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Exploring the Material Bases for Outmigration and Human Trafficking in the Farming Communities of Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Perception of human trafficking among selected rural-farming households in Kwara State in the Middle Belt of Nigeria is based on analysis of data obtained from 120 heads of farming households. Deploying a 5-point Likert-type scale as indicator of awareness of human trafficking, knowledge of the phenomenon is not gender-selective in nature, and a majority (77.5%) stated that they have out-migrants in their household, more than half (54.2%) of which were in the age range 10-20 years at the time of move. Major reasons for leaving base include: lack of employment opportunities (mean score=4.6 of 5), lack of better social services and amenities and poor access to better education, while high wage and income in destination was a major pull factor. Most of the victims thus get lured by human trafficking agents premised on prospects of getting them good jobs abroad but eventually find themselves trapped and often end up with concocted debts mounted on them by these traffickers. Implications of cross-border social and economic linkages of the study area to northern areas of Benin Republic are further highlighted for international trafficking.

Introduction

A Gallup poll conducted before the 2019 Nigerian presidential elections showed that roughly half of all Nigerians said it was a “bad time” to find a job in the economy. The proportion of youth planning to leave Nigeria permanently increased from 36 percent in 2014 to 52 percent in 2018, one of the highest levels in sub-Saharan Africa. In absolute numbers, the figure of international

migrants from Nigeria has increased from around 450,000 in 1990 to 1.4 million in 2019. Many among these millions are young people preyed upon by traffickers to migrate not just out of his or her local community to urban centres but out of the country.

Human trafficking is a form of business venture that dehumanize humanity in itself (WHO, 2002) – a situation whereby humans turn follow humans into a commodity and a product. Nigeria is still listed among the Tier 2 watch list of United States Department of State trafficking in persons 2017 report and other significant documents that contain extensive research data on human trafficking. Also, UNESCO (2020) claimed that trafficking of humans is regarded as the third largest crime after economic fraud and drug trafficking. Thus, Nigeria is commonly identified as a country of origin, transit, and destination for human trafficking, with endemic communities often cited in the deep south or the core north of the country.

However, while so much attention has been given to the international dimensions of human trafficking, as well as the southern and northern geographical delimitations of endemic communities and experiences, little is known about the dynamics of trafficking in the Middle Belt of Nigeria. Kwara State, one of the six Middle Belt States (of Nigeria's total 36 States) is the focus of this study. In Nigeria, the major hot-spots of out-migration and human trafficking are Edo and Lagos in the Southwest of the country. The majority of trafficked persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation are young women and minors from Edo State (UNODC, 2010).

Lagos State is unique for being a place of origin, destination, and transit point of victims of trafficking (Akinyoade & Oyeniyi, 2012). An IMADR (2015) report indicates that '[In] the last two decades, there has been a growth in the internal trafficking of Nigerian women and children. An increased number of people are trafficked from rural communities to cities such as Lagos, Abeokuta, Ibadan, Kano, Kaduna, Calabar and Port-Harcourt. Trafficking to these regions is predominantly for exploitative domestic work, farm labor and prostitution.'

Examination of the forced labour experience of victims rescued by NAPTIP in the aforementioned locations by Akinyoade and colleagues (2012) underlies this point. Geographically, Kwara State, which is located in the middle belt, is a major transit route between these identified cities. Yet, little or no information exists regarding the occurrence, nature, and context of human trafficking in the state. This chapter also offer qualitative insights to

child fostering practices in Kwara State, particularly how fostering turns a child into domestic help in conditions of forced labour (which in itself is an outcome of trafficking).

In the general literature, there are several underlying perspectives to the nexus of outmigration, emigration, human trafficking, human mobility, and the like. First is the issue of the lure of opportunities in the city as a driver of rural-urban migration; secondly, the use of members of the extended family system for domestic work in large town agglomerations; thirdly, the bigger city as a stepping stone in the eventuality of international travel; fourthly, seeking higher educational opportunities, and a host of several factors playing individually or acting together as motivation for rural-urban movement. In this wide array of propelling factors lie unscrupulous agents and intermediaries that broker and facilitate linkage to opportunities. Many of these agents are sometimes close to the family or on many occasions not related to the out-migrant or the victim, but the agents do serve to inform/misinform and facilitate the potential for the would-be out-migrant to become a victim of trafficking (IOM, 2016).

Traffickers find an easy prey in the victims and in some cases their families in situations of impaired livelihood conditions. Irrespective of the national or international destination, many of the trafficked persons are sourced from rural areas and oftentimes poor socioeconomic backgrounds (UNODC, 2008). Where the source is from rural areas, human trafficking imposes extremely adverse effects on agricultural production and productivity (Ofuoku, 2010; Ofuoku & Uzokwe, 2012). The dearth in statistics for rural-urban migration in Nigeria and the thin line involved in attempting to distinguish travelling to secure work in domestic servitude (or forced labour conditions) from local child fostering practices and child adoption makes it difficult to obtain fairly accurate statistics on human trafficking. Adoption is the legal process whereby a person obtains judicial or administrative authorization to take the child of another person as his own, and parental rights and obligations are permanently transferred from the child's natural parents to the adopter (Issa & Awoyemi, 2016).

In rural settlements, where most people are being trafficked, many appear to be not only unconscious of the probable consequences of migration on themselves and, of course, on its effect on the economies of the local communities they are about leaving behind them (Ofuoku, 2010). Most rural communities are settlements that are always characterized by gross diminishing returns and low income emanating from population pressure

and uneconomic land ownership, and the resultant decrease in population of farmers may aggravate further these diminishing returns and income. The level of dependence by rural communities on manual labour, especially that provided by women and young able-bodied men, will also relate with the level to which farm output and income in the rural areas may be affected.

In Kwara State, Nigeria, bush clearing, tilling, planting, harvesting, storage processing, and marketing of arable crops are carried out by women and young people in the form of manual labour. Agriculture is an important source of employment for about 87% of economically active women and 80% of economically active young men (Blackden & Rwebangira, 2004). Trafficking in women/youth may lead to labour shortages and output reduction. The arable crops mainly grown in Kwara State include cassava, maize, vegetables, sorghum, yam, rice, and sweet potato. An affirmative conclusion is, however, difficult to make as to how out-migration and attendant forms of human trafficking have affected agricultural productivity. It would therefore be worthwhile to examine the perceptions of rural-farming households on the effect of human trafficking in the study area where there has been a recent upsurge in the number of young people leaving the communities in search of perceived better opportunities elsewhere.

The Nigerian setting, with attention to Kwara State

Decades of military regimes in Nigeria served as a fundamental contributory factor for the emergence and deepening of human trafficking in the country as some citizens used it as form of escape from the severe political, social, and economic crises experienced in the period 1966-1999 (cf. UNESCO, 2020). Following the oil boom in the 1970s, opportunities for migration, both inside and outside the country, created avenues for exploitation and international trafficking. Despite the potential wealth of the country from its abundant natural and human resources, political instability and widespread corruption hampered the progress towards poverty reduction, and, as people sought greener pastures into a world environment where borders have been increasingly militarized, the facilitation of trafficking thrived. A 2015 report by Human Rights Watch noted that, significantly, corruption in the public sector has been endemic and it has 'continued to undermine the enjoyment of social and economic rights' in the country (HRW, 2015). The link of corruption to the facilitation of trafficking is direct; for example, it eases the transportation of victims within countries and across borders without detection or requests for paperwork. Economically, families seeking to escape destitution and poor conditions of living become vulnerable

to the antics of traffickers. And, with the feminization of poverty, women and young girls (who also suffer discriminatory cultural practices) became more exposed to the tactics of traffickers. Added to this fragile landscape are different forms of internal conflict and instability (the Boko Haram conflict and violence that occurs in the four-year electoral cycles) have combined to create fertile ground for organized criminal groups to thrive (see Oarhe & Sylvester, 2012). At the international level, the United State Trafficking in Persons Report (2015) reported that 'EUROPOL has identified Nigerian organized crime related to trafficking in persons as one of the greatest law enforcement challenges to European governments.'

In 2017, the trafficking in persons (TIP) report was published by the United States Department of State and noted that more than three dozen women and children were exploited 'in sex trafficking among seven IDP camps in Maiduguri', and that government officials managing the camps are alleged to be complicit in these activities. Kwara State was not left out in this menace; it was made known in 2018 that the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) reported assisting the Kwara State government in retrieving the indigenes of the state that were victims of human trafficking in Lebanon and other destination countries in the Middle East. The agency recently had even taken some steps further to sensitize communities within the borders of Togo and Benin Republic. And the agency has concluded plans to profile the victims and work out modalities to return them to Nigeria. According to the Nigerian Living Standards Survey (NLSS) report released by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) covering the year 2019, Kwara State was ranked 28th in position of poverty head-counts out of 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in Nigeria.

The major objective of this study therefore is to sample the perceptions of rural-farming households about the nature and context of out-migration and the ways it has manifested as human trafficking in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Describe the socioeconomic characteristics of rural-farming households in the study area
- Identify the historical roots of out-migration from the study area
- Examine major factors that contribute to the occurrence of human trafficking in the study area.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Kwara State, Nigeria, which is located in the country's Middle Belt. While the state is bounded locally by other states in its northern (marked by the West African River Niger), eastern, and southern sections, it shares an international border with the Republic of Benin in the west. It is located in the forest savanna and enjoys moderate dry and wet seasons; the state is noted for a heavy rainfall season from March to November, and annual rainfall varies from 1000 mm to 1500 mm, with the peak between September and early October, which is essential for rain-fed agricultural practices. Thus, the major occupation of people in the state is farming, and various crops which are cultivated both for local consumption and as cash crops are cashew and oil palm. Rice, sorghum, cassava, maize, yam, beans, and sweet potatoes are the major crops grown mainly for consumption in the state (Kwara ADP, 2015). The vegetation type found here is derived savannah with riparian forest along the river bank. Kwara State is located about 300 kilometres away from Lagos (the national commercial capital) and 500 kilometres away from Abuja (Nigeria's administrative capital). These geographical and administrative attributes put the state in a vantage connection position locally and internationally, with favourable means of transportation by land, water and air – ideal for traffickers needs.

Baruten Local Government Area in the North Central district of Kwara State, Nigeria, sharing a long land border with Republic of Benin, is a major transit point for would be traffickers. 'The local government begins in Ilesha Baruba and ends in Chikanda which is the border town, and it has its headquarters in the town of Kosubosu.' The main language spoken in Baruten is Baruba, and other languages spoken in the area include Yoruba, French, Pidgin, Hausa, and Ffulde (Fulani). The border town (Chikanda) is known for oil importation and exportation. It has an area of 9749 km² and a population of 209,459 as at the 2006 census, and the Baruten LGA includes a part of the Borgu Game Reserve (UN Environment Programme, 2007)

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, primary data were sought and obtained through structured questionnaire survey. A three-stage sampling technique was adopted for identification of respondents. The first stage involved a random selection of three local governments from the 16 local governments in Kwara state. At the second stage, simple random sampling was also deployed for the selection of five villages from all the selected three local governments. At the final stage, 24 farming households from each village were identified, which led to identification of a total of 120 respondents.

Descriptive statistics and a 5-point Likert-type scale analysis was used to analyse the data obtained from the study area.

Results and Discussion

Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents

The importance of prevailing socioeconomic conditions as contributory factors for persons to migrate out of an area, and/or become victims of trafficking, has been shown in several studies (see Akinyoade & Carchedi, 2012; Perry & McEwing, 2013; Honeyman et al., 2016). For our study area, the socioeconomic background of respondents is presented in Table 2. The tabulated information shows that males constituted over 70% of the respondents. This is in tandem with research work that indicates a preponderance of males as heads of households. However, since the study sought to elicit information from farming communities, the higher percentage of males compared to females may be due to the very nature of farming as a male-denominated activity in Nigeria. In Table 1, the marital status profile of the rural-farming households interviewed shows that 70.0% of them are married. The presence of the 21.7% that reported being widows is in tandem with the earlier observation that, where female heads of household exist, their changed marital conditions dictated their new positions as household heads. The relatively high percentage of married rural-farming households is also indicative of potentially large families where the married bear a lot of children who are expected to support farm labour so as to enhance farming activities on family land.

Also, about half (46%) of the respondents have no formal education; those with primary education constitute 29.2% of the sample, and 16.7% of the respondents have some form of tertiary education. The fairly large proportion of uneducated heads of households appears to suggest a likelihood of vulnerability to the preying techniques of 'agents' and traffickers who promise better lives for unsuspecting victims. Farming is the primary occupation (over 80% of the respondents) in these local governments. A few of the respondents engage in trading, teaching, and the transporter business. Approximately three-fifths (59.2%) of household heads interviewed have been involved in farming for more than 20 years.

Table 9.1

Grain Crops Yield (Tons), Area Cultivated (Ha), and Yield (Tons/Ha)

	Crops	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
1	<i>Maize</i>					
	Ton	149.89	164.53	189.78	196.56	210.70
	Ha	109.20	114.66	126.22	133.27	141.16
	Yield (Tons/Ha)	1.37	1.43	1.50	1.47	1.49
2	<i>Sorghum</i>					
	Ton	102.97	112.70	131.05	137.96	146
	Ha	67.30	80.50	84.93	87.32	96.26
	Yield (Tons/Ha)	1.53	1.4	1.54	1.58	1.52
3	<i>Rice</i>					
	Ton	234.21	345.69	440.43	480.80	384.44
	Ha	97.18	135.04	142.81	147.13	128.75
	Yield (Tons/Ha)	2.41	2.56	3.08	3.27	2.986
4	<i>Millet</i>					
	Ton	25.39	28.44	19.54	20.50	26.01
	Ha	13.43	15.05	16.64	17.09	19.26
	Yield (Tons/Ha)	1.89	1.89	1.17	1.20	1.35
5	<i>Cowpea</i>					
	Ton	0.968	1.08	3.12	3.27	3.58
	Ha	4.34	5.12	5.42	5.54	5.91
	Yield (Tons/Ha)	0.22	0.21	0.57	0.59	0.60

Source: KWADP, 2012.

Generally, despite the growing evidence that fertilizers can substantially increase yields in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) as well as slow down environmental degradation, farmers in this region (include Kwara State, Nigeria) still lag far behind other developing countries in fertilizer use (Liverpool-Tasie et al., 2010). The fertilizer supply is limited, and the cost is prohibitive for SSA farmers because fertilizer may cost as much as five times the global market price (Mosier & Syers, 2005). This is one of the contributing factors that has led to low yield, low income, and arable land degradation, that is, all these afore-mentioned factors, creating fertile ground for out-migration and a probability of yielding to entreaties of traffickers in the study area.

The few samples of arable crops mentioned show low yield (ton/ha) in the study area, which could also contribute to the out-migration of the people in the state when their living conditions are not commensurate with the income gained from their agricultural production.

Table 2 also shows the farm-size profile of the household head, where a majority (86.7%) of the farmers have a farm size that ranges between one to five hectares, which implies that the respondents practice small-scale farming because of fragmented land holdings in the study area.

Generally, over three-quarters (77.5%) of the rural-farming households have either one or more of their members as migrants; more the half (54.7%) of the migrants in the study area are males, whose age as of the time of migration was in the age range of 10-20 years. The implication of this finding is that the young migrants have the strength and risk-bearing ability associated with such movement. This is in tandem with Gimba and Kumshe (2000) that says a majority of the migrants from the villages to cities are young and energetic enough to cope with the hurdles faced in cities.

In Table 2, data are presented to show that nearly half of the migrants left the study area in search of employment, while 35.2% of them do so to further their education. This study is not too different from the studies conducted by Omonigho and Olaniyan (2013), McCarthy and colleagues (2006), and Todaro (1997), which show that education and employment are two basic reasons why people move from the rural area to an urban centre. This study also reveals that a majority (70.6%) of the migrants were not employed before migration, while 29.4% of the migrants were employed before migration but looking for better employment.

Table 9.2

Socioeconomic Characteristics of Rural-Farming Households Sampled

Characteristics	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	88	73.3
Female	32	26.7
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	10	8.4
Married	84	70.0
Widow	26	21.7
<i>Education Level</i>		
No formal education	55	45.8
Primary education	35	29.2
Secondary education	10	8.3
Tertiary education	20	16.7
<i>Primary Occupation</i>		
Farming	98	81.7
Others	22	18.3
<i>Farming experience (Years)</i>		
0-10	32	26.6
11-20	17	14.2
20+	71	59.2
<i>Farm size (Ha)</i>		
1-5	104	86.7
6-10	13	10.8
11-15	3	2.5
<i>Association Membership</i>		
Yes	73	60.8
<i>Household with migrants</i>		
Yes	93	77,5
<i>Gender of migrants</i>		
Male	66	54.7
Female	54	45.3
<i>Age (year) at time of migrants</i>		
0-9	3	2.2.
10-20	65	54.2
20+	52	43.6

Table 9.2

Socioeconomic Characteristics of Rural-Farming Households Sampled (continued)

Characteristics	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
<i>Reasons for migration</i>		
Employment	52	43.1
Education	42	35.2
Marriage	15	12.5
Bored of rural life	6	4.3
Joining a relative	4	4.1
Conflicts/Natural disaster	1	0.7
<i>Employment status of migrants before migration</i>		
Yes	35	29.4
<i>Received remittance from migrants</i>		
Yes	87	72.3
<i>Amount received as remittance (Naira/Year)</i>		
0,000-60,000	31	25.8
70,000-100,000	18	15.0
120,000-200,000	31	25.8
>200,000	5	4.1
No remittance	35	29.2
<i>Factors responsible for rural-urban migration</i>		
Push	60	50.0
Pull	24	20.0
Both	36	30.0

Source: Field Survey 120 farming household Baruten LGA, Kwara State 2018

In traditional cultures where arranged marriages are common, girls are sometimes forced into child marriage, which can also be identified as a form of human trafficking (Hartmann, 2018). In this study, 12.5% of households that experienced out-migration of at least one of their members did so for marital reasons. In the local government areas studied, early marriage is common, and human trafficking for marriage becomes a crucial possibility as highlighted by the fact that an appreciable proportion of migrants left these areas in their mid-teen years for places outside the zones on the pretext of marriage.

The study also examined whether remittance or assistance is received by the households from the migrants, and, in this case, 72.3% of the households claimed to receive remittances and 27.7% claimed not to receive remittances

from the migrants. This show that all migrants in the household migrated either to further their education or in search of employment; thus, migrants may have heterogeneous motives, and their remitting behaviour can be described as altruism or self-interest. Under this assumption of altruism, the likelihood of sending remittances is a function of the migrant's level of income (Lucas & Stark, 1988; Vanwey, 2004).

The amount of remittances claimed to be received by the farming households is shown in Table 2. A quarter (25.8%) of the farming households, respectively, stated having received remittances in the range of NGN 30,000-60,000 per annum, and the range of NGN 120,000-200,000 per annum. Some farming households received a bit more (NGN 200,000 per annum), but this constituted less than 5% of the sampled households. Yet, 29.2% of the farming households claimed not to have received any remittances from their members that have migrated.

Data also show that out of the 120 rural-farming household heads interviewed, 50% strongly stated that migration is caused by push factors, 20% cited pull factors as causal agents, while about one-third opined that the migration pattern is caused by both factors. This is similar to the push and pull factors developed for understanding migration by Lee (1966). 'Push factors' are those circumstances that make people leave home for other areas such as famine, drought, low agricultural productivity; while the pull factors are those conditions that attract rural migrants to urban areas such as job opportunities, and better income opportunities among others.

Factors contributing to the vulnerability of trafficking

Vulnerability to trafficking in the study area was measured by exploring respondents' perception of factors of human trafficking identified in the literature. These factors include: lack of employment opportunities, lack of better social services/amenities, and unequal access to better education, along with other factors which they ranked 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, respectively, based on the high mean scores (most important factors) in a descending order. And logically, this study follows the tenet of previous studies that identified these factors mentioned as major push/pull factors influencing human trafficking/migration. According to Omonigho and Olaniyan (2013), and Todaro (1997), education and employment are two basic reasons why people migrate.

Collated responses in Table 3 indicated that lack of employment opportunities (mean=4.6 out of a maximum of 5.0) was a major factor responsible for

people's decision to give themselves up to trafficking. This was congruent with Ofuoku and Uzokwe (2012) who found that people had a high desire to survive and escape from poverty which was prompted by unemployment and lack of access to opportunities. Another major push factor was the lack of better social services and amenities (mean=4.51), and unequal access to better education (mean=4.41). Ofuoku and Uzokwe (2012) argued that parents allowed their household members to be trafficked because they believed that the destination, whether in or out of the country, could provide better employment and educational opportunities, as well as stable social amenities.

High wage and income differences at the place of destination (mean=4.24) was a major pull factor responsible for victims giving up and landing in the hands of local agents, which comes with the promise of such a relatively better life. This observation matched the findings of UNESCO (2006), and Ofuoku and Uzokwe (2012), whose studies showed that high income at the destination of trafficked persons was an important pull factor in human trafficking. The desire for this high income has a tendency to motivate people to decide to be trafficked outside their original place of abode.

Connections to Benin Republic

The Baruten LGA in the North Central district of Kwara State, Nigeria, shares a long border with the Republic of Benin. The Baruba people that are found in this geographical location in the Benin Republic and Nigeria share the same culture and speak the same dialect, despite the division by international border. Inter-marriages and other cross-border celebrations are common, all signifying a high level of commuting as well as exposure to opportunities. Unfortunately, cross-border criminal groups subject Beninese children to domestic servitude and other forms of forced labour in Nigeria. The local forms of child fostering that mutate into servitude occur in this area too. In the United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report of 2020, 'a lack of identity documentation contributed to increased vulnerability to trafficking in Benin.' Officials reported that traffickers exploit boys, girls, and women from Parakou in the north-east of Benin Republic. Experts have also highlighted the commune of Djougou in north-western Benin as one of the corridors for traffickers who subject women to forced labour and potentially sexual exploitation in Persian Gulf countries, Lebanon, and the Maghreb. Some of these towns in Benin Republic that share the international border with Kwara State of Nigeria are frequented by visitors from the Baruten local government area. Cross-border communities are vantage manifestation

points for the characteristics of trafficking – as transit areas, even as endemic areas. Up till now, little scholarly and programmatic attention have been given to these so-called far-flung outposts. Evidence from this study show that the characteristics of these locations should no longer be ignored.

Table 9.3

Push/Pull Factors of Human Trafficking/Migration from the Perception of Respondents

Push/Pull Factors	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Mean Score	Rank
Lack of employment opportunities	0 (0.0%)	4 (3.3%)	1 (0.8%)	34 (28.3%)	4.60	1st
Lack of better social services and amenities	0 (0.0%)	4 (3.3%)	2 (1.7%)	43 (35.8%)	4.51	2nd
Unequal access to better education	1 (0.8%)	8 (6.7%)	2 (1.7%)	39 (32.5%)	4.41	3rd
High wage/income difference	0 (0.0%)	15 (12.5%)	5 (4.2%)	36 (30.0%)	4.24	4th
Joining relative or friend	0 (0.0%)	12 (10.0%)	5 (4.2%)	81 (67.5%)	3.94	5th
Political instability	3 (2.5%)	16 (13.3%)	12 (10.0%)	45 (37.5%)	3.93	6th
Farming is tedious	1 (0.8%)	22 (18.3%)	13 (10.8%)	60 (50.0%)	3.70	7th
Shortage and unfair distribution of land	2 (1.7%)	36 (30.0%)	16 (13.3%)	38 (31.7%)	3.45	8th
Inadequate access to resources such as input, technology etc	3 (2.5%)	45 (37.5%)	14 (11.7%)	36 (30.0%)	3.24	9th
Natural disaster flood fire. etc	7 (5.8%)	45 (37.5%)	19 (15.8%)	32 (26.7%)	2.98	10th
Increase in rural population	7 (5.8%)	57 (47.5%)	12 (10.0%)	32 (26.7%)	2.88	11th
Evil social customs and practices	12 (10.0%)	54 (45.0%)	19 (15.8%)	30 (25.0%)	2.68	12th

Cut-off mean score = 3.0 (≥ 3.0 =important factor)

Source: Field Survey 120 farming household Baruten LGA, Kwara State 2018

Conclusion and policy implications

The study indicated that the push factors associated with human trafficking included lack of employment opportunities, lack of better social services and amenities, unequal access to better education, political instability and insecurities, lack of interest in tedious farming activity, shortage and unfair distribution of land, inadequate access to resources such as input, technology, natural disaster such as flood and fire outbreaks, increase in rural population, and evil social customs and practices. While the pull factors include high wage and income differences and joining a relative and friends, these are factors that ease the manipulation and control of trafficked persons with a promise of high income in the working destination and a perceived low risk involved in the working destination. While there is a lack of comprehensive or reliable data on the occurrence of human trafficking in Kwara State, the geographical location puts it as a vantage transit position in Nigeria's internal trafficking route from the north to the south or vice versa; its border shared with the Republic of Benin makes it a conduit of sub-regional traffickers, and the convergence of points found in other studies to be conducive to conditions where trafficking thrives are found in these communities.

This study is exploratory yet very important as it adds to the literature on the internal dynamics of trafficking in Nigeria. It presents a background to be built on, not only for the further understanding of how endemic trafficking works locally but also to understand the fine line between what seemingly looks like out-migration as opposed to enticed migration facilitated by traffickers and brokers. Further studies are thus recommended to capture in better detail the extent of trafficking, the networks, deficiencies in public services delivery, and the operationalization of counter-trafficking protocols and initiatives. For farming communities, this study serves to underscore the potential incorporation of agricultural extension agents to disseminate anti-trafficking messages during their interactions with farmers. Finally, government needs to join forces together with community-based organization (CBOs), the immigration agency, and the police force in order to create and sustain anti-trafficking awareness programmes in the farming communities of the state.

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