

## **HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND ITS EFFECTS ON NATIONAL IMAGE: THE NIGERIAN CASE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper deals with human trafficking as a phenomenon of modern slavery. It specifically deals with human trafficking as a contemporary social problem in Nigerian society, and examines its effects on the country's national image. Human trafficking 'involves deceiving or coercing someone to move either within a country or abroad through legal or illegal channels for the purpose of exploiting him or her'. Human trafficking involving Nigerians gave rise to the movement of thousands of Nigerians mainly through land routes to North Africa, Middle East and Europe for the purpose of prostitution and servile labour, involving children and youths. The incidence of human trafficking involving many Nigerians began in 1990s as a result of the decline in the economy of the country and consequent increase in unemployment, poverty, inflation, low wages and general social misery among the masses. Consequently, many Nigerians especially the unskilled youths began to venture into Europe, Middle East and lately Asia in search of better economic opportunities. Some perished in the course of the adventure, while others who got to their destinations found themselves engaging in certain odd jobs, prostitution or crime. Human trafficking has negative effects on Nigeria's image and has necessitated the establishment of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) by federal government, and in collaboration with some organizations to stem the tide. But the ugly phenomenon still persists. Human trafficking creates impression that the country is incapable of providing for the comfort of her citizens, especially the vibrant youths who seek for favorable economic opportunities and comfortable social life. It also debases Nigerian womanhood as many Nigerian girls are allegedly involved in underground sex industry in Europe. Besides, the deportation of many Nigerian citizens from foreign countries casts aspersion on the country's national character. Human trafficking also frustrates the effort towards achieving the country's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) especially with respect to education as many Nigerian children engage in child labour within and outside the country without prospect of benefiting from formal education. Moreover, brain drain which is a dimension of human trafficking deprives Nigeria of the services of her indigenous experts necessary for rapid national development.