

The Dark Side of Migration Remittances and Development: The Case of Edo Sex Trade in Europe

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Migrants' remittances outflow to developing nations has gained wide attention in recent times. This is due to the fact that it has surpassed the amount in total aid money from developed nations to these developing nations. According to World Bank estimates in 2011 remittances by migrants in the United Kingdom to India is 4billion USD compared to 450million USD aid to the country in that same year¹. When looked at in real terms it means how much impact these money can have on the developmental strides of developing countries in the long and short run. The remittance flow to developing nations in 2008 was put at 336 billion US dollars and in 2009 it was 316 billion US dollars from developed countries.² These remittances have in no small way had increased positive impact on the ways of life of persons and relatives living in these less developed countries. It is a relief to many homes from the grip of intense poverty. But the question is how much of these remittances are from legitimate and morally right sources? This paper seeks to look at remittances from Europe to Edo state of the federal republic of Nigeria and analyse the possible sources of remittances that have had an impact on the lives of the peoples of Edo state.

Keywords: migration, remittances, human trafficking, human traffickers and sex trade.

1. Introduction

The interconnectivity between migration and development is not a new phenomenon. The periods before the industrial revolution between the mid sixteenth century and the 1820's brought about the uprooting of people from their homes in coastal parts of West Africa to provide the needed manpower for the development of societies in the Europe and America. This was a form of forced migration known as the period of transatlantic slave trade. An estimated 12million slaves were moved out of Africa.³ The twin pronged trajectory of resistance movements by the slaves and rights activists of that time and redundancy occasioned by industrial revolution meant that the services of the slaves was no longer needed, led the abolition of slave trade. Many had to be returned to Africa to the coastal region which is today known as Liberia and Sierra Leone. However many remained, this influenced the composition of American and Caribbean populations of African descent who are mostly descendants of African slaves.⁴

¹ Ratha Dillip & Sonia Plaza, *Diaspora and Development: Critical Issues*, in India Migration Report, Irudaya Rajan. S. (Ed), India and London, Routledge, 2014 See <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/jan/30/migrants-billions-overshadow-aid> (3 May 2016).

² Dillip Ratha & Sanket Mohapatra & Ani Silwal, *Outlook for Remittance flow 2010 to 2011; Remittance outflow to developing nations remained resilient in 2009 expected to recover during 2010-2011*, Migration and Development Brief; Migration and Remittances Team Development Prospect Group, World Bank, 2010.

³ David Eltis & David Richardson, *The Numbers Game*, in David Northrup, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, 2nd edn, Houghton Mifflin Co. 2002, p. 95.

⁴ M. C. Waters & P. Kasinitz & L. Asad, *Immigrants and African Americans*, *The Annual Review Of Sociology*, 2014, 10th March 2016.

In October 1961 the first bilateral agreements to move Turkish guest workers to West Germany was reached between Germany and Turkey, as Germany needed young men to work in its post-World War 2 booming economy. The migration of Turkish workers was by individual and small group responses to the initiatives of German and other business enterprise.⁵ Workers were also attracted from countries like Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain and Yugoslavia.⁶ Some immigrants outsourcing were born out of colonial relationships between the colonies and the colonial masters. Evidences of these are the North and some of West Africans origins in France, Indians, Pakistani, Nigerians Ghanaians and others from former British Colonies in the United Kingdom⁷. The important point here is that these migrants and host relationships have imparted on the development of these developed nations in no small way.

The focus of migration and development today is the amount of remittances migrants living and working in host developed nations are sending back to their home countries. The United Nations says it was more than the entire sum of aid from these developed nations to developing nations. This influenced the interest of the UN in the Global Forum on Migration and Development which was inaugurated in Belgium in 2007. This forum is not a creation of the United Nations but its relevance has made the United Nation an active participant in the forum. The United Nations *Secretary General recognized that "one of the main achievements of the Global Forum has been its focus on the contributions of international migration to development and on building better understanding and collaboration among countries linked by migration; that the meetings of the Global Forum on Migration and Development have successfully engaged both Governments and the multilateral system in realizing the benefits of international migration for development and is collaborating to address its potentially detrimental effects"*⁸.

*Regardless of their origin and the causes of the relocation of almost 200 million migrants worldwide, their productivity and earnings constitute a powerful force for poverty reduction. Remittances are the financial counterpart to migration and are the most tangible contribution of migrants to the development of their areas of origin.*⁹ According to the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2007 formal inflow of remittances to Nigeria was 17.9 billion USD representing 6.7% of the GDP, with the United States of America being the highest remittance sending country, followed by the United Kingdom, Italy, Canada, Spain and France¹⁰

⁵ Gündünz Atalik & Brian Beeley, *What Mass Migration has meant for Turkey*, in Russell King (Ed), *Mass Migration in Europe: The Legacy and Future*, John Wiley & Sons, Sussex England, pp. 156-173, 1993.

⁶ German missions in the United States of America History of guest workers. Immigration of foreign workers. <http://www.germany.info/Vertretung/usa/en> (1 February 2016).

⁷ Erik Bleich, *The legacies of history; Colonization Immigrant Integration in Britain and France* 2005, Springer.

⁸ United Nations General Assembly, 65th session, *International Migration and Development*, Report of the Secretary-General 2nd August 2010 p. 14.

⁹ Vargas Rosemary & Maecella Villareal & Guillaume Lanly & Martha Osorio, *International Migration Remittance and Rural Development*, International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2008, IFAD p. 6.

¹⁰ Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), *The Remittance Environment in Nigeria*, Unpublished report of a study by the Research & Statistics Department, Abuja, 2007, Cited in Adejumoke A. & IOM research division, *Migration Trends in Nigeria; A Country Profile* 2009, IOM Switzerland 2009.

2. Factors Influencing Migration

Discourses on migration have identified two major factors responsible for migration. According to Ghaffari and Singh The centripetal and centrifugal forces otherwise known as push-pull are factors that could compel people to migrate.¹¹

The push factors are those challenges in the country of origin of the migrant that causes him to move out. These factors range from economic, political, cultural and religious. Economics have been identified as the major push factor responsible for why people migrate. These range from unemployment, underemployment draught, famine these challenges that produce poverty and encourage rural out-migration.¹² According to the International Labour Organization, the greater number of international migrants of over 100 million has left their homes to find better jobs and opportunities for their families abroad. Migrants tend to move to places where they can receive added value for their services.

Other push factors are political instability, civil strife, wars, ethnic and religious persecutions, infringements on human rights. Immigrants who fall under these categories are considered as asylum seekers who become refugees if their application for asylum is positive. This is based on the 1951 convention relating to the status of Refugees. Studies have shown that because of better integration packages for refugees as against economic migrants many would rather claim to be refugees or asylum seekers so that they can enjoy more favourable integration packages.¹³

Pull factors have been identified as those factors in the destination country that pull migrants to it, these range from political stability, stable and growing economic environment, availability of jobs, modern infrastructure, higher life expectancy, access to justice and human rights. De Haas posits that there is usually urban ward migration where more commercial business takes place.¹⁴ A lot have also migrated on technically incorrect information, based on ideas, perception and deceptive information from human traffickers.

3. Nigerian Migration Trends Pull and Push Factors

Nigeria like most developing countries of the world has faced a myriad of political problems. This has in no small way imparted on its development. The country's dependence on oil has made it impossible to diversify its economy which would be much needed to provide employment for its ever growing population estimated at 17 0million people. The situation was not too different in the 1980's: it was indeed worse with the military in power. Growth and development was stalled and high level of inflation meant that people were not able to meet their basic needs. Changes in the economic and political policies of the country resulted in changes in the pattern of migration in Nigeria. One important change in particular is the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986. This dictated a shift from the official policy of full employment to substantially reduced government spending on critical

¹¹ H. Ghaffari & S. P. Singh, *Push-Pull Determinants of Inter Provincial Migration: Iran's case study*, Indian Journal Of Economics, 2000, 81(32), pp. 269-275.

¹² G. S. Kainth, *Push and Pull Factors of Migration: A case of Brick Kiln Industry of Punjab State*, Asia Pacific Journal of Social Science 2009, 1(1), pp. 82-116.

¹³ Cortes E. Kalena, *Are Refugees Different From Economic Migrants? Some Empirical Evidence on the Heterogeneity of Immigrant Groups In the United States*, March 2004, IZA Discussion Paper No 1063. Available at SSRN, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=52460 (10th March 2016).

¹⁴ H. De Haas, *Remittances, Migration and Social Development; A Conceptual Review of the Literature Social Policy and Development Programme Paper Number 34 United Nations Research Institute for Social Development*, 2007.

services, such as health, education and housing.¹⁵ This government policy encouraged many Nigerians to engage in international migration to affluent and developed countries in search of better life conditions. *Also political persecutions the military government against perceived enemies, this led many to seek refuge in other countries. Those who migrated were mostly of the educated class who sought countries where their services will be adequately paid for. An estimation by DRC¹⁶ says that 1,041,284 million Nigerians live abroad mostly in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. 10.7% of the highly skilled population who were trained in Nigeria work abroad with 83% of those emigrants from Nigeria in the United States of America being highly skilled as well as and 46% of emigrants to the United Kingdom being highly skilled. An average 64% of Nigerian emigrants possess a tertiary certificate.¹⁷ An estimated 14% of Nigerians trained in the medical field in Nigeria live and work in the United States and the United Kingdom.¹⁸ Nigerian emigrants for educational purpose have been on the rise since 2002.¹⁹ This is the result of government's reduced spending on the educational sector that has brought about friction between government and the academic unions because of their demand for improved government spending on education. They sought to put pressure on government through strike actions that has led to loss of academic sessions. Between 1988 and 2013 the Academic Staff Union of Universities had embarked on sixteen strike actions.²⁰ With students staying at home for long periods when they ought to be studying in school, parents who could afford it began sending their children abroad for studies. The economic hardship that set in by reason of the SAP and the limited employment opportunities were the genesis of this out migration²¹*

4. Theories of Prostitution and Edo Historical Perspectives.

Literature on the history of prostitution in Edo is quite scarce, but we will try to understand Edo people's perception of prostitution from the point of view of theories of prostitution and the communal system that existed among the Edo people of pre-colonial times. Garner defined prostitution as the act or practice of engaging in sexual activities for money or its equivalent.²² Prostitution is the act of engaging in sexual activity, usually with individuals other than a spouse or friend in exchange for immediate payment in money or other valuables. Prostitutes may be of either sex and may engage in either heterosexual or homosexual activity, but historically most prostitution has been by female with males as clients.²³ So much talk about prostitution being the oldest profession, Ayittey, espousing African

¹⁵ A. A. Afolayan & I. O. Adelekan, *The role of climatic variations on migration and human health in Africa*, The Environmentalist, Vol.18, pp. 213-218, University of Ibadan, Kluwer Academic Publishers 1998, Cited in A. A. Afolayan & O. Ikuyatum & O. Abejide, *African Perspectives on Human Mobility Programme Funded by MacArthur Foundation, A Country Paper: Dynamics of International Migration In Nigeria* 2008.

¹⁶ Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty (DRC) 2007 Global Migrant Origin Database, Development Research Centre on Migration Globalisation and Poverty, March 2007, Version 4. (29 February 2016).

¹⁷ F. Docquier & A. Marfouk, *Measuring the international mobility of skilled workers (1990–2000)*, World- Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2004. No. 3381. (16 February 2016).

¹⁸ M. A. Clemens & G. Pettersson, *New data on African health professionals abroad*. Working Paper 95, Centre for Global Development, Washington DC. 2007, (10 December 2015).

¹⁹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) *Human trafficking in Nigeria: Root causes and recommendations*, Policy Paper Poverty Series 2004 No. 14.2(E), Paris. (10 March 2016).

²⁰ Ibrahim Adamu, *Impact Appraisals of Academic Staff Union of Universities Strike on the Quality of University Education in Nigeria*, The Online Journal in Quality in Higher Education, July 2015, Vol. 2 issue 3 pp. 84-88. (23 February 2016).

²¹ Frontex, *Handbook on Risk Profiles on Trafficking in Human Beings*, 2015, p.62; BBC, *Human trafficking: The lives bought and sold*, 28 July 2015; UNESCO, *Human Trafficking in Nigeria: Root Causes and Recommendations*, 2006, pp. 33-34. (16 December 2016).

²² See, E. E Aloba & Ndifon Rita, *Addressing Prostitution Concerns in Nigeria: Issues Problem and Prospects*, European Scientific Journal May 2014 edition Vol.10, No.14. (23 April 2016).

²³ E. E Aloba & Ndifon Rita, *Addressing Prostitution Concerns in Nigeria: Issues Problem and Prospects*, European Scientific Journal May 2014 edition vol.10, No.14. (23 April 2016).

indigenous social system by citing Kenyatta, states that sexual intercourse between a man and his wife(s) is looked upon as an act of reproduction, not merely as the gratification of bodily desire. His research is situated in Gikuyu community and it typically represents African perception of the sexual relationship that exists between a man and a woman and the Edo people are no exception.²⁴

Alobo and Ndifon discuss three theoretical perspectives of prostitution, *the functionalist* theory in the works of Kinsley Davis he gives two parallel ideologies of prostitution

1. Sexual morality that condemns prostitutes.
2. The existence of prostitution strengthening morality.

The second is the *social psychological* theory which holds that certain factors causes women to become prostitutes, traumatised childhood, like parental neglect and child abuse, the notion that prostitution can be a source of wealth and livelihood, and finally unemployment or pressure from peers and pimps.

The *feminist* theory which holds that society has a sexist view of women that is why the law goes only after a woman in a crime committed by both gender. And the societal encouragement of the patriarchal gender stratified system which dominates and exploits the female gender thereby promoting prostitution.²⁵

The ancient Edo people lived in small close communities suitable for administration and this were divided into three age grade *edion* the elders, *ighele* the adults and *iroghae* the youths. The communal system here meant that the basic needs of individuals were met with the age group. Ayithey posits that in Africa primary duty is owed to the community, persons exist only in relation to another. Citing Jackson he explains that the essence of moral responsibility springs from the fact that a person's action affects and implicates all those who are related to him. He emphasised the importance of 'we' as against 'I' which implied unity and cooperation. This unity meant that all had access to livelihood, shelter and feeling of belongingness which run contrary to the social psychological factors that produce prostitutes. Ayithey emphasise further the African indigenous social system by quoting, Williams who outlines these communal lifestyle as "rights" (a) to equal protection of the law (b) right to own a home (c) right to livelihood through land distribution, (d) right to aid in time of trouble and other rights.²⁶

The close communal life style of the ancient Edo people would have made it difficult to find a clandestine profession like prostitution existing among the people, there were traditional provisions that made it possible for widows to be remarried within her spouse family and be catered for. The changes that took transformed the traditional conservative Edo society may not be unconnected with Benedict Anderson's²⁷ discourse on state and nations where he talks about the transformation of society from agrarian practice to industrialization and increase in population. That the creation of the state as we know it today, gave rise to breakdown of communal society and created room for individualism that promotes social ills which prostitution is one of them.

²⁴ Ayithey George, *Indigenous African Institutions*, Transnational Publishers incorporated, New York USA.1991.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities, Reflection on the Origin and spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London and New York.

5. Edo State of Nigeria and Italy and Europe

The demand for farm labourers in the southern part of Europe led less educated Nigerians to countries like Italy and Spain in Europe during planting and harvest periods to work in tomato and fruit farms.²⁸ Braimoh states that “the first generation of Edo women and girls who went to Italy initially went abroad to conduct legitimate business such as the buying and selling of goods which included clothes shoes and jewellery. However, in the process of engaging in such business, a lot of women became compromised and augmented their business with prostitution.²⁹ Proceeds from the farm work was meagre when compared with proceed from prostitution. Many female immigrants started to supplement farm labour with prostitution. The high demand for sex workers in Europe and the relatively higher remunerations was the main reason behind this.³⁰ Hughes classified the demand for prostitutes into three categories: users or purchasers of sex, profiteers from selling sex and social cultural attitudes towards sex. Users or purchasers refers to persons who pay prostitutes to render a sexual service; brothel owners and pimps comprises of profiteers from selling sex and academics and media reporting and writing about prostitutes form part of socio-cultural attitudes towards sex, Hughes³¹ By extension from Hughes analysis the highest profiteers from sex trade are the madams and traffickers as we will see with the case of prostitutes and victims travelling from Edo to Italy. These women were inspired by socio-cultural attitudes towards sex and the sex industry in Europe³² and the cover of distance and away from the watchful eyes of those who will question their actions many were lured into this trade.

The proceeds from prostitution became too good to hide. Many women became transnational travelling to and from Europe under the pretext of buying goods from Europe and selling them in Nigeria. But underneath recruiting and encourage other friends or family members to take to the trade as it was seen as a great money spinner. Nigerian naira (means of financial exchange in Nigeria) had been devalued against international currencies because of the implementation of the SAP policies.³³ More international currencies meant much more naira.

Other multiple co-existing social psychological factors are illiteracy and the discrimination and violence faced by women in Nigerian society with the societal acceptance of polygamous family system. A man is entitled to take as many wives as he can cope with. Many go into polygamy without counting the cost and this may lead to the disruption of support systems. Many women are left with no choice but to fend for their children because the man has abdicated his responsibility to his family because of lack of employment or because a sense of lack of commitment to his duties as a father.

Life expectancy is 47.3 years for men and 48.3 for women,³⁴ this has led to early loss of family members. Many women experience early widowhood and accordingly they have to provide for their families by

²⁸ S. Plambech, *Points of Departure*, 2014, p. 34. Cited in Afolayan, Ikwuyatum and Abijide 2008.

²⁹ T. S. Braimoh, *Sex Trafficking in Edo State, Nigeria*, 2013, pp. 2 & 10-11; UNICRI, *Trafficking of Nigerian Girls in Italy*, April 2010, p. 41. Cited in EASO Country of Information Report; *Nigeria Sex Trafficking of Women*.

³⁰ T. S. Braimoh, *Sex Trafficking in Edo State, Nigeria*, 2013, pp. 13, 21-22; UNESCO, *Human Trafficking in Nigeria: Root Causes and Recommendations*, 2006, p. 41; NAP TIP, Factsheet, Factsheet 2 – *What is human trafficking?* Cited in EASO Country of Information Report; *Nigeria Sex Trafficking of Women*.

³¹ M. D. Hughes, *Best practices to address the demand side of sex trafficking*. Rhode Island: University of Rhode Island. 2004.

³² Schulz Erika (Ed), *Sexual Exploitation and Prostitution and its Impact on Gender Equality*, European Parliament: Directorate General for Internal Policies; Policy Department, Citizens Rights and Constitutional Affairs, EU Brussels 2014. (In Nigeria there yet to be any form of legal consideration for regulating the sex trade based on fundamental human rights.)

³³ Lall Sanjaya, *Structural Adjustments and African Industry*, World Developments, Vol.23 issue Elsevier 12 December 1995 12, p. 2019-203.

³⁴ Chimobi Ucha, *Poverty in Nigeria: Some Dimensions and Contributing Factors*. Global Majority E-Journal, Vol. 1, No. 1, June 2010 pp. 46-56.,

any means possible. Others factors are the desire for greater autonomy and adventure, divorce, love, and family expectations.

Restrictive migratory policies in Europe made it difficult for many to get access to visas. They are then likely to turn to illegal agents to procure travel documents to migrate to Europe. Corruption among Nigerian officials both immigration officials and others working at the airports was instrumental to the growth of the sex trade and human trafficking in Edo state Nigeria.³⁵To a large extent a ‘strong respect for and belief in certain aspects of traditional African religion has in no small way influenced the growth and secrecy needed for this “business” to thrive.’³⁶

Many were lured, cajoled or forced by poverty into the sex trade. It grew into a network³⁷, a cartel which includes recruiters, traffickers’ madams at home and abroad, voodoo priests, intimidators, pimps and victims. What started as secret additional ways to acquire more foreign currency has grown in leaps and bounds to and evolved into international challenge involving drugs and prostitution, connecting illegal trade across continents and immoral and illegal alliances among mafia gangs.³⁸

6. Nigeria and Sex Trafficking

The Palermo protocol of the UN³⁹ to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons especially women and children, defines trafficking in persons as, recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation shall be irrelevant where any of the afore-mentioned means have been used. The recruitment, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered ‘trafficking in persons,’ even if it does not involve any of the above listed means. “Child” shall mean any person less than eighteen years of age (Art. 3). This was supplemented to the UN Convention against Transnational organised Crime.⁴⁰ *According to the United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report 2015 ‘Nigeria is a source, transit, and destination country for women and children subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking⁴¹ The trade of prostitution and drugs has been on-going since the 1980’s. The proceeds of crime have made it an established and growing industry that shows no sign of going away soon.*

https://www.american.edu/cas/economics/ejournal/upload/Global_Majority_e_Journal_1-1_Ucha.pdf (3 May 2016).

³⁵ UNODC, “*Corruption: The Grease that Turns the Wheels of Human Trafficking*”, Background paper, Vienna, Forum on Human Trafficking, (13-15 February 2008).

³⁶ Agbu Osita, *Re-visiting Corruption and Human Trafficking in Nigeria: Any Progress?*

³⁷ John Barner & David Okech & Meghan Camp, *Socio-Economic Inequality, Human Trafficking and Global Slave Trade*, Vol. 4, pp. 148–160.; doi:10.3390/soc4020148 Open Access Societies, 2014.

³⁸ Chiara Caprio, *The deadly alliance between Nigerian and Italian mafia gangs*. The Independence online news <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/italian-and-nigerian-gangs-a-deadly-alliance-2361393.html> (21 December 2015).

³⁹ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ProtocolTraffickingInPersons.aspx> (3 May 2016).

⁴⁰ UNESCO *Human Trafficking in Nigeria, Root Causes and Recommendation*, Policy Paper No. 14.2(E) Paris 2006, (15 January 2016).

⁴¹ US DoS, *2015 Trafficking in Persons Report*, Nigeria, p. 265 (27 July 2015).

The source of the growth of this industry is simply its ability to reproduce itself according to this report by European Asylum Support Office EASO country of origin information on sex trafficking in Nigeria, new ‘madams’ in the industry have themselves been victims who starting off as prostitutes working on the streets, indebted to their madams who transported them to Europe or bought them over from peddlers or traffickers and became madams after repaying off their debt, the amount often dictated by their “madams.”⁴² Europol posits that, victims often become members of the criminal groups exploiting them, ultimately assuming the role of a “madam” and exploiting other victims they (new madams) have recruited or bought off from traffickers. In turn, this cultural novelty reduces the likelihood that victims will cooperate with law enforcement.⁴³ Carling designates this system a ‘self-reproducing organisation.’⁴⁴

In 2009, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) estimated the number of victims of sex trafficking from West Africa, at 3,800-5,700 per year among which Nigeria constituted the main source country. In the period between 2007-2012 Nigerian victims accounted for more than 10% of the total number of detected victims in Western and Central Europe, making this route the most prominent trans-regional flow in this sub region.⁴⁵ Recent reports also by (UNODC) on *Global Trafficking in Persons (2014)* identify young women from Nigeria to Europe for the purpose of sexual exploitation as one of the most persistent trafficking flows.⁴⁶ In a Eurostat report for the reference period 2010-2012 regarding absolute numbers of registered victims of human trafficking in the European Union (EU), Nigerians were amongst the top five non-EU citizens⁴⁷ Regions also covered in this report are statistics from the Netherland, France and the United Kingdom.⁴⁸ Italy and Spain appear as the primary destinations of trafficked Nigerian women, from where they are trafficked to northern, central, and eastern European countries.⁴⁹ Europol identifies Nigerian organised crime related to trafficking in persons as one of the greatest law enforcement challenges to European government.⁵⁰ The phenomenon of human trafficking and international sex trade is not peculiar to Nigerian alone it indeed is a global challenge which is a product of social inequality and poverty which creates vulnerability among certain groups in the society. Barner and others in this discourse discusses the social inequalities and vulnerabilities that expose victims to this phenomenon in various regions in the world.⁵¹

7. Sources and Profiles of Victims

Nigeria is a source, transit, and destination country for women and children subjected to forced labour, sex trafficking and organ harvesting according to the United States Department of State for Trafficking in Persons Report from 2015⁵². In many cases, internal trafficking will constitute a first step to

⁴² E. M. O. Baye, *Experiences of Nigerian Trafficked Women*, p. 25., (December 2012).

⁴³ EUROPOL, *Trafficking in Human Beings in the European Union*, pp. 15-16. (1 September 2011).

⁴⁴ J. Carling, *Trafficking in Women from Nigeria to Europe*, (1 July 2005).

⁴⁵ UNODC, *Transnational Trafficking and the Rule of Law in West Africa*, July 2009, p. 41.

⁴⁶ UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014*, pp. 56-57.

⁴⁷ The other countries of citizenship for registered victims were: Brazil, China, Viet Nam and Russia. See: Eurostat, *Trafficking in Human Beings*, 2015.

⁴⁸ Eurostat, *Trafficking in Human Beings*, 2015, cited in EASO country report on Nigeria sex trafficking.

⁴⁹ B. U. Mberu & R. Pongou, Nigeria: Multiple Forms of Mobility in Africa’s Demographic Giant, 30 June 2010; Women’s Link Worldwide, *Trafficking of Nigerian Women and Girls*, June 2015, p. 12.

⁵⁰ US DoS, *Trafficking in Persons Report, Nigeria*, 27 July 2015, p. 265.; Cited EASO Country of Origin Information Report – Nigeria: *Sex trafficking of women*.

⁵¹ John Barner & David Okech & Meghan Camp, *Socio-Economic Inequality, Human Trafficking and Global Slave Trade*, Vol. 4, pp. 148–160; doi:10.3390/soc4020148 Open Access Societies. 2014.

⁵² *Ibid.*

trafficking out of Nigeria.⁵³ Edo state in Nigeria represents the epi-centre for the recruitment for human trafficking to Europe. According to Beatrice Jedy Agba Executive Secretary of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and Other Related Matters (NAPTIP) “it is strongly concentrated in Edo state”.⁵⁴ This was also reiterated by the founder, Committee for the Support of the Dignity of Women (COSUDOW) in an interview by Land info of Norway in 2006 said pioneers in human trafficking to Europe with evidence of success were from Edo State.⁵⁵ Participants in this illegal trade all originated from Benin City, the capital of Edo State and nearby villages. Participants here refers to all those linked with the trade comprising, recruiters, traffickers, madams at home and abroad, voodoo priest and the unfortunate ones, the victims. Not all participants are Edo speaking people. Origins here could mean those resident or having friends or relatives resident in Edo state. Estimates show that 85% of Nigerian women selling sex in Europe travelled from, but did not necessarily originate in Benin City.⁵⁶ The focus of recruitment have shifted from the main city to the rural areas this is due to the clamp down by NAPTIP and other law enforcement agencies on the activities of traffickers, and the level of awareness created by NAPTIP among residents in Benin city, but this is not to say that city recruitment is completely ruled out. In the poverty stricken areas rural around Benin parents may be more inclined to put pressure on their young daughters to yield to the recruiters so as to change the family status. After recruitment from rural areas and the usual ritual of oath taking administered by the juju/voodoo priest women report that they were then taken to major cities, particularly to Benin City and to Lagos.

Recruitment takes place in places where there are possibilities of establishing relationships these include includes the markets where women work, churches or schools and within meeting groups like progressive unions. Women may also be recruited from other states, especially Delta State, but also from other southern states of Abia, Anambra, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Enugu, Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Imo or from the more central states of Kaduna and Plateau. In Benin City of where, one can hardly find an extended family that does not have a family member, mostly women, who migrated to Europe.⁵⁷ It is note-worthy that not all were trafficked or migrated for the purpose of sex trade

8. Level of Awareness

The initial group of women in international prostitution in the 1980s were predominantly married or separated, searching for income to support their families. Recent recruitments are young girls who are between the age of 17 and 28 years.⁵⁸ Recruitment of minors has been on the increase because adult women especially in cities are more aware of the risks to which they are likely to be exposed, especially with the level of awareness that has been created through the media by NAPTIP and by women groups fighting against this menace. Young girls are easier prey lured by the promises of fast success by recruiters. The age declared by girls and women in the course of this journeys are unreliable as age is

⁵³ Cherti *et al*, *Beyond Borders*, p. 24. (January 2013).

⁵⁴ In June 2014, the United States government conferred the award of 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report Hero to the Executive Secretary of NAPTIP, Beatrice Jedy-Agba, NAPTIP Boss Emerges 2014 Trafficking in Person's Hero, June 2014 EASO.

⁵⁵ Sister Florence was interviewed during the Land-info (Country of Origin Information Centre, Norway) fact-finding trip to Nigeria in March 2006. See: Land-info, *Trafficking in Women*, May 2006, p. 13. For information on COSUDOW see its website at: <http://cosudowlagos.org/home/>.

⁵⁶ Carling 2005, Kasner 2009 IOM 2011b.

⁵⁷ S. Plambech, *Points of Departure*, 2014, p. 39.

⁵⁸ C. Okojie *et al*, *Trafficking of Nigerian Girls to Italy*, 2003, p. 108; Baye, E. M.-O., *Experiences of Nigerian Trafficked Women*, December 2012, p. 25; Aghatise, E., *Trafficking for prostitution in Italy*, 8 November 2002, p. 4.

declared according to the need of the recruiter. Age is increased to avert the watchful eyes authorities or indeed decreased for “marketing purposes”.⁵⁹

The only period residents in Edo state can claim ignorance about trafficking for the purposes of prostitution, to Italy and other parts of Europe was in the 1990's. A lot were actually tricked into thinking that they were travelling to Europe to work as hair dressers in salons, baby sitters or as domestic house-helpers, working in factories, restaurants, beauty parlours or have been promise a modelling career.⁶⁰ By the time news of the activities of these cartels began to filter down to Nigeria and the level of campaigns that government initiated since that time, it is evident that all should have been informed about the consequences of becoming victims of traffickers. Nowadays people are aware that women go to Europe to work as prostitutes.⁶¹ It should be noted here that Edo people do not normally accept prostitution or promiscuous behaviour. Women have been ostracised for this both by family and by society according to Aghatise and Braimoh. Despite remittances from sex trade abroad prostitution is still not an acceptable behaviour for the Edo society. Poverty and limited choices are the primary reasons why families cannot say no to income from prostitution. The financial success of these women portrayed by their large houses exotic cars and jewellery is one of the reasons why they become role models for younger girls, especially uneducated ones. Many are aware before they leave Nigeria that they will end up as prostitutes but are ignorant of the conditions, the harsh atmosphere, the exposure to violence and the enormity of the debt.⁶² These young girls consider two to three years working hard as prostitutes to repay the debts to their facilitators⁶³ as being worth it to alleviate themselves and their families from poverty.

9. Efforts by the Government to Stem the Tide

Efforts by the Nigerian government to end the social menace of trafficking in persons, have been enormous and consistent, from raising awareness to discouraging its patronage and to the punishment of those found to be culpable of the act. A rehabilitation programme for victims caught in the act of prostitution Europe and repatriated back to Nigeria. One major instrument that the government has created to tackle human trafficking is NAPTIP the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and other related matters. Its mandate includes investigation, prosecution, monitoring, counselling, rehabilitation, awareness raising, research, and training.⁶⁴ The Agency works both as a social tool for creating awareness and legal tool for apprehending and prosecuting offenders. NAPTIP working with other stake-holders uses all forms of media to create awareness of the public about the activities of traffickers. Television and radio announcements, talk-shows are broadcast in various local

⁵⁹ UNICRI, *Trafficking of Nigerian girls in Italy*, April 2010, pp. 41-42.

⁶⁰ C. Okojie, et al, *Trafficking of Nigerian Girls to Italy*, 2003, p. 57; Baye, E. M.-O., *Experiences of Nigerian Trafficked Women*, December 2012, p. 33; Voice of America, *Bound By Magic, Nigerian Women Enslaved*, 21 November 2012; *Women's Link Worldwide, Trafficking of Nigerian Women and Girls*, June 2015, p. 11; Global Post, *I was a slave, Nigerian women escape sexual bondage in Italy*, 14 July 2015; Frontex, *Handbook on Risk Profiles on Trafficking in Human Beings*, 2015, p. 68.

⁶¹ DIS, *Protection of victims of trafficking in Nigeria*, April 2008, p. 31.; Carling, J., *Trafficking in Women from Nigeria to Europe*, 1 July 2005; Pascoal, R., *The situation of the Nigerian human trafficking victims and their children in Italy*, 19 December 2012, p. 22; Landinfo, *Trafficking in Women*, May 2006, p. 9; Skilbrei, M.-L. & Tveit, M., *Facing return*, 2007, p. 5; Plambech S., *Points of Departure*, 2014, p. 389.

⁶² R. Pascoal, *The situation of the Nigerian human trafficking victims and their children in Italy*, 19 December 2012, p. 22; J. Carling, *Trafficking in Women from Nigeria to Europe*, 1 July 2005; M. L. Skilbrei & M. Tveit, *Facing return*, 2007, p. 5.; S. Plambech, *Points of Departure*, 2014, p. 389.

⁶³ Europol, *Trafficking in Human Beings in the European Union*, p. 12., (1 September 2011).

⁶⁴ S. K. Kigbu & Y. B. Hassan, *Legal Framework for Combating Human Trafficking In Nigeria*, 2015, p. 206.

dialects and Pidgin English (a form of corrupted English spoken by majority of residents popular among the uneducated). Billboards warning people about the traffickers can be found in the major city centre (Benin City) and parts of the city where persons who have immigrant population and their relatives are concentrated. The Nigerian movie industry (Nollywood) has been very active in raising awareness of the dangers victims are exposed to trying to make it abroad.

NAPTIP along with other stakeholders developed a National Plan of Action (2009-2012) structured on the four theme areas of Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership, called the 4 Ps Strategy. This was followed by a Strategic Plan (2012-2017) focused on tackling human trafficking in five broad areas which are; strengthening law enforcement and prosecutorial response, reinforcing public enlightenment, using various mediums, including movies, drama and documentaries to create greater awareness on the real impact of trafficking, expanding platforms for victim protection and assistance and addressing factors which increase vulnerability, strengthening partnerships at national, regional and international levels and improving organisational development.⁶⁵

Also of relevance are the ratification in 2000 and 2001 of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized crime and its supplementing protocol on trafficking in persons in 2003, by the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act which was amended in 2005 and 2015 to increase penalties for trafficking offenders. This act is applicable to the 36 states of Nigeria and the federal capital territory (FCT) Abuja.⁶⁶

10. Remittances and their Positive Impact

The International Monetary Fund IMF defined workers' remittances as international transfer of funds sent by migrant workers from the country where they are working (and have stayed for more than one year to be considered resident in the countries) to their family members in their countries of origin. Similarly, the IMF Balance of Payment Manual 5 (BPM5) defines remittances as the portion of international migrant workers earning sent home from the country of employment to the country of origin. Solimano⁶⁷ considers remittances as that portion of migrants' earnings sent from the migration destination to the place of origin. Remittances can be sent in cash or kind. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) also shares this position as it considers remittances as both financial and non-financial resources freely sent to migrants' households in the home countries. They contribute immensely to financing domestic investment as well as providing sustenance funds for dependent relatives, thereby alleviating partly poverty in developing countries, kind refers to here to items such as food, jewellery, books, medicine, clothing, electronics and cars meant for immediate use by the recipient, but alternatively they are sold to acquire funds for other uses. Remittances are also considered as unilateral transfers and so they do not create any future liabilities such as debt servicing or profit transfers. So remittances are generally less volatile, hence they are a more dependable source of funds in some countries than private

⁶⁵NAPTIP, *Nigeria, Finland collaborate against human trafficking* – Press release, 13 January 2015; J. Famakin, *A paper on 'sex-work and human trafficking of women and girls'*, 31 July 2013, NAPTIP, National Rapporteurs on Trafficking in Persons and Equivalent Mechanisms in Addressing Trafficking in Persons (NREM), 21 – 22 May 2014.

⁶⁶ UNODC, *Trafficking in Persons Report, Nigeria* Signatories to the CTOC Trafficking Protocol, US DoS, 2015, (27 July 2015).

⁶⁷ Solimano Andrea, *Workers Remittances to the Andean Region, Mechanism Cost and Development impact*. Paper prepared for multilateral investment fund IDB conference on remittances and development. Quito-Ecuador, May 2003.

capital inflow. *Remittances from abroad play an important role in poverty reduction.*⁶⁸ *Many of the migrant girls interviewed by Braimoh in 2013 confessed their willingness to take the risk of being trafficked because of the desire to salvage their families from the grip of poverty. Many can afford to go to school, have a decent meal, have access to health care and live in decent housing because of a relative living abroad.*

Remittances are commonly used to acquire housing, land, financial assets and to fund businesses in the community of migrants' countries of origin. This may be due to the fact that these are more durable investment and require little or no monitoring. It can also be argued that migrants' investment decisions are closely related to their return migration plans.⁶⁹ This accounts for the many modern houses in Benin City today especially in suburbs and densely populated areas. Prior to migration trends Benin City had more of mud houses basically overcrowded with extended families living together. This brought a lot of strife among family members, due to overcrowding.

There is no denying the fact that remittances from emigrants have impacted on the life of many residents in Edo state and in Nigeria in general. Remittance income does not benefit only individual recipients; it benefits the local and national economies in which they live. Indeed, the spending allowed by remittances has a multiplier effect on local economies as funds subsequently spent create incomes for others and stimulate economic activities in general. Beyond such multiplier effects, however, are other factors conducive to economic growth and stability.⁷⁰ Remittance received from migrants abroad is one of the largest sources of external finance for developing countries. The true size of remittances cannot be truly documented most of the data on remittances are from formal channels. Unrecorded flows from informal channels can double the data from formal flow if documented. In Edo state for example the informal channel of flow of remittances is ultimately large as bureau de change offices which double as pay-out agents are found in various places within Benin City. These channels are believed to be as large as the formal sectors of Western Union and Money Gram. Freund and Spatafora⁷¹ carried out studies on literature on informal remittances for more than 100 developing countries on shadow economies. Findings revealed that informal remittances amounted to 35-75 % of formal remittances to these countries. But results vary from country to country. Informal remittances to Eastern Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa are higher than those to East Asia and the Pacific. The reasons put forward by Orozco from researches from remittances to Latin America is the percentage cost of sending money through formal channels which is much higher than informal channels.⁷²

11. Consequences of Migration and Remittances on the Victims and Youth Population

Regardless of the seeming glamour displayed by so called successful victims turned madams, negative consequences of human trafficking outweigh positive impact of remittances. Human rights violations and deterioration of mental and physical health are some of the negative experiences victims of human

⁶⁸ Dillip Ratha & Sanket Mohapatra & Ani Silwal, *Outlook for Remittance flow 2010 to 2011; Remittance outflow to developing nations remained resilient in 2009 expected to recover during 2010-2011*, Migration and Development Brief; Migration and Remittances Team Development Prospect Group, World Bank, 2010.

⁶⁹ OECD International Migration Outlook 2008.

⁷⁰ Caroline L. Freund & Nicola Spatafora, *Remittances: Transaction Costs, Determinants, and Informal Flows* (August 2005). World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 3704.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Orozco Manuel, *International flow of Remittances Cost Competition and Financial Access in Latin America and the Caribbean Inter- American Dialogue*, Towards an Industry Score card, Washington DC May 2006

trafficking go through during and after the process of trafficking. Free will, human dignity and an inability to make their own decisions are some of the human rights violations experienced by victims at the hands of human traffickers.⁷³ The stigmatization associated with prostitution in Edo state can also be a source of social-psychological disorder for ex-prostitutes or victims especially those deported without anything to show for their *travel*. As stated earlier, it is the level of poverty that throttles many families from saying no to proceeds of prostitution, but prostitution is still not an acceptable norm in the Edo society.

The glamour and wealth displayed by migrants' are a source of inspiration for many young people to migrate to Europe. This accounts for why many both male and female are determined to make the journey at all cost. Youth population with the desire to travel are no more inclined to get an education as traffickers do not specify educational qualification as a prerequisite, as such many have lost the desire to get an education or acquire skills. Youth populations, both male and female are on their way through various unconventional routes to get to Europe.⁷⁴ Many lose their lives on the way to Europe.⁷⁵ Cultism and drug trafficking is common among young men from Nigeria resident in Italy and Spain many have been killed because of this. Mafia gangs promote cultism because these young men are vulnerable tools in their hands for their illicit trade in drugs and prostitution.⁷⁶ Many Nigerian youths who were deported from Libya waiting to cross to Europe became a social menace in the society. Prostitutes deported from Europe back to Nigeria become traumatised and have to receive a lot of psycho-therapy to fit into society again. More often because of the shattered dreams of not being able to come back glamorous they distance themselves from the family which was the consideration for making the journey in the first place.⁷⁷ This negative impact of traffickers information and activities on the youth population cannot be over-emphasised much need to be done to get them out of business or neutralise information they pass to young men and women so that whole populations will not be lost to unrealistic dreams because of their activities.

12. Conclusion and Recommendation

The Nigerian nation have been going through political instability since the first coup d'état in 1966. After its independence from colonial rule in 1960 a better part of its political existence has been in the hands of the military spanning over 30 years. This accounts for the high level of mismanagement of resources, corruption, nepotism, infrastructural decay, unemployment youth restiveness and poverty. However for the decision by many to immigrate to places where there are better living conditions and opportunities for work, the level of poverty would have been more extreme. This could have led to some form of implosion. Looking at the figures from remittances it is obvious that it is a life saver. Government should not discourage immigration but search for ways to take traffickers out of the business. This could be done by opening up channels of communication with countries needing labour. This can create job

⁷³ Luty and Lanier, *An Integrated Theoretical Framework to Describe Human Trafficking of Young Women and Girls for Involuntary Prostitution*, Journal of Public Health Social and Behavioural Health May 2012.

⁷⁴ Kumolu Charles, *Suicide Trip to Europe By road; Uncovering Fatal Attraction Among Nigerian Migrants*, Vanguard Newspapers, April 28 2015 <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/04/suicide-trip-to-europe-by-road-uncovering-fatal-attraction-among-nigerian-migrant/> (1 February 2016).

⁷⁵ Marc Herman, *From Africa to Europe: A surprisingly Dangerous Journey*, December 2013, <http://www.takepart.com/article/2013/12/03/dangerous-journey-senegal-spain>;

Joan Baxter, *Mali; Dangerous Desert Gateway*, June 2002 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2063526.stm> (23 April 2016).

⁷⁶ Oladimeji Ramon, *How Nigerian Cult Groups Traffic women into Europe*; Spanish Police Punch Newspapers (January 28 2016); <http://www.punchng.com/how-nigerian-cult-group-traffics-women-into-europe-spanish-police/> <http://www.nigerianeye.com/2016/01/exposed-how-nigerian-cult-group.html> (23 April 2016).

⁷⁷ R. Pascoal, *The situation of the Nigerian human trafficking victims and their children in Italy*, 19 December 2012, p. 24.

opportunities for its large and growing youth population and prevent their exposure to crime and illiteracy which the traffickers subject them to. Also educating people on how they can directly have access to travel without needing to go through traffickers.

Countries experiencing out migration and the international community in general need to begin to ask is how much of these remittances come from illicit and illegal sources. From evidences above we saw how the initial group of migrants to Italy and Spain abandoned farm work and augmented transnational business with prostitution. No doubt large amount of these remittances are from illegitimate and morally decadent sources, but on which cost? At the cost of allowing a group of traffickers, madams and mafia groups breed for our society cultists and prostitutes, convincing them, that this is all life is about? Increased efforts should be made to stop these groups of people with governments adopting pro-active steps to fight against traffickers. And government should engineer the right policies to educate the people, provide employment and open up legitimate migration channels.

Migration is significantly reshaping the traditional social and economic structures of rural communities in Edo state in both positive and negative ways. Braimoh has identified illiteracy as the major factor driving victims and their families to yield to traffickers. For many years Nigeria's budget for education has been relative low this has accounted for why majority of the poor people could educate their children. The Mohammadu Buhari government identified this and takes steps to deploy teachers to the rural area to teach.⁷⁸ Yet much more still has to be done, the Nigerian education system suffered from the many years of political instability and infrastructural decay. This led to falling educational standards which affected teachers training colleges in the country. Those in teaching profession today may not have had the prerequisite training needed to teach. Therefore many may not have needed tools for passing knowledge. So a retraining of teachers for basic pedagogic skills may be necessary.⁷⁹

Guidance and counselling units in schools need to be strengthened to help in this fight, as the girls under family pressure could talk with guidance counsellors.

Welfare from governments has eluded Nigerians for many years of governance, although it could be a way of alleviating many from poverty. It can go a long way in also getting the citizen to trust in the government, by showing that it cares for their welfare. The fight against traffickers has been unsuccessful because a lot of people do not have a real choice. As step in the right direction the new government is introducing welfare for Nigerians.⁸⁰

The fight against illicit and illegal transnational crimes is not a fight of the international community all hands must be on deck for information sharing, and expert advice sharing to stop or at least reduce this trend drastically so that the many benefits of immigration will not be high-jacked by a few unscrupulous actors.

⁷⁸ Adalakun Abimbola, *Education and Buhari's 2016. Budget*. Punch newspapers December 31 2015 <http://www.punchng.com/education-and-buharis-2016-budget/> (31 January 2016).

⁷⁹ Oladunjoye Patrick & Omenu Felix, *Revitalizing Teachers Training Colleges in Nigeria, Issues and Challenges*, Journal of Education Practice, Vol. 4 No.17 2013 (23 February 2016).

⁸⁰ Buhari plans to introduce social welfare by making payments to 23million extremely poor. Nigerian Watch 03 September 2015; <http://www.nigerianwatch.com/news/7703-buhari-regime-plans-to-introduce-social-welfare-by-making-payments-to-25m-poor-families> (30 January 2016).