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2022/2023 PhD Thesis Abstract

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RT: Legal Response to Human Trafficking in Nigeria: the Promise and the Reality

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AB: Human trafficking is a complex global problem that violates human rights and undermines public health and safety. Nigeria is a source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking, where women and children are particularly vulnerable despite government intervention. In Nigeria, the 'Not for Sale' campaign is one of many public awareness initiatives the government has initiated to combat human trafficking. However, due to low funding and lack of awareness, especially by those in rural areas where trafficking is rampant, the impact of these initiatives has been limited. Previous studies have shown that human trafficking has serious effects on victims, their families, and the politico-economy of the country with less emphasis on how this menace can be effectively curbed legally. This study therefore examined the legal response to human trafficking in Nigeria and evaluated the promise by the government and the reality in practice.

This study employed an embedded exploratory design. The population was 735 participants which comprised of 700 lawyers, five human trafficking victims, and 30 staff of National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Lagos Zonal Command were purposively selected, which made up the sample size. A structured and validated questionnaire was used to collect data from 700 lawyers and 30 staff of NAPTIP for the quantitative data. While the qualitative data was collected from purposively selected staff of NAPTIP and Human trafficking victims. Secondary Data were further obtained from Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended); Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement, Administration Act, 2015 and case laws on human trafficking. The response rate of 91% was recorded. The data collected qualitatively and quantitatively were analysed separately using descriptive (percentage) statistics, then integrated at the interpretation stage.

This study found that 80% of the respondents agreed that they were aware of the measures put in place by the government to curb human trafficking in Nigeria, but only 40% agreed that these measures have had the desired effect. This study found that Nigeria has made significant legal efforts to combat human trafficking, including the enactment of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act in 2015. However, secondary study found that implementation of these laws has been hampered by a lack of political will, corruption, inadequate funding, inadequate collaboration and synergy between government agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The interview result found that victims of human trafficking faced various challenges, including stigmatization and lack of access to justice.

The study concluded that the legal efforts made to combat human trafficking has not had the desired effect. This study recommended that the Nigerian government should increase funding for anti-trafficking efforts, improve collaboration between government agencies like NAP TIP and other NGOs, provide adequate support services for victims of trafficking, and enhance law enforcement efforts.

Keywords: Human trafficking, Legal response, Nigerian government, Poor implementation, Vulnerable victims

Word Count: 460

Abbreviations: RFN: Researcher's Full Name, RD: Researcher's Department, RS: Researcher's School, RE: Researcher's Email, RAE: Researcher's Alternate Email, RP: Researcher's Phone Contact, RT: Registered Title, MS: Main Supervisor, ME: Main Supervisor's E-mail Address, SP: Main Supervisor's Phone Contact, CS: Co-Supervisor, CE: Co-Supervisor's E-mail Address, CP: Co-Supervisor's Phone Contact, AB: Abstract

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