortunately we found our self in this situation.

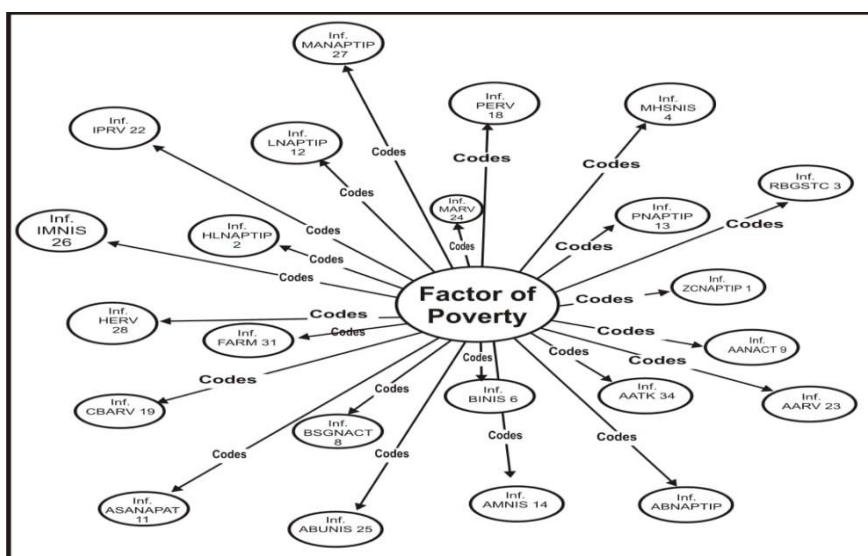
Raising the salient point on the issue of poverty as a factor for human trafficking, informant AATK 34 said, “because of the poverty rate and high rate of unemployment people were easily recruited”. Corroborating this perspective, Informant ABNAPTIP 16, also expressed his perspective saying: As a source most of the victims are lured to be taken to Saudi Arabia to work in their house hold and because of the religion status of Saudi Arabia many victims are easily mobilised. The major recruitment derived in the North is different from that of the South -West and South-South. Here they are lured with promise of Saudi Arabia and they end up in Oman, Lebanon, Dubai and other middle-east countries. Many have attributed it to poverty and that may be true but not completely so because i see greediness playing a role in this. For example, last week the Jigawa State Immigration Command hand over 8 victims to us and two of them were sheltered here, counsel and rehabilitated and yet still go ahead to be trafficked after all empowerments.

Justifying poverty as a significant factor that contributes to human trafficking in Nigeria, informant ABUNIS 25 succinctly disclosed that, “The level of unemployment in the country is also pushing the population to engage in this act”. This viewpoint is reflected in the perception of interviewee, Informant BINIS 6 who explicitly said: They are usually deceived by promise of good jobs and better life by the traffickers. A shocking example is the case of a girl rescued by us some months ago who says she was recruited because of poverty her mother is facing as a result of separation from her father, she is a professional event manager but need capital to start which her mother cannot afford and nobody to help so she chose the path of travelling abroad to raise funds to support her family.

Buttressing this observation, Informant HERV 28, a rescued victim narrated why poverty justified her ordeal thus: I am 23 years old girl from Anambara state from a family of four. I lost my father and I have been battling together with my mother to hold the family together without assistance from our relatives or friend. So, in order to generate fund, I decided to travel to Another Country Libya so that I can support the family to put food on the table. However, I can do anything, I don't have other alternative to bring out my family from this present predicament.

Numerous other informants expressed the same position of poverty as the reason for thriving human trafficking to Europe from Nigeria.

Figure 6: Perception on poverty as a major factor responsible for human trafficking in Nigeria



4.2.5. Ignorance

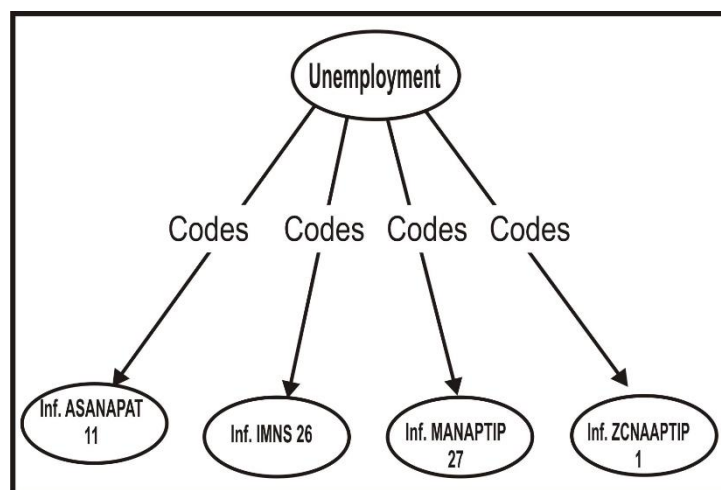
Ignorance can indeed be a contributing factor to human trafficking in Nigeria, as it creates an environment where people are vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation. Many individuals, particularly those from rural or marginalized communities, may not be fully aware of the risks and dangers associated with human trafficking. They may not understand the tactics used by traffickers or the potential consequences of falling into their traps. Without this knowledge, people are more likely to be lured into situations that can lead to trafficking. This was confirmed by informant HYNAPTIP 17 who said:

Ignorance and lack of awareness is one of the reasons why people are moving out of the country. From experience those who returned back are now given testimony that Nigerian is a heaven and one of the best country on earth. Collapse in the religion and family values before now values are being taught to children on what is good and bad and now a days children picked the values from television and this make them vulnerable to trafficking by traffickers and criminals. For instance, our value and religion forbid prostitution, yet our people go for them because of absent of these family and religion values.

4.2.6. Unemployment

Unemployment is indeed a significant factor contributing to human trafficking in Nigeria. High level of unemployment create an environment of economic vulnerability, which traffickers exploit to recruit and exploit individuals. A lack of employment opportunities, particularly for young people, increases the likelihood of falling into the hands of traffickers. When individuals are unable to find legitimate jobs, they may become desperate and willing to consider risky alternatives that traffickers present as employment opportunities. Among the sources who identified unemployment as the reason for human trafficking was informant ASANAPAT 11 who said, “unemployment is all contributory factor to human trafficking”. Expressing it in another way, informant IMN IS 26 said, “The strategy used in luring them is usually deception for jobs and scholarship”. In a similar manner, Informant MANAPTIP 27 revealed that, “unemployment is all contributory factor to human trafficking”. Justifying this claim, informant ZCNAPTIP 1 disclosed thus, “The level of unemployment in the country is also pushing the population to engage in this act”.

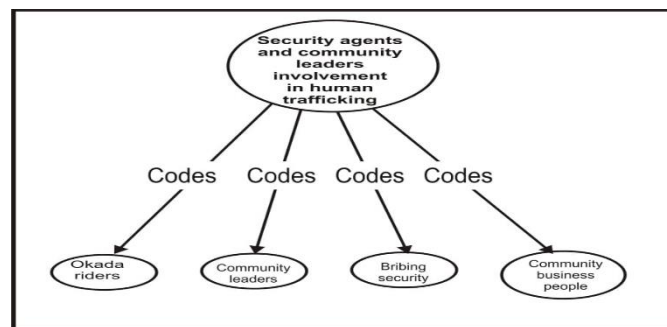
Figure 7: Perception on unemployment as a major factor responsible for human trafficking in Nigeria



4.3. Security agents and community leaders' involvement in human trafficking

It is important to note that while some security agents play a vital role in combating human trafficking, unfortunately, there have been instances where security agents themselves have been involved in facilitating or participating in human trafficking activities. In some cases, security agents, such as border patrol officers, police officers, or immigration officials, may be susceptible to bribery or corruption. Traffickers may exploit this vulnerability by offering bribes to facilitate the movement of victims across borders or turning a blind eye to trafficking activities. Some security agents may knowingly or unknowingly facilitate illegal migration, which can be a precursor to human trafficking. They may neglect their duties to properly screen individuals at borders or fail to enforce immigration laws, allowing traffickers to transport victims across borders undetected. In certain instances, community leaders may be directly involved in human trafficking by organizing and facilitating the trafficking of individuals. They may use their positions of influence and power to recruit, transport, or exploit victims for labor or sexual purposes.

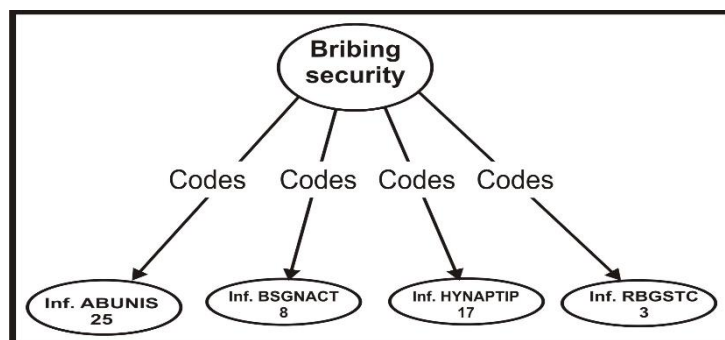
Figure 8: Security agents and community leaders' involvement in human trafficking



4.3.1. Bribing security personnel

Bribing security personnel is unfortunately a common tactic used by human traffickers to facilitate their illegal activities. Traffickers may bribe security agents, such as border patrol officers, police officers, or immigration officials, to overlook or assist in the trafficking process.

Figure 9: Perceptions on bribing of Security agents and community leaders'



Traffickers may bribe border patrol officers or immigration officials to allow the safe passage of trafficking victims across borders without proper documentation or scrutiny. Confirming this, informant ABUNIS 25 declared that, "We formed a surveillance team made up of community members, but they end up conniving with the traffickers and not doing anything positive". Another

confirmation was from informant BSGNACT 8 who said, “Corruption among security agents”. Similarly, informant HYNAPTIP 17 testified thus, “Corruption among the security agency”. In relation to this perception, Informant RBGSTC 3 said, “corruption among the security who are supposed to fight the menace”.

4.3.2. Community business people

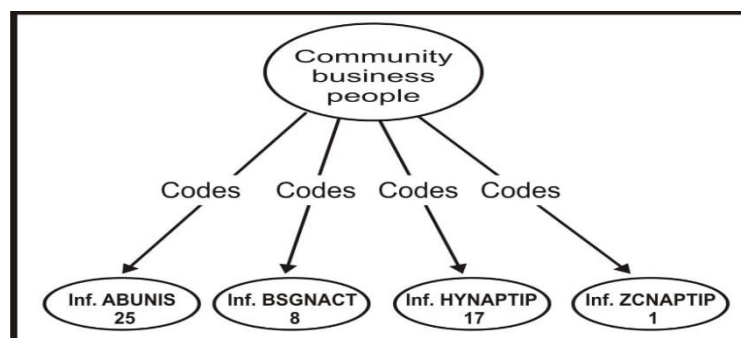
Community leaders involved in human trafficking may be driven by financial incentives. They may benefit financially from the exploitation of victims, either through direct involvement or by accepting bribes or kickbacks from traffickers. Another dimension to this problem is the involvement of people who are making money out of human trafficking flow in the community. According to informant ABUNIS 25, “The communities also aid trafficking because they see it not as crime but business”. Establishing this fact, informant BSGNACT 8 disclosed that, “There are syndicate who conduct this business”. Corroborating this perception, informant HYNAPTIP 17 went further to identify the communities involved thus:

These border communities like Babura, Kongonlon, Jibia Baba-Mutum use these as business and that is why they engaged in trafficking and use their motorcycle for this business because of the huge gain in it. In 2021 in baban mutum, we raid community. Baban mutum and arrest 6 suspects of human trafficking but our sensitization is helping in reducing the crime.

In the same vein Informant ZCNAPTIP 1 elaborately described how some communities’ members operate in this illicit business thus:

The fact is that the motorcycles are bought by the rich men in Illelah and are distributed to the riders who use them in conveying the traffic victims across the Illelah-Konni boarder through the numerous unmanned routes to avoid and outsmart the security checks at the border. The communities also aid trafficking because they see it not as crime but business.

Figure 10: Perceptions on communities’ business people involvement in human trafficking



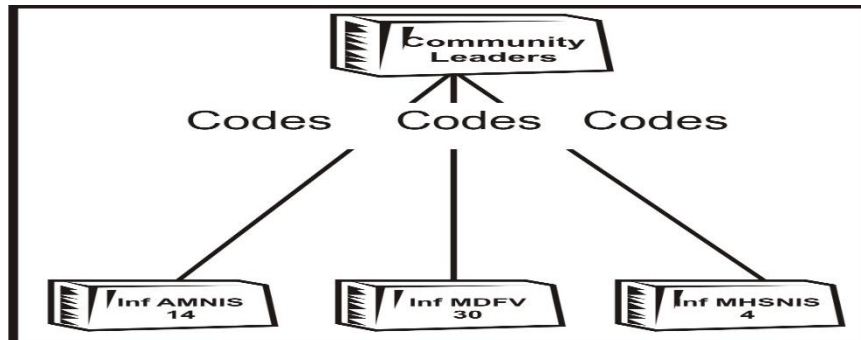
4.3.3. Community leaders

Community leaders sometimes provide protection or cover for traffickers operating within their communities. They might intentionally ignore or downplay the presence of trafficking activities, making it easier for traffickers to operate without scrutiny. Aside the involvement of business people in the communities, the leaders in those communities are also involved. According to informant AMNIS 14, “The victims use the porous border and with the connivance and assistance of members of the border community”. Similarly, informant MDFV 30 said, “The activities of Human Trafficking in this area is a thing of concern that government need to take adequate

measure to cube. The traffickers usually connive with some community people to engage in such devilish acts”. Confirming this, one of the security agencies at the border towns, informant MHSNIS 4 highlighted that:

There are cases of human trafficking here, we have made several arrests despite that many were carried out using the unmanned routes with the aid of community members for financial gain. The communities at the border always aid the crime as they guide the traffickers and victims in utilizing porous borders.

Figure 10: Perceptions on communities’ leaders’ involvement in human trafficking



4.3.4. Okada riders’ involvement in human trafficking

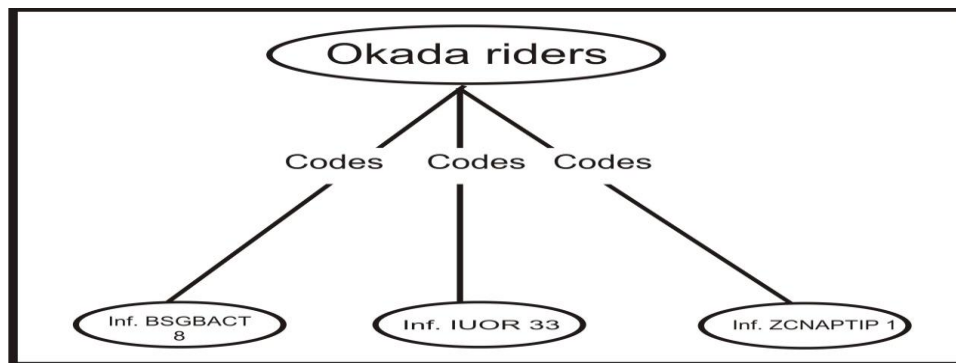
Commercial motorcycle transporters known in Nigeria as “Okada riders” often play a significant role in human trafficking, as they provide the means to transport victims from one location to another. While not all transporters are involved in trafficking, there are instances where transporters knowingly or unknowingly participate in or facilitate human trafficking. Worth mentioning specifically are the popular motorcycle riders in the border communities who are used mainly to transport human trafficking victims across borders and to escape the security agencies. Confirming this is informant BSGNACT 8 who reiterated that, “victims of trafficking are aided by commercial motorcycle riders (Okada), who are sponsored and supported by some influential people in the border communities”. In relation to this, Informant IUOR 33 expressed his own worries thus:

The Okada riders contribute immensely to human traffickers because most of the riders are agent of traffickers who survey the area and give them information on how to escape. Because they usually receive a lot of money from traffickers. Despite the sanction and security measures put in place

Buttressing these challenges which emanate from the commercial motorcyclists in the border towns, informant ZCNAPTIP 1 copiously revealed thus:

In fact, one of their agent in Illelah was reacting to the community surveillance group set up by NAPTIP saying that “It is their business and nobody can stop them from doing it”. That is why you see that the number of motorcycles in Illejah is more than the population of the town itself. In Fact, the trafficking victims are conveyed by the Okada riders through the unmanned routes. Also, the banned rice is everywhere in this community, yet the customs cant apprehends anyone because the community will resist.

Figure 11: Perceptions on okada riders' involvement in human trafficking



5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the major factors responsible for human trafficking across borders are unemployment, poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and lack of parental support. Other causes are greed, weak legal framework designed for tackling trafficking and vulnerability, weakness of West African regional security framework and the challenges of cooperation in enhancing the rights and dignity of human beings in the sub-region. Recession in the economy, conflicts, globalization inadequate legislation and luring of potential victims with the notion of learning a trade, being enrolled in school, and being provided business opportunities abroad. Added to the foregoing factors are also near absence of human security provisioning in form of food security and purchasing power parity which are responsible for human trafficking prevalence between Nigeria and Niger.

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