

Sustainable Development Goals and Human Trafficking in Nigeria

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Abstract

Human trafficking is not only a global issue, it has negatively affected developing countries, particularly those of the sub-Sahara Africa, including Nigeria. This study examined the impact of sustainable development goals implementation on human trafficking in Nigeria for the period 2015–2021. The study used the number of people trafficked from Nigeria as dependent variable while poverty level, youth unemployment, food security, school enrolment, rate of economic growth, and terrorism index as independent variables. To this end, secondary data on the included variables were collected from various sources, including Central Bank of Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, and World Bank Database. In the paper, multiple regression model was used to carry out the analysis. The findings showed that while poverty level, terrorism index, and youth unemployment, have positive impact, food security, school enrolment, and rate of economic growth, have negative impact on human trafficking in Nigeria during the period under review. Thus, it is recommended that Nigerian government must ensure that measures to combat poverty and unemployment are institutionalized in our communities, educational systems, and in the formation of government policy. Our media houses must devise free educational initiatives to help unemployed Nigerian youth, women, and persons with disabilities improve their capacities. Governments must ensure that everyone has equal access to inclusive and equitable quality education and learning, which should be free and mandatory and this will increase school enrolment, thereby reducing trafficking in children. Governments should speed up its campaign against human trafficking, while cooperating with other nations' law enforcement agencies and with non-governmental organizations to prevent human trafficking in the country.

Background to the Study

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as Global Goals, were born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 as a call to universal action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity (Kubiszewski, Mulder, Jarvis, and Costanza, 2021; Sachs et al. 2019; Szetey et al. 2021). The objective was to produce a set of universal goals that meet the urgent environmental, political, and economic challenges facing our world. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) consist of seventeen global goals designed as a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". Each of the 17 goals is expected to be achieved by 2030 in every country around the world (National Voluntary Review, 2017). It ensures the right choices are adopted now to improve life for future generations in a sustainable way. The SDGs are blueprints for the world to experience peace and prosperity at the fullest by 2030 (Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, 2019). The SDGs are set of seventeen interconnected goals which have targets with at least one or two indicators for each target. The goals are:

Goal 1: End poverty

Goal 2: Zero Hunger

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being

Goal 4: Quality Education

Goal 5: Gender Equality

Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Goal 12: Responsible Production and Consumption

Goal 13: Climate Action

Goal 14: Life Bellow Water

Goal 15: Life on Land

Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals (United Nations, 2012)

All the 17 SDGs are integrated in such a way that action in one SDG will affect the outcomes in other SDG(s) and that development must balance social inclusion, economic growth and environmental protection (UN, 2015a). Swain and Yang-Wallentin (2020), have reported on the significance of these three underlying SDGs pillars for both developed and developing countries but noted that whilst the magnitude of increase in sustainable development was highest from the social and environmental pillars, in developed nations, the gains from the environment pillar, in the developing nations, were relatively smaller in magnitude and statistically insignificant, in the short term. They, therefore, encouraged developing countries to continue their focus on the economic and social pillars of the SDGs but without detriment to the environment pillar due to the inter-linkages, synergies and trade-offs between the three pillars (Warchold, Pradhan, and Kropp, 2021).

Young people face numerous challenges against their development and well-being; with unemployment, underemployment and the lack of decent work on the top-end of these challenges. It is notable that Nigeria has been trying to address these problems and, in spite of the progress made in raising basic literacy rates, it has not been able to provide its youth with quality education and requisite skills for the work place (UN, 2018). The SDGs declaration recalls that “unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, is a major concern” (UN, 2015a). Likewise, youth employment is not just about jobs; it can be “decent” only if it incorporates the other dimensions of decent work, such as rights, protection, voice and representation (Soremekun, 2016). As the population of youth in Nigeria continues to increase, greater investment is required to enhance youth education and employment opportunities to leverage their human capital (OECD, 2019). Without such investment, quality education (SDG4) and decent work and economic growth (SDG-8) will remain out of reach for youths in the country.

The UN predicted that by 2050, Nigeria will be the third largest population in the world. Although the increased population could potentially offer the country key human capital for development, millions of Nigerian youths could remain uneducated or poorly educated; portending for unemployable youths. Sustainable development is only useful if it leads to the improved welfare of ordinary people; be it through education or economic empowerment (Prieto-Jiménez, López-Catalán, López-Catalán, and Domínguez-Fernández, 2021). Education, as a concept, is to increase the knowledge, plant ideas, ideals and culture in persons. SDG-4 adopts a lifelong learning approach to education and introduces vocational and tertiary education into the global agenda whereas SDG-8 promotes inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (OECD, 2019). In essence, SDGs 4 and 8 overlap to underscore the acquisition of knowledge and requisite skills for employment and decent work especially because the two SDGs, combined, hold sufficient indicators to track young people through their journey from education to employment and can, therefore, act as salient catalysts to sustainable growth in any country (Fonseca, Domingues, and Dima, 2020; Tremblay et al., 2020).

Education is crucial to sustainable development as it creates a basis for improvement and stability in other spheres of human endeavor as health, climate change, international collaborations and conflict resolution (Agbedahin, 2019; Biesta, 2015). This is in tune with the statement of the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that “sustainable development cannot be achieved by technological solutions, political regulation or financial instruments alone since we need to change the way we think and act. This requires quality education and learning for sustainable development at all levels and in all social contexts” (UN, 2015b).

Inclusive and sustained economic growth is also a prerequisite for sustainable development as generating more decent jobs that provide for living wages and social protection as well as workers' rights and improved livelihoods is the best way to promote the three components of sustainable development of economic growth, social cohesion

and environmental sustainability (Odunuga, 2015). Although unemployment is a global challenge, it is worse in Nigeria, with attendant social, economic, political and psychological consequences. It engenders low gross domestic product (GDP), increase in crime and violence, and can lead to political instability and adverse effects on health (Njoku and Ihugba, 2011). These problems are particularly severe amongst young people, with youth unemployment rates exceeding 50% in Nigeria. This is compounded by the poor quality of jobs that are available to young people. Specifically, Nigeria's vast, rapidly growing population of approximately 200 million people, with an increasing youth bulge of about 123.4 million youths (NBS, 2019), which account for 63% of the population, portends for one of the highest unemployment scenarios in the World (ILO, 2015). In 2017, Nigeria was among 44 member countries of the United Nations that presented its Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the implementation of the SDGs at High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (*Voluntary National Review Report, 2020*). In 2020, Nigeria was ranked 160 out of 195 countries examined in the world's SDG Index.

On financing of the SDGs in Nigeria, reports indicated that the UN and its partners in the country are working towards achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which address the major development challenges faced by people in Nigeria and around the world. Since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015, Nigeria has continued to demonstrate its commitment to achieving the global goals through leadership and ownership of the implementation process. On July 1, 2020 Nigeria officially commenced the process of designing and implementing an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) for financing national development priorities and achieving the SDGs (*UNDP, 2020*). The integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) is a United Nations initiative to support countries in operationalizing the agreements of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) for financing the SDGs. UNDP has been supporting the government and its people by addressing development challenges, strengthening and building institutions that promote inclusive sustainable development and democratic governance. For example, during the COVID-19 crisis, UNDP partnered with Japan to support Nigeria's health and socio-economic response (*UNDP, 2020*).

Since the year 2017, Nigeria has volunteered to be among the countries to review the progress of the 2030 Agenda (Voluntary National Review, 2020) presentations are annual reviews organized by the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Nigeria was among 44 member countries of the United Nations that presented its Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the 2030 agenda and the SDGs at HLPF. The review focuses on 7 SDGs, namely:

- i. Poverty (SDG 1)
- ii. Good Health and wellbeing (SDG 3)
- iii. Quality Education (SDG 4)
- iv. Gender equality (SDG 5)
- v. Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)
- vi. Enabling environment of peace and security (SDG 16)
- vii. Partnerships (SDG 17)

Nigeria's 2020 Voluntary National Review (VNR) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focuses on the key issues of poverty (SDG-1) and an inclusive economy (SDG-8), health and wellbeing (SDG-3), Education (SDG-4), Gender equality (SDG-5), and the enabling environment of peace and security (SDG-16), and partnerships (SDG-17). This VNR was developed while facing huge challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic testing Nigeria's public health systems, and of the collapse in oil prices, for an economy still getting 86% of public revenue from oil and gas. The report outlined the institutional dimensions for creating an enabling policy environment for the implementation of the SDGs through its Economic and Recovery Growth Plan (ERGP) (2017-2020). The ERGP's focus on economic, social and environmental dimensions of development makes it consistent with the aspirations of the SDGs.

SDG3-Good Health and Wellbeing: While Nigeria has some poor health outcomes, such as high rates of maternal mortality, there have been improvements in the under-five mortality rates (from 157 per 1000births to 132per 1000births). COVID-19 has challenged our public health system. A key lesson in protecting the public in times of such pandemics is hygiene and the need to prioritize universal access to clean water and energy. Nigeria's current access to basic drinking water stands at 64%.

SDG4-Quality Education: Ensuring youth are well-educated and able to transit to productive employment through the digital economy can help reduce poverty (SDG-1) and help diversify growth beyond dependence on oil and gas. A key challenge confronting the country has to do with Out-of-School-Children, a demographic challenge that relates to an interplay between employment (SDG-8), education (SDG-4), poverty (SDG-1) and the digital economy (SDG-17). With a population of approximately 200 million people, regional disparities indicated that, with 78% of South Western children able to read full or part sentences, while only 17% of North Eastern children can. With only 1.6% of GDP devoted to education, provision of quality education has been inadequate.

SDG8-Decent Work and Economic Growth: In terms of decent work and economic growth (SDG-8), Nigeria's informal economy is one of the largest on the continent - estimated at 53% of the Labour force and accounting for 65% of GDP. It is estimated that 75% of all new jobs are informal. Youth have a combined unemployment and under-employment rate of 55.4% or 24.5 million. This is the youth bulge that needs to be building the required skills to move into secure and less precarious forms of employment.

The Voluntary National Report (2020) also indicated that good progress have been made in the domestication process of the SDGs in Nigeria. First, there is an ongoing realignment of the National Statistical System (NSS) with the requirements and Indicators of the SDGs. Second, Nigeria has developed its home-grown 'Integrated Sustainable Development Goals (iSDG Model) - an analytical framework for assessing how policy making can better address the indivisible nature of the SDGs. Third, the report has drawn on past evaluations across the Seven priority SDGs and has an ongoing evaluation of the country's performance in SDG 3&4. This attempt to systematically use evaluations is an

innovation in the Nigerian government. Nigeria is strengthening the evidence based planning and accountability mechanisms at State level for accelerating the SDG decade of action in the country, the report says. In summary, in 2020, Nigeria was ranked 160 out of 195 countries examined globally and scored an index of 50.4 on the 2020 world's SDG Index. The country ranked 139 out of 163 countries examined globally and scored an index of 54.2 (United Nations, 2022).

Despite the commitment of Nigeria to the Sustainable Development Goals, the country continues to lag behind when it comes to socio-economic development that targets the goals. The country had also failed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which had similar development aspirations and a similar 15-year implementation period. For instance, in the 2019 SDG index, Nigeria ranked 159th among 162 countries compared in terms of their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Nigeria's performance index score of 46.4 in 2019 is just a little above the score for the Central African Republic, a country sitting at the lowest rung of the index (Ajala, 2022).

Nigeria is undisputedly the giant of Africa and the most populous nation – with a population of 213 million and an estimated GDP of 45 trillion naira as at the first quarter of 2022 making it the largest economy in the continent. Between 1999 and 2021, the number of people living in Nigeria increased at a rate above two percent with a current death and infant mortality rate of 11 and 56 deaths per 1000 live births respectively. The giant of Africa in 2021 became the global headquarters of poverty with an estimated 92.5 million of its population living in extreme poverty. A recent report by the Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa – “Africa 2030: Sustainable Development Goals Three-Year Reality Check” corroborated that little progress has been made towards the achievement of SDGs in Africa as a whole. One in three Africans is at the risk of food insecurity while more than half of the global poor (those who earn under \$1.90 PPP per day) are found in Africa. The World Bank has also projected that the number of Nigerians living below the poverty line will increase to 95.7 million in 2022 (World Bank, 2021).

On education, according to UNICEF (2021), about 10.5 million of the Nigeria's children aged 5-14 years are not in school which is the largest in the world. In 2017, the World Economic Forum ranked Nigeria 120th out of 136 countries with regard to the quality of primary education. Nigeria is a country with a very low Human Capital development Index rating and a high level of youth unemployment. The country's unemployment rate rose from 27.1 percent to 33.3 percent from December to March 2021 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). There have been twin problems of underfunding and misfunding of educational sector making it increasingly difficult produce enough qualified graduates.

On health, National Bureau of Statistics (2021) review of the budgetary allocation to the health sector in the last twenty years revealed that Nigeria has never met the 15% target agreed to by the heads of state of the AU countries at the summit which is known as the Abuja Declaration (2001). The allocation to the health sector in the 2022 proposed budget is just 4.34% of the entire budget. This means that Nigeria has again failed to meet the 15% commitment it agreed to since 2001.

The Sustainable Development Goals Report (2022), highlighted that the global COVID-19 pandemic has caused a humanitarian and economic crisis that poses risks for the attainment of SDGs and compromised the efforts on the “Decade of Action.” The report estimated an additional 60 million Nigerians were pushed into poverty and food insecurity is expected to nearly double. Fragile health care systems are being tested, and women are at risk of being left out even more. “Slow economic activity and lockdowns had compounded the problems of unemployment and debt while decreased remittances, development assistance and domestic revenue are added risks to financing for development and achievement of SDGs.

One of the sustainable development goals (SDG) is to achieve universal extreme poverty and hunger eradication by the year 2030. The Nigeria government has established SDG unit under the presidency and directed state and local government to establish to enable it achieve the goals. Since its inception, billions of naira has been expended by both federal and state governments, other directory of poverty eradication programme was also established from federal to local government levels and huge financial obligation is expanded. Many Non-governmental organizations (NGO'S) also collaborate with state and federal government in its effort to eradicate governments in its effort to eradicate poverty and human trafficking (Musa, Deribe and Sani, 2014).

Besides, the national agency for the prohibition of traffic in persons and other related matters (NAPTIP) was established. The establishment of NAPTIP is a clear demonstration of the political will of the federal government of Nigeria to tackle the serious scourge of trafficking in persons. It further demonstrated the country's commitment to her international delegations as a signatory to the transnational organized Crime Convention and trafficking in persons. The NGOs, state government, Local governments and other stakeholders have over the year been collaborating in one way or the other to achieve the desired objective of eradicating poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and conducts those subject human beings to all forms of exploitation, including human trafficking and child labour (Musa et al 2014).

There appears to be a consensus among stakeholders that Nigeria does not have the capacity to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. One of the biggest stumbling blocks to the achievement of the goals is that the country requires \$350 billion to achieve the goals. \$350 billion is about 800% more than the entirety of the country's 2022 budget and 37.28% of this budget will be financed by debt. Lack of planning and poor implementation are some of the reasons identified for the country's likely failure to achieve these goals. Others say the country's budgetary allocations and priorities have gone in the opposite direction of the achievement of the goals.

Corruption has been a cog in wheel of development in Nigeria over the years. Corrupt activities in Nigeria have denied the overwhelming majority of the citizen of the country the gains inherent in sustainable development goals. The corruption denied the citizens the basic means of livelihood, with a worsening level of unemployment which has eroded

almost all available goals of sustainable development and the policy strategies inherent in it. For instance, despite the existence of 17 sustainable development goals target aimed at reducing poverty in the country not much have been achieved due to corrupt tendencies in the both bureaucratic and political system of Nigeria. Policies such as the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP) and National Directorate of Employment (NDE), as well as the huge amounts of gains derived from oil and other natural resources which was supposed to be geared towards reduction of poverty for easy attainment of sustainable development failed. According to Ogbeidi (2013), corruption in Nigeria remains the biggest hindrance to the implementation of sustainable development. The author noted that Corruption is the most critical impediment in achieving the sustainable development goals in Nigeria. Corruption in the country's political, administrative, and bureaucratic cycle which often takes the form of acceptance of gratification, inducements, embezzlement of the fund, conflict of interest, influence peddling, padding of budget, extortion, fraud, bribery, misappropriation, falsification of financial records, these acts perpetrated by some public office holders are inimical to the implementation of sustainable development goals in Nigeria (Aina and ICPC, 2014). Many citizens of the country are still living in abject poverty, which keeps growing due to corruption (Aminu and Onimisi, 2014). There has also been the problem of insecurity arising from terrorism, insurgency, kidnapping, banditry, and human trafficking from Nigeria.

Literature Review

Conceptual and Theoretical Review

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) initiative is the successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and is widely known as “Agenda 2030”; involving the “five Ps” agenda: people, prosperity, planet, peace and partnership, which are for all countries and peoples of the world (Tremblay, Fortier, Boucher, Riffon, and Villeneuve, 2020). For about 12 years, the MDGs made some progress in some areas including: reducing income poverty, driving down child mortality, and improving maternal health as well as increasing literacy levels (UNDP, 2015). The SDGs are built on the successes of the MDGs, while including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable production and consumption, peace and justice, good governance, among other priorities. According to UNDP (2015), the SDGs are an inclusive agenda, and poverty eradication is at the heart of the 2030 agenda, and so is the commitment to include all and sundry to make a positive change for both people and planet. This means that SDGs are of the people, by the people and for the people (Ajidani, Akawu and Eggon, 2019). SDG were adopted by 193 countries with Nigeria as one member. The implementation of "Global Goals" kicked off in many countries, including Nigeria, in January, 2015 (Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, 2019).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) officially known as –Transforming our Worlds is a set of seventeen aspirational –Global Goals with 169 targets and agenda, adopted to build on and complete the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals. Also known as Agenda 2030, it includes a specific target to end all forms of violence against children. Across several other targets of the SDGs is

mainstreamed neglect, abuse and exploitation of children. The Target of the SDGs specifically commits the international community to: –Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour and modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all forms (Chinyere and Ezevunwo, 2021). By this target, the world community has for the very first time, according to ILO (2017), acknowledged on the international development agenda, the right of all children to live free from fear and violence.

Trafficking is defined by The Trafficking in Persons' Law Enforcement and Administration Act (2003), as all and attempted acts involved in the recruitment, transportation within or across nation's borders, purchases, sales, transfer, receipt or harbouring of a person involving the use of deception, coercion or debt bondage for the purpose of placing or holding the persons, whether for or not involuntary servitude (domestic, sexual or reproductive) in forced or bonded labour, or in slavery-like conditions. In the same vein, human trafficking according to Article 3(a) of the United Nations Palermo Protocol is conceptualized as recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, and receipt of persons, by means of threat, use of force, and other forms of coercion. It also entails use of abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power in giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation (United Nations Palermo Protocol, 2000).

Adepelumi (2015), argues that human trafficking is a transnational organized crime that impacts not only on the individual victims but the entire society. The menace is seen to have been undermining the national peace and security. However, there are two major aspects of human trafficking as a transnational organized crime. The first of this kind remains the human smuggling that includes importation of people into a state through evasion of immigration laws. This also involves bringing in illegal foreign people or aliens, unlawful transportation and illegally harbouring aliens already in a country. Second is the human trafficking aspect which entails luring of victims from their homes for sex or labour exploitation (Ogwu, 2002). The victims of lure are given false promises of getting well-paid jobs at the initial stages of luring process and thereafter coerced them into prostitution, domestic servitude, farm or factory labour or other types of forced labour. In both terms of human trafficking, the traffickers confiscate travel documents of the victims and warn them of dire consequences to them should they attempt to escape hence the categorization of the process as a transnational organized crime (Newton, 2008) Also, UNESCO (2006) on human trafficking defined it to be a process which involves the exploitation of a vulnerable person through recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception and abuse of power. Buttressing the UN's definition, Newton (2008) observes that human trafficking has been employed to address an avalanche of crimes and human rights abuses in connection with the recruitment, movement and selling of people into exploitative conditions (Newton, 2008).

Dinan (2000), defines human trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of 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 living or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation". This definition is amplified by Humphrey (2001) when he states that human trafficking is considered to be trade or commerce in people, which has many features of slavery, and which is illegal in most countries. The victims of human trafficking can be used in a variety of ways, including prostitution, forced labour (including bonded labour or debt bondage) and other forms of involuntary servitude.

Andrew (2003) described trafficking of children as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation". The writer also states that commercial sexual exploitation of children can take many forms and include forcing a child into prostitution or other forms of sexual activity or child pornography. This means that child exploitation can also include forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, the removal of organs, illicit international adoption, trafficking for early marriage, recruitment as child soldiers, for use in begging or as athletes (such as child camel jockeys or football players), or for recruitment for cults (Jana, 2003).

In the area of trafficking in women, David (2005), states that "women may become victims of trafficking when they seek assistance to obtain employment, work permits, visas and other travel documents. Traffickers prey on women's vulnerable circumstances and may lure them into crime networks through deceit and false promises of decent working conditions and fair pay". In some cases, according to the author, "women go abroad knowing that they will work in the sex industry, but without awareness of the terrible work conditions and violence that accompany the trafficking business. The further observed that other women answer job advertisements for positions abroad such as dancers, waitresses, and nannies only to find themselves held against their will and forced into prostitution and sexual slavery. In most cases, women are later subjected to physical violence, sexual assault and rape, battery, imprisonment, threats and other forms of coercion". Trafficked people are usually the most vulnerable and powerless minorities in a region. They often come from the poorer areas where opportunities are limited, they often are ethnic minorities, who are displaced persons such as runaways or refugees, though they may come from any social background, class or race.

From the definitions above, it can be deduced that trafficking:

- (i) Affect human beings -men women and children
- (ii) Is illegal
- (iii) Is exploitative
- (iv) Discourages education of child and sustainable women capital accumulation in the source countries
- (v) Is caused by poverty and lack of opportunities for decent jobs

- (vi) Makes individuals susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases
- (vii) Is involuntary
- (viii) Affects all countries both developing and developed.

It is also important to note that this type of crime occur in such a way that many times people do not notice, talk more of grasping the extent and severity of its effects. Human trafficking doesn't exist in isolation; it involves movement of people from one place to another. Mainly there are three complex forces interlinked for trafficking to take place and these include social, political and economic factors. Poverty doesn't only create results in trafficking but when it is combined with other factors socially creates a higher risk for being trafficked. Most people around the world live in poverty, therefore the supply of victims of trafficking is fast. Major indicators of human trafficking are briefly explained below:

- (i) **Unfree recruitment** includes circumstances of deceptive, forced recruitment and the use of scam or intimidation by a third party. Being poor or uneducated would establish pressure or abuse by the third party may create pressure in workers. It also includes deceit about the nature of work, working conditions, salary and wages to any worker who is being aware of the real conditions would not agree to be exposed to those.
- (ii) **Work and life under threats** covers "unfriendly working or living circumstances forced on an individual by the utilization of power, punishment or threat of penalty". This would incorporate unreasonable work or work that isn't sensibly anticipated given the national work law system, degrading living conditions, constraints of various kinds of opportunity and freedom, for example, opportunity of development and forcing "excessive dependency "on the worker by the employer.
- (iii) **Difficulty to change the employer.** Changing the employer may involve risk or penalty to the worker and it may limit their freedom. Workers feel that they remain to lose effectively earned wages if they leave. Most trafficked workers reported that their passports and other personal documents are taken by the employer and they couldn't access them on request. (Harroff-Tavel and Nasri 2013).
- (iv) **Deception** relates to the failed conditions to deliver what has been promised to the worker. For example, it can be the agreed contract, working hours, vacation, housing and living conditions, job location or the identity of the employer. Many children are recruited through false promises, concerning food, shelter, education and number of visits to their parents. Workers are also obliged to work extra hours or days beyond the limits prescribed by the law. They can be denied taking a break, days off and required to take over shifts of colleagues who are absent and forced to work overtime without being paid (ILO 2009).
- (v) **Physical and sexual violence.** Physical and sexual violence is an important indicator of trafficking. Employers can apply physical or sexual violence to workers or their family members. Beatings, deprivation of food, sexual assaults, bad touch, also rape is common among female and children's workers. Workers

are afraid to seek justice as they fear to lose the job due to the threats from their employer. Violence can also incorporate forcing workers to take alcohol or drugs to gain control over them. Violence can also be used to force an employee to attempt tasks that were not part of the initial understanding or agreement, for example, to engage in sexual relations with the employer or a relative or to attempt mandatory household work besides, their "ordinary" task. Workers might be locked up, monitored to keep from getting away from their workplace, have their movements controlled inside the work environment, using cameras or guards. Workers are also often restricted to communicate with family, companions, and neighbours (UNODC 2009).

This study is anchored on the routine activity theory propounded by Felson and Cohen (1980) to explain the reasons why the problems of human trafficking continue to occur in our societies despite the measures put in place for its containment and also meant to deter indulgence. The authors predicated their submissions on the belief that crime is relatively pushed by social causes such as poverty, inequality and unemployment (Goff, 2000). The theory therefore postulates that organization of routine activities in society creates opportunities for criminal activities; and this simply means that the daily routine activities of individuals or group of people and their socialization which include but not limited to where they work, what they do and where they live, strongly influence criminal activities in the society. According to the theorists, the reason for the increase in criminal activities is that the propensity of contemporary society offers more opportunities for crime to take place in all ramifications (Jasinki and Navarro, 2012).

The theory further posits that routine activities from opportunities over time and space amongst people can make crime easy and how low risk or difficult to manage or totally eliminate (Felson and Clarke, 1994). Although routine activity theory focuses on range of factors that intersect in time and space to produce criminal opportunities and in turn criminal happenings. This particular theory studies crime as an event that closely relates crime to its environment and emphasizes its ecological process, thereby diverting academic attention away from mere offenders. The theory does not vividly explain why some people commit crime and others do not. It however proceeds to suggest that crime can increase as well decline without any change in the number of those involved in crime (Jasinki and Navarro, 2012). The theory identifies socio-economic cum political problems, availability of market, enabling environment and prevalence of bias in the justice system in a country as factors motivating the menace among individuals or group of people.

Again, sustainable development theory was propounded by Lere (1991). The author stated that the study of sustainable development theory cannot be separated from the implementation of relevant policies (Steer & Wade-Gery, 1993, Stagl, 2007). Sustainable development (SD) has experienced the germination of ideas, and then a series of sustainable development theory (SDT) practices, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit. Many changes have taken place and SD has evolved from tackling environmental issues to deal with the global strategic issue (Olawunmi and Chan, 2018).

After 1992, the conflicts of interest among the economies, society, and environment became increasingly apparent. The need to introduce the concept of cooperative governance of global stakeholders became more crucial (United Nations, 2012). Under this background, the United Nations held the “Rio+20” Summit in 2012. The summit indicated that the green economy was the key to solve conflicts between development and the environment (Barbier, 2012). Moreover, global cooperative governance can solve conflicts among economic, social, and environmental issues. By the end of the summit, SD expanded from three pillars to four: economic, social, environmental, and governance (Zhu, 2016).

In September 2015, more than 150 heads of state and government participated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit at the United Nations headquarters in New York. The summit assessed the implementation of MDGs and adopted “Transforming our World – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (United Nations, 2015). The agenda set out the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), covering 17 focus areas and 169 specific targets. Compared to MDGs, SDGs changed the traditional concept of development fundamentally. Besides solely pursuing economic growth, SDGs put forward the concept of inclusive growth and SD featuring coordinated economic, social, and environmental development.

Empirical Review

Ola (2013) examined the impact of sustainable development goals on human trafficking in Ogwa City in Edo State of Nigeria. The study is designed as empirical research and 500 households are selected in Ogwa City in Edo State. The findings of the study show that there is significant relationship between the number of those trafficked to abroad and the expected improvement in their social well-being. Secondly, the findings of the study reveal that poor standard of living in the city in spite of the implementation of SDGs lure many into the hands of human traffickers. Lastly, the findings of the study show that the families of the victims attain higher standard of living than their counterparts. The study therefore recommends that exodus of people out of the country can be curbed if SDGs are faithfully implemented and poverty is reduced and each household attains a level of well-being.

Mbakogu (2015), undertook a study on the impact of sustainable development goals on human trafficking in Nigeria. The authors used descriptive statistics as a method of analysis. The findings showed that unemployment, percentage of workforce in agriculture, literacy rate and mortality rate under five have negative and insignificant effect on trafficking in Nigeria.

Huttmanova and Valentiny (2019), analyzed the actual situation in the case of economic and environmental pillar of sustainable growth and economic development within 4 EU member states, using indicators as Sustainable Economic Development Assessment (SEDA), Human Development Index (HDI), and Environmental Performance Index (EPI) in the 2012-2018. The study employed ordinary least squares regression as estimation

techniques. The study revealed that an improvement in one dimension of sustainability caused positive results in economic development in the countries.

Bassetti, Blasi and Sedita (2020), researched interconnection among environmental conditions-economic performance-economic development in 3 Sub-Saharan African countries between 2012 and 2019. The study employed pooled panel data regression as estimation techniques. The empirical evidence confirmed that well-advised environmental orientation positively affects economic situation of nations and contribute in increasing economic development in the countries.

Kiselakova, Stec, Grzebyk and Sofrankova (2020), examined the total synthetic measure value of sustainable development goals for each EU country using a multidimensional comparative analysis of the EU countries in terms of sustainable development goals. The statistical evaluation of this complex phenomenon was based on 108 statistical indicators describing 17 goals of sustainable development which were taken from the Eurostat database. The statistical data applied to the 2012-2019. The ordinary least squares method was applied as a research tool. Passing through consecutive stages, the values of synthetic measures with variables determining the subsequent goals of sustainable development were set. The study led to the ranking of EU countries into groups of high, medium-high, medium-low and low level of achievement of sustainable development goals. The results confirmed that the leaders of sustainable development goals in the EU are Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Austria. Most EU countries have reached the medium level, while Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Cyprus have poorly realized the goals of sustainable development. Due to the growing importance of countries of the Visegrad group in Europe, this article also subjected them to a more detailed assessment in terms of their achievement of sustainable development goals. Among the Visegrad countries, only the Czech Republic has reached a medium-high level of achievement of sustainable development goals. The other three countries, that is, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, hold a similar position in the ranking of EU countries in terms of achievement of sustainable development goals. Considering future generations, the implementation of the goals of sustainable development as well as the identification of key indicators for each country are becoming an important challenge in terms of global market competitiveness.

Chinyere and Ezevunwo (2021), investigated the impact of sustainable development goals on eradication of child labour. Two research questions and two hypotheses were used to guide the study. The study relied on both secondary and primary sources of data collection and employed poverty compulsion theory as our framework of analysis. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to enable the researcher effectively evaluate the impact of sustainable development goals on eradication of child labour in Rivers State. The study revealed that poverty reduction target of SDGs created decent jobs for parents, increased access to essential services, initiated support for inclusive and sustainable business practices, enhanced increase in household income, improved children 's entrepreneurship skills and developed innovative products to meet social

needs of the child. It was recommended that to achieve the SDGs Target on eradication of child labour, there is the urgent need for state policies targeted at deterring parents/guardians from putting their children into child labour, and for the state government to provide child-centred services to ensure children out in the streets are in schools, among others.

Beata, Dana and Erika (2021), investigated the impact of selected global multicriteria indices (through Global Innovation Index, Doing Business Index, Economic Freedom Index, Corruption Perception Index and Human Development Index) on sustainable development (expressed by Sustainable Economic Development Assessment) within 28 EU countries for the period of 2011 to 2018. Secondary data were processed using panel data regression analysis. Results of average score in the field of sustainable economic development showed that Finland achieved the best-performed, while the worst position was recorded by Romania. Looking at the selected indices average scores, the leading position was indicated in the case of Denmark and the worst results was obtained by Greece. Based on the results of the panel regression analysis, the key determinants influencing the sustainable economic growth of the EU countries belong such variables as innovation activity, business environment, corruption issues and human resources. The presented findings provide valuable insight toward to strategic priorities review, as well as, it can also help governments move from plans to action.

Emily, Idowu and Josephat (2022), investigated the impact of sustainable development goals on youth unemployment human trafficking, using the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria, as a study; with a randomly selected sample size of 1,000 unemployed persons, in the 18–49-year-old age group. It examined the causes of youth unemployment as well as levels of awareness of the UN's SDG-4 (Quality Education) and SDG-8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) in the working-age population, and the roles of these SDGs and government in combatting unemployment. Frequency and average-mean descriptive statistics of the factors causing youth unemployment indicated low levels of education, lack of employable skills and experience, and poor policies, etc., as predominant causative factors. Regarding the SDGs, the results revealed a low level of awareness and attainment in the population sampled. Education is central to achieving the SDGs; which can, in turn, mitigate unemployment and impel decent work. The introduction of private sector-driven, government-initiated mandatory one-year skills acquisition and developmental schemes for the youths as well as the provision of soft loans for participants to facilitate entrepreneurial ventures are recommended to reduce youth unemployment and promote economic development.

Oluwaseun, Akeem and Tomisin (2022), examined the impact of sustainable development goals in eradicating poverty and attaining quality education in Nigeria, and the innovative policies and practices that could eradicate poverty and improve quality education in Nigeria. The study adopted secondary sources for data collection, used qualitative research technique for data analysis, and applied structural functionalist theory for smooth interrogation of variables of interest in the disquisition. It was

discovered that although the existing policies possesses some sought of benefits to an extent, little impact of the existing policies has been felt in the Nigerian economy due to lack of continuity, accountability and transparency, nepotism, corruption, inadequate funding, selfishness inefficiency, and bad leadership. However, there is a need for the government to improve the nation's infrastructure, reduce corruption and deploy strategies that will improve the nation's foreign exchange. This, if done will improve the nation's human capital base and position it for sustainable development.

Gaps in the Literature

The review above indicated that a number of empirical studies have been carried out on relationship between sustainable development goals and human trafficking in some countries around the world. It is important to note that these studies yielded conflicting results and conclusions. The methodology used in the present study differs from past studies in several important aspects. First, the scope of the present study is on human trafficking which is not covered in the empirical studies reviewed above. Second, none of the empirical studies reviewed above is done in 2022. These observed shortcomings have created gaps in the literature, thus necessitated another method of explaining the relationship between sustainable development goals and human trafficking in Nigeria. This is the motivation for this study.

Methodology and Data

The study used ex-post facto design to investigate the impact of implementation of sustainable development goals on trafficking in Nigeria during the 2013-2021. To achieve this, the research used time series data on included variables and the method of ordinary least squares multiple regression to estimate the model. The research used data from secondary sources of information. The adoption of this research design is based on the fact that the study relied on historic data obtained from National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), and World Health Organization (WHO) Database. The present study is rooted in both the Theory of Sustainable Development Goals and Routine Activity Theory. While routine activity theory explains the reasons why the problems of human trafficking continue to occur in our societies despite the measures put in place for its containment, and that crime is relatively pushed by social causes such as poverty, inequality and unemployment, the theory of sustainable development has experienced the germination of ideas, and then a series of sustainable development theory practices, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit. Many changes have taken place and sustainable development has evolved from tackling environmental issues to deal with the global strategic issues.

The model used in this study was adopted from Mbakogu (2015) on implications of sustainable development goals in fighting human trafficking in Nigeria. The model is given as:

$$TRAt = a_0 + a_1UNEt + a_2WOAt + a_3LITt + a_4MORt + Ut \text{-----} (1)$$

Where: TRAt = Number of people trafficked from Nigeria at time t; UNEt = Unemployment rate at time t; WOAt =P percentage of workforce in agriculture at time t; LIT = Literacy rate at time t; MORT = Mortality rate under five at time t; and Ut = Error term at time t. Model (1) was modified by replacing percentage of workforce in agriculture (WOA); literacy rate (LIT); and mortality rate under five (MOR), with Poverty rate (POV); Illiteracy rate (ILL); and Corruption perception index (CPI) respectively. Since Mbakogu (2015) model adopted in this research is an optimization model, it is suitable for application in Nigeria. The regression form of the model is stated in log-linear form as:

$$\ln \text{TRAt} = a_0 + a_1 \text{UNEt} + a_2 \text{POVt} + a_3 \text{ILLt} + a_4 \text{CPIt} + \text{Ut} \text{-----} (2)$$

Our a priori expectations are that $a_0 = 0, a_1, a_2, a_3, a_4 > 0$.

Double log was introduced to convert all data (which were in different units) to the same unit to enable easy estimation. The ordinary least square (OLS) regression method is preferred over other methodologies due to its various advantages. Firstly, the OLS technique is unbiased and works efficiently with small sample sizes which is the case in the current study. Secondly, the OLS is flexible and applicable irrespective of whether or not the underlying variables are mutually co-integrated. The time series data collected were summarized and the model estimated by using EViews 10.0 Econometric software.

Empirical Results and Analysis

The models derived in section 3 were estimated using the ordinary least squares multiple regression method and the results are presented in tables below.

Table 1: Regression Results
Dependent Variable: Number of persons trafficked (TRA)

Independent variables	Coefficient	t-value (calculated)
Constant	182.9	4.401
UNE	0.324	3.221
POV	0.516	4.321
ILL	0.433	2.390
CPI	0.302	2.674
R ²	0.845	
F-calculated	3.577	
D - W Calculated	0.998	
t _{0.025, 4}	2.31	

Source: Computed from E-views 10.0 by the researcher, 2022

The results in table 1 above revealed that the fit of the model is good as the explanatory variables jointly accounted for 84.5 percent of the total variation in number of persons trafficked in Nigeria. The low value of Durbin Watson statistic indicates that auto correlation is not a problem. In the table 1, the coefficient of unemployment rate (UNE) is positive, implying positive relationship between it and number of persons trafficked in

Nigeria during the 2013-2021. The t-value (3.221) is greater than tabular value (2.31) at 5 percent level of significance. This indicate that unemployment rate is statistically significant in determining number of persons trafficked in Nigeria during the 2013-2021.

It can also be seen from the table 1 that the coefficient of poverty (POV) is positive indicating positive relationship between it and number of persons trafficked in Nigeria during the 2013-2021. It passed the significant test since its t-calculated (4.321) is greater than its tabular value (2.31) at 5 percent level of significance. This implies that poverty rate is statistically significant in determining number of persons trafficked in Nigeria during the period under review.

Again, the results on the table1 showed that the coefficient of illiteracy rate (ILL) is positive indicating positive relationship between it and number of persons trafficked in Nigeria during the 2013-2021. It passed the significant test as it t-calculated (2.390) is greater than its tabular value (2.31) at 5 percent level of significance. The results mean that illiteracy rate is statistically significant in determining number of persons trafficked in Nigeria during the period under review. It can also be seen from the table 1 that the coefficient of corruption perception index (CPI) is positive indicating positive relationship between it and number of persons trafficked in Nigeria during the 2013-2021. It passed the significant test since it t-calculated (2.674) is greater than its tabular value (2.31) at 5 percent level of significance. The results indicate that corruption is statistically significant in influencing number of persons trafficked in Nigeria during the period under review.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper was able to reveal that the growing rate of human trafficking in Nigeria is positively and significantly related to government's inability to faithfully implement sustainable development goals. In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

Government must look for all means to reduce poverty. An end to poverty is an end to human trafficking. The nation will plough the resources wasted on recruitment, training, equipping of the agency that fights against human traffickers on productive investment. Until a common man on the street can feed his own household, human trafficking cannot end. To this end, government must faithfully implement the policies of SDGs to eradicate extreme poverty in Nigeria.

To reduce unemployment in Nigeria, the government should create jobs and offer people gainful employment. This is as a way to discourage them from becoming victims of fraudulent recruitment agencies who deceive them by promising them good jobs that do not actually exist. (iii) There should be an increased awareness of available economic opportunities. This will encourage people to be aware and also access gainful employment. Compulsory free education for children in Nigeria up to senior secondary school level must be introduced. Non-compliance to the rule by public members should

attract punitive measures on the parents of such a child. This will put parents on red alert to ensure that their wards are in the school, they are not given out in marriage at school age and are not subject of street hawking and abuses. School curriculum should embed skill acquisition, entrepreneurship and skill application. This is meant to reduce the spate of unemployment, and hence reduce human trafficking in Nigeria.

The implementation of school feeding Programme should be extended to all public primary schools across the country. This will encourage parents to ensure that their wards are in the schools. There is a need to address corruption in both the private and public sectors. To achieve this, government should incorporate human rights and development perspectives into anti-corruption work; enacting a comprehensive law that will cover most aspects of human trafficking, specify severe punishment for traffickers, rehabilitate victims, and give law enforcement officers adequate investigation tools; increasing security at border posts, and adequately equipping law enforcement agencies to check the schemes of the traffickers; capacity building at all levels for the eradication of human trafficking; public enlightenment through regular workshops, seminars, conferences, and through print and electronic media; and schools, religious bodies, traditional institutions, and the family should be sensitized on the evils of this abominable crime against humanity.

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