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IMPACT OF CROSS-BORDER HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON SECURITY IN SEME-IDIROKO BORDER COMMUNITIES OF LAGOS AND OGUN STATES

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Abstract

The article looked at how cross-border human trafficking affected Seme-Idiroko border's effective defense against illicit transborder crossings into the border communities. From a target population of 46,105 respondents, a sample of 397 was obtained using the Rakesh sample size formula. The respondents were drawn from the Nigeria Customs Service, the Nigeria Immigration Service, and the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons in Seme-Idiroko border communities; the Office of the National Security Adviser to the President, Abuja; and residents of the border communities of Seme, Idiroko, Kpogji-Ague, and Igolo. Additionally, using the purposive sampling approach, a sample of 15 respondents was chosen from the sample size. structured questionnaire, and in-depth interviews, were used to generate the data. Data were equally generated from secondary sources. While the in-depth interview data were analyzed using the narrative-analytic approach, the questionnaire data were analyzed using weighted average. Utilizing relational-content analysis, data from secondary sources were analysed. The results revealed, among other things, that border security in Seme and Idiroko border communities was in worse shape given the rise in cross-border human trafficking in the border communities. Findings also demonstrated how security in Seme and Idiroko border communities has been severely hampered by insufficient government responses to cross-border human trafficking. The government was advised, among other things, to increase collaborations with pertinent stakeholders in order to address the detrimental impacts of human trafficking on security in Seme-Idiroko border communities.

Keywords: Border, Border States, Human Trafficking, Trafficking, Security

Introduction

The spate of trans-border security threats has continued to increase in Seme-Idiroko border communities of Lagos and Ogun States, and this has increased the activities of cross-border human traffickers who operate mainly through Seme-Idiroko border communities. Given the rise in the incidences of cross-border human trafficking through the borders, increasing number of Nigerian girls, women and boys are forcefully recruited from many villages in the

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country and transported out of the country through Seme-Idiroko borders to other states for the purpose of exploitation. Land borders in Seme-Idiroko are largely porous, and this serves as a lure to human traffickers to transport their victims through the borders. to facilitate the foregoing, human traffickers sometimes bribe border security personnel at the borders so as to facilitate the illicit activities, which largely compromises the security of the borders (Okereke & Okoli, 2020).

Given that human trafficking is a universal phenomenon, it affects many states in various ways. The economically-developed countries are in the "demand side" of human trafficking, which is motivated by sex and labour exploitation. On the contrary, the economically-underdeveloped countries are in the "supply side" of human trafficking, which is motivated by unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, among other things, which makes government in such countries to lose potential contributions of trafficked youth to other economies. Globally, estimate showed that annual proceeds from human trafficking was over $31 billion, while average earnings from crime of human trafficking involving Nigerians were nearly $100 million (Okereke, 2018). With increase in the spate of human trafficking in Nigeria, the country had 3.39 victims of the crime as at 2018, a figure that was higher than the number of victims in North Korea and Pakistan (Meltzer, 2022).

With over 160 illicit routes into Seme and Idiroko, cross-border human trafficking has continued to worsen in Ogun and Lagos States (Oladipupo, 2021). From 2011 to 2022, nearly 5% of victims of cross-border human trafficking rescued in Benin republic were Nigerians, showing that Seme-Idiroko land borders are largely porous. This increases the spate of crimes in the borders posts and border communities given the link between cross-border human traffickers and other trans-border criminal gangs such as drug smugglers and arms traffickers (Okereke, 2018).

Despite all efforts by the government such as Operation Fire-For-Fire and Passport to Safe Migration in Idiroko-Seme border frontiers, the spate of cross-border human trafficking has continued to deteriorate. In 2018, 200 vulnerable Nigerian girls being trafficked to Ghana were rescued in Seme, and over 189 victims of the crime of cross-border human trafficking were rescued in Seme in 2022 (Alabi, 2022). Therefore, this paper is geared towards the examination of various ways cross-border human trafficking affected security in Seme-Idiroko border communities of Lagos and Ogun States as well as assessment of responses of the government to the crime

Conceptual Elucidation

Border Communities

The concept of border is reviewed before the general concept of border state in order to enhance our understanding of the concept. Border can be defined in diverse ways. According to Jatau (2019), border is defined as a barrier that guards a state from illegal cross-border entry or exit by both external and internal actors. Given the strategic location of borders, they attract economic advantages such as opportunity of having big markets which affords the residents the of border communities the opportunities to take advantage of price differences in both sides of the borders. nevertheless, borders equally bring about smuggling of goods, drugs trafficking, among other trans-border crimes, with their attendant adverse consequences. Though the definition by Jatau is vital in this paper, it did not capture the nexus between border and state sovereignty needed in this paper.

Many scholars including Konrad (2015), and Hagen (2021) asserted that border shows the point where a state's sovereignty terminates, and where another state's sovereignty begins. For Konrad and Hagen, border is a legal means of determining national identify since diplomatic recognition is

accorded to states by international community when such states are able to effectively protect its territory, but this did not show the meaning of "soft" and "fortified" borders which is important in the understanding of the nature of Seme-Idiroko borders.

Gulasckaram (2012) contributed to the definition of border. According to Gulasckaram, fortified borders are regulated borders strictly safeguarded by soldiers, while soft borders do not have stringent security checks and allows easy passage of goods and people through it. Though this is partly related to the meaning of the concept in this paper, it did not cover the meaning of border communities. Therefore, border communities is defined, in this paper, as Seme and Idiroko border communities showing the shared borders between Nigeria and Benin Republic, while at the same time, showing the limits of sovereignty of the two countries and the extent to which they can protect their borders.

Human Trafficking

Trafficking, in the past, meant illicit movement of goods across international borders, particularly illicit goods for the purpose of making profit. In the contemporary time, the concept of trafficking has been expanded to mean movement of mainly vulnerable people from one location to another for the purpose of exploiting them. The concept of trafficking emerged from "traffic", which roughly translated to transportation or travel. Trafficking is perceived as a lucrative criminal activity in the world (Okereke, 2018). Though the foregoing definition of trafficking is appropriate to this paper, it did not cover the meaning of human trafficking.

Jatau (2019) contributed to the definition of human trafficking by examining its three aspects, which are the Act, the Means and the Purpose. According to Jatau, the Act comprises of what is done such as harbouring or recruitment of victims, while the Means comprises of how it is done such as force and fraud. The purpose if the reason for the crime which is exploitation. This shows that human trafficking involves smuggling and exploitation, but this did not show the meaning of internal and external human trafficking which is vital in the understanding of border security in Lagos and Ogun States.

More so, Okereke and Okoli (2020) defined human trafficking by examining its types which are internal and external human trafficking. While internal human trafficking takes place within a country, external human trafficking takes place across the borders and involves the participation of diverse actors located in different parts of the world. Though definition by Okereke and Okoli captured internal and external human trafficking, it did not show nature of the crime.

Human trafficking is an organised criminal activity involving forceful recruitment of vulnerable individuals by force, fraud, among others, and their transportation from one place to another for the purpose of exploiting them. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime otherwise known as the protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish trafficking in Persons offenders, especially women and children in Article 3 defined human trafficking as recruitment, transportation, transfer or receipt of persons through the use of force, fraud or abuse of power with the aim of exploiting them (Rusev, 2013). Though the idea of Rusev is largely related to this study, it did not significantly cover the meaning of the concept in this paper. Therefore, cross-border human trafficking is defined, in this paper, as forceful recruitment of vulnerable youths from poor families in Nigeria or Benin Republic, and their transportation from the country of origin through Seme-Idiroko borders to a country of destination by trafficker(s) for the purpose of sexual and or labour exploitation.

Security

The concept of security can be viewed from diverse perspectives. According to Brauchi (2013), security in objective sense is defined as a measure of absence of threats to acquired values, but in a subjective sense, security is used in measuring absence of fear regarding possible attack on cherished values. Security can equally be perceived as a process of political as well as social interaction, which shows that cultures, norms, social values and collective identities of people are important in the understanding of security, but Brauchi did not show the meaning of security from political angle.

Orolundare-Ayeni (2021) contributed to the definition of security by examining the concept from political angle. In this regard, security means protection of a sovereign state from external attacks, which is related to the realist perspective of security. This definition is vital in the understanding of the role of states in ensuring effective border security, but it did not clearly show the referent objects of realist and idealist perspectives to security.

According to Adeleke (2021), security can be defined by looking at the concept from realist and idealist perspectives. For the realists, security means safeguard of a state as well as its primary interests from attacks by external actors, while idealists define security as elimination of war, hunger, diseases, poverty, among other things. The referent object of security for the realists is the state, while the referent object of security for idealists is the individuals. Nonetheless, the foregoing definition of security did not cover securitization and constructivist perspectives to security which is also needed in this paper.

The definition of security from securitization and constructivists perspectives are partially-related to the meaning of the concept in this paper because of the "pull" and "pull" factors that drive cross-border human trafficking. For securitisation theorists, the meaning of security is context and subject specific, while for constructivists, the meaning of security is socially-constructed (Eroukhanoff, 2018), but this did not largely meet our requirements. Therefore, security is defined, in this paper, as protection of Lagos and Ogun States, especially its borders from illicit border crossings and protection of the individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities from poverty, violent attacks, diseases, illiteracy, injustice, amongst other cherished values.

Empirical Review of Related Literature

With respect to ways cross-border human trafficking affect security in Nigeria, Njoku (2015) carried out a study on human trafficking was examined with particular reference to its effects on Nigeria's national image. While the finding showed that human trafficking dents Nigeria's image abroad, it did not cover impact of cross-border human trafficking on safety of individuals and border protection in Seme and Idiroko borders. In a qualitative study by Osezue (2016), human trafficking was examined focusing on gender issues in Edo State. Data were collected from 120 household heads, out of which 18 of them were interviewed using Focus Group Discussion. Analyzing data collected using narrative-analytic technique, it was revealed that sex trafficking has adverse impact on parents and families of victims, but the findings did not extend to families in Seme and Idiroko border communities or to border protection in Seme-Idiroko border communities.

Similarly, Ibrahim and Omoregbe (2020) examined human trafficking in Nigeria generally using qualitative methods of data collection and data analysis. Findings revealed that poor human capital development, low life esteem and poor economic advancement of the victims are some of the impacts of human trafficking, but Ibrahim and Omoregbe did not cover impacts of cross-border

human trafficking through Seme and Idiroko borders on security in Lagos and Ogun States. In a quantitative study by Sunday (2020), causes, prevalence and ravaging corollaries of illegal cross-border trade on Nigeria's economy were examined. With a sample size of 75 respondents drawn from personnel of Nigeria Customs Service in Illela and Sabon-Biri border posts, findings showed that transborder trade adversely impinge on economy of Nigeria. Nevertheless, the finding did not cover impact of cross-border human trafficking through Seme and Idiroko borders on Lagos and Ogun States. Ojiakor, Nzewi and Arinze (2021) x-rayed the impact of trans-border trade on security of lives and properties in Nigeria from 2003 to 3015 using a mixed research method. Underpinning the study by the rational choice theory, it was revealed that trans-border crimes erodes Nigeria's security, but this did not extend to impact of cross-border human trafficking on Seme and Idiroko border communities, which created gaps in this area of the study.

Regarding the assessment of responses of government toward fight against cross-border human trafficking, Foua and Diriwari (2019) examined new perspectives in combating child trafficking and the shift to an effective child protection in Nigeria using qualitative method. Findings showed that lack of genuine political will as well as focus on real factors that trigger cross-border human trafficking characterise government responses to child trafficking in the country, but the study did not assess government responses toward fighting cross-border human trafficking to ensure security in Seme and Idiroko border communities.

Motseki and Mofokeng (2020) examined stakeholders as catalysts to human trafficking using case studies. Data for the study were collected using semi-structured interview comprising of 36 participants, while data collected were analysed qualitatively. Findings from the study revealed that stakeholders' involvement in anti-trafficking policy implementation as well as service responses are largely inadequate due to lack of integrated strategy aimed at effective policy implementation and strategic cooperative partnerships, but this did not cover assessment of the responses of government towards the fight against cross-border human trafficking in ensuring security in Seme and Idiroko border communities.

In a study by Akanbi (2020), effectiveness of global as well as international cooperation in tackling trafficking in human beings was examined using qualitative methods of data collection and data analysis. Findings of the study showed that exiting laws, treaties, and agreements by states, among other actors, for combating human trafficking is largely idealistic instead of realistic in many countries. Nevertheless, the study by Akanbi did not assess the responses of government towards the fight against cross-border human trafficking to ensure security in Seme and Idiroko border communities.

In a work by Azorondu, Adegbite, Adeyeye and Ajike (2021), strategies on combating human trafficking in Nigeria through exploration of social workers' interventions were investigated. Data for the study were collected from a sample of 380 respondents. Cronbach Alpha was utilised in ensuring internal consistency of primary data collection instrument. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings of the study showed that human trafficking and sexual exploitation do not alleviate poverty, but established that human trafficking is driven by financial reasons. Though Azorondu, Adegbite, Adeyeye and Ajike examined strategies mitigating human trafficking in the country, they did not assess the responses of government in the fight against cross-border human trafficking in ensuring security in Seme and Idiroko border communities.

Idemudia, Okoli, Goitom and Bawa (2021) studied life after trafficking focusing on reintegration of human trafficking survivors in Nigeria. Data for the study were collected using semi-structured

interview with women who are survivors of human trafficking in Nigeria, while the data generated were analysed using thematic analysis. Among other things, it was found that there is inadequate care for victims of human trafficking, which did not adequately capture the issue of maintaining security in Seme-Idiroko border communities. Therefore, there is gap in this area of the study.

Theoretical Framework: Liberal Intergovernmentalist Theory

This paper was anchored on liberal intergovernmentalist theory of liberalism paradigm. According to Verdum (2020), the origin of liberal intergovernmentalist theory is traceable to works of David Mitrany in 1943, "A working Peace System", which formed the foundation for functional theory in International Relations. The theory has many variants, but liberal intergovernmentalist theory by Andrew Moravcsic is adopted in this paper because it best explains the collaboration between Nigeria and its neighbours, especially Benin Republic in combating cross-border crimes through their borders without largely relying on Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The theory is anchored on the belief that states have interests, and their decisions to pursue any line of action is largely determined by their interests. States choose their preferences on the basis of challenges in their domestic setting, suggesting that states determine the role of any regional organisation they subscribe to its membership. The theory identifies the nation-states' governments as major actors in international relations. Nation-states are basically driven by rationality as well as self-interest, which ultimately make the actors to integrate. Major actors involved in integration possess relatively stable as well as fixed preferences throughout the integration process which are developed or built through rational strategic calculations in relation to internal factors.

Szabo (2017) noted that liberal intergovernmentalist theory is anchored on international cooperation, the importance of intergovernmental bargaining through empirical investigations. The basic assumption of the theory is that countries play crucial role in international relations dominated by anarchy. Instead of relying on international organisations for making as well as enforcing policies, states solve their problems through bargaining and negotiations with their counterparts. States usually pursue goals that are limitedly rational. This shows that states make rational choices that are effective in realising their preferences. This is exemplified in agreements enabling cooperation or decisions taken by a state to join an intergovernmental institution. Limited rationality of states in relation to intergovernmental cooperation is understood through clear definition of their preferences, negotiation of agreements as well as creation or adjustments of institutions in order to guarantee that those outcomes for political uncertainty purposes in the future are realised. Liberal intergovernmentalist theory focuses on promotion of national interests of a state as it cooperates with another state. Therefore, the theory is relevant to the paper because recognises the need for cooperation between two diverse countries in enhancing their shared border security.

Methodology

The design of the paper was a mixed method involving the use of survey and historical research designs. The population of the study was 46,105 respondents encompassing staff from Nigeria Customs Service in Ogun and Lagos, Department of Operations/victims and perpetrators of human trafficking in National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, Lagos Zonal Office (64); Department of Border Management in Nigeria Immigration Service in Lagos and Ogun States (221),

Department of Enforcement, Investigation and Inspection, Nigeria Immigration Service (444);Department of Internal Security, Office of the National Security Adviser to the President (143); residents of Gbaji-Yeke in Seme (7,800), residents of Idiroko (23,258); residents of Pudji-Ague, and Igolo (6,981).

Using Rakash sample size formula, SS = $\frac{PS}{[(1+(PS\times PE)2]}$, where PS = Population size (46,105), PS = Precision Error (0.05%), SS = Sample Size, 1 = Mathematical constant, the sample size was 397 respondents. Proportional random sampling was used in administering the questionnaire to the population units. The formula used in arriving at the sample size for each of the departments and border communities, according to Adeleke (2021) is as follows: n = $\frac{\text{Stratum Target Population} \times \text{Sample Size}}{\text{Total Target Population}}$.

Three hundred and eighty-two (397) questionnaire was administered to the respondents, out of which three hundred and sixty-one (361) questionnaire was returned which represented 94%, while nineteen (19) questionnaire was not returned which represented 5%. Also, 2 copies of questionnaire were invalid, which represented 1%. Therefore, a total of three hundred and sixty-one (361) or (94%) questionnaire was duly filled and returned to the respondent for analysis. On the contrary, purposive sampling was used in tentatively selecting 15 respondents on the basis of their depth of knowledge and experience regarding remarkable ways cross-border human trafficking on Seme-Idiroko border communities. However, after the interview of 13 respondents, the researcher discontinued with the interview, after reaching a saturation point, in line with the saturation theory.

Primary data were collected using closed-ended and open-ended questionnaire, while Key Informants Interview (KII) guide was used in generating data from the experts. Secondary data were collected from NAPTIP websites, and NAPTIP Reports from 2011 to 2022 on human trafficking in Lagos and Ogun States.

Data from questionnaire were analysed using weighted average. Weighted average = $\frac{\text{Sum of Products}}{\text{Number of Respondents}}$ (Adeleke, 2021). Sum of products is given as follows: f1 (w1) + f2 (w2) + f3 (w3) + f4 (w4) +f5 (w5), where "f" is each number in the frequency from responses for each question that was asked and "w" is the corresponding weighting factor. The sum of weights is the sum of all the weights which = w1 + w2 + w3 + w4 + w5 (Adeleke, 2021).

Weighted average = $\frac{\text{Sum of Products}}{\text{Number of Respondents}} = \frac{\sum fw}{\sum f}$. The decision rule is that weighted average value from 1.00 to 2.49 is unagreeable, while weighted average value ranging from 2.50 to 3.49 is considered as neutral. Also, weighted average value ranging from 3.50 to 5.00 is agreeable (Jatau, 2019). Data from in-depth interview were analysed using narrative-analytic method, while data from secondary source were analysed using relational-content analysis.

Result and Discussion

Ways Cross-Border Human Trafficking affected Security in Seme-Idiroko Border Communities

Findings on diverse ways cross-border human trafficking affect security in Seme-Idiroko border communities showed that with weighted average of 3.85, the statement, cross-border sex trafficking increases the likelihood of spread of communicable diseases among residents of Seme-Idiroko border communities in Seme-Idiroko border communities, was agreeable, while weighted average of 4.01 made the statement, cross-border sex trafficking largely increases the level of

crime in Seme-Idiroko border communities, agreeable. With weighted average of 3.95, the statement, cross-border labour trafficking increases violence against vulnerable individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities is agreeable. Also, with weighted average of 3.99, the statement, the higher the level of cross-border human trafficking, the poorer the state of security in Seme-Idiroko border communities, is agreeable.

Findings from in-depth interview are broader than findings from questionnaire. Findings from in-depth interview showed that majority of the respondents agreed that victims of human trafficking were sexually-exploited and forced to work contrary to their will. The victims were equally physically and emotionally devastated. Cross-border human trafficking leads to increase in the number of brothels in the border communities, which in turn, provides hideouts for other trans-border criminal gangs. Some residents of Seme-Idiroko border communities equally connive with criminal elements in creating multiple bush paths to facilitate illicit movements of victims through the borders into or out of Nigeria. the crime of cross-border human trafficking was found to be responsible for incessant clashes between border security agencies and cross-border criminal elements, leading to loss of lives and properties in the border communities. For the perpetrators and some residents of Seme-Idiroko border communities, cross-border human trafficking is not a crime, but a means of economic survival.

A study by Njoku (2015) found that human trafficking erodes national image of Nigeria as well as portrays the later as a country with massive political and economic crisis, which impinges on the efforts of Nigerian government in realising MDGs goals, especially Education For All. However, the foregoing studies did not identify how forced prostitution, increase in the level of forced labour, buying as well as selling of victims of external sex trafficking significantly increase the likelihood of linkage between the factor and arms trafficking in Lagos and Ogun States, which are largely covered in this study. Osezue (2016) found out that human trafficking has negative impacts on parents and families of its victims Edo State. Though the findings of the study are slightly similar to the findings of this study in terms of issues covered, it differs from this study in terms of depth of issues covered, and geographical scope of the study.

In addition, the findings of this study are different from the findings from studies carried out by Ibrahim and Omoregbe (2020), Sunday (2020), Ojiakor, Nzewi, and Arinze (2021), among others, in terms of depth of issues covered and focus of the studies. Ibrahim and Omoregbe (2020) identified effects of human trafficking as poor human capital development, low life esteem, and poor economic advancement, while findings by Sunday (2020) showed that human trafficking negatively impinges on Nigeria's economy. Finally, findings from a study by Ojiakor, Nzewi and Arinze (2021) focused on influence of trans-border crimes on security of lives and properties in Nigeria covering Seme border from 2003 to 2015, which is different from this study in terms of time frame covered by the study. However, the findings by Ojiakor, Nzewi and Arinze (2021) is related to the findings of this study by identifying cross-border crimes as being responsible for deterioration of security situation in Nigeria, which is partly one of the findings of this study. Therefore, with weighted average of 3.99, the statement, the higher the level of cross-border human trafficking, the poorer the state of security in Seme-Idiroko border communities, is agreeable and accepted in line with the decision rule.

The foregoing findings agree with the basic tenets of the liberal intergovernmentalist theory. This shows that for security to be adequately maintained in Seme-Idiroko border communities and in its adjacent border communities in Benin Republic, the two countries require closer collaboration.

This is because security threats in Nigeria would affect development in Benin Republic and vice versa. Since states are rational actors and are driven by self-interests in its relations with others states, each of these states have come up with divergent border security mechanisms which they think could satisfy their self-interests and ensure protection of lives and properties within its borders. This shows that the inability of the government to curtail cross-border sex and labour trafficking through Seme-Idiroko borders would continue to deteriorate the level of border protection in Seme-Idiroko border communities. This shows that our findings that the higher the level of cross-border human trafficking, the poorer the state of security in Seme-Idiroko border communities, is valid to the extent that it is largely supported by findings from previous studies, in-depth interview, questionnaire as well as by the major assumptions of liberal intergovernmentalist theory anchored on rationality of actors in international relations.

Government Responses toward fighting Cross-Border Human Trafficking to Ensure Security in Seme-Idiroko Border Communities

Findings from questionnaire on government responses to cross-border human trafficking in relation to security in Seme-Idirko border communities showed that with weighted average of 2.18, strategies adopted by government in combating cross-border sex exploitation in Seme-Idiroko border communities are unagreeable. Also, with weighted average of 1.83, the statement, the government largely cooperate with Benin Republic in combating cross-border labour trafficking for enhanced safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko borders, was unagreeable, while with weighted average of 2.27, the statement, laws enacted by government to combat cross-border sex trafficking are largely adequate in preventing safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities, was unagreeable. With weighted average of 3.89, the statement, inadequate government responses to cross-border human trafficking impeded security in Seme-Idiroko border communities.

Findings from in-depth interview are broader than findings from questionnaire in terms of issues covered. Majority of the respondents opined that government used sensitization, prevention, arrest of perpetrators, prosecution of perpetrators, joint border patrols, border closure, partnerships with other countries, among others, in combating cross-border human trafficking to ensure security in Seme-Idiroko border communities. Findings from in-depth interview also showed that responses of government to cross-border human trafficking is not adequate in ensuring security in border communities of Seme-Idiroko border communities.

The study by Nwogu (2015) focused on Nigeria borders and frontier security, which is related to this study in terms of one of the variables studied, but it differs significantly from this study in terms of identification of responses of government in combating cross-border sex and labour trafficking in Lagos and Ogun States. Findings by Foua and Diriwari (2019) identified protection of rights of children, which is largely different from the findings of this study. In a similar manner, findings by Idemudia, Okolie, Goitom, and Bawa (2021) showed that lack of adequate care for victims of human trafficking in Nigeria best explains government responses to the crime of human trafficking in the country, which is significantly related to this study.

Study by Azorondu, Adegbite, Adeyeye, and Ajike (2021), using Cronbach Alpha, found that human trafficking and sexual exploitation do not alleviate poverty, which is not related to this study in terms of methodology. However, the study identified the use of criminal justice system in tackling human trafficking in the country as a response of the government to combating human trafficking

in Nigeria, which is slightly related to this study, but differs significantly from this study in terms of specific issues covered. The findings of the study are not adequate for tackling the crime of cross-border human trafficking because it is not adequate for tackling the problem of drivers of cross-border sex and labour trafficking in the border communities of Seme and Idiroko. The findings by Motseki and Mofokeng (2020) showed that government has adopted stakeholders' involvement in anti-trafficking policy implementation as panacea to human trafficking in Nigeria, but cross-border sex and labour trafficking have continued to fester in the country suggesting that the responses are not adequate in combating the crimes. Findings by Akenbi (2020) showed that government has responded to cross-border human trafficking using treaties, laws, agreements by states, regional, sub-regional, and international operations in combating human trafficking, which are largely idealistic in approach rather than being realistic since the strategy is delinked from combating the drivers of cross-border sex and labour trafficking at individual level. Therefore, with weighted average of 3.87, the statement, inadequate government responses to cross-border human trafficking impeded security in Seme-Idiroko border communities, was accepted in line with the decision rule.

The foregoing findings largely agree with liberal intergovernmentalist theory, which postulates that states through their government are the major actors in international relations. This shows that Nigerian and Beninese governments should be governed by rationality and self-interests in its efforts at combating cross-border sex and labour trafficking in Seme-Idiroko border communities. However, the inability of the government to rationally and self-interestedly carry out the foregoing task brings about insecurity in the border states of Seme-Idiroko border communities, and by extension in Nigeria and in other states within the sub-region. Therefore, our finding, inadequate government responses to cross-border human trafficking has significantly impeded security in Seme-Idirko border communities, is valid in line with the decision rule and findings from questionnaire, in-depth interview and tenets of liberal intergovernmentalist theory.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This paper examined the impact of cross-border human trafficking through Seme-Idiroko borders as well as assess the responses of government to the crime in ensuring safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities. The paper observed that the higher the level of cross-border human trafficking, the poorer the state of security in Seme-Idiroko border communities. It was also observed that inadequate government responses to cross-border human trafficking has significantly impeded security in Seme-Idirko border communities. Therefore, it is concluded that unless government adopts proactive measures in mitigating illicit trans-border movements by human traffickers as well as their victims through Idiroko-Seme borders, the quest for effective protection of Seme-Idiroko border communities would remain a mirage.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

i. The State Governments through border security agencies, community leaders, and traditional institutions should intensify awareness creation on the dangers of cross-border sex and labour trafficking as well as build robust partnerships among them on combating adverse effects of the crime on safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities; and

ii. Since the responses of government toward fighting the crime are largely inadequate, the Federal Government should adopt proactive strategies involving the use of poverty alleviation and biometrics in combating the crime of cross-border sex and labour trafficking in ensuring safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities of Lagos and Ogun states.

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