Drivers of Cross-Border Human Trafficking and Security in Seme-Idiroko Border Communities

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Abstract

Cross-border human trafficking remains a significant challenge to effective fight against illicit trans-border movements through Seme-Idiroko borders. The purpose of this paper was to assess how drivers of cross-border human trafficking have undermined safety of individuals and compromised effective protection of Seme-Idiroko borders in order to mitigate the increasing spate of cross-border sex and labour trafficking in the border communities. The study was built around the structural conflict theory by Karl Marx in order to clearly understand the class character of the drivers of human trafficking. Using the Rakash sample size formula, a sample of 397 was determined from a population of 46,105 respondents comprising a target population from NAPTIP, NCS, and NIS in both Ogun and Lagos States; ONSA, Abuja and residents of Idiroko, Seme, Kpodji-Ague and Igolo border communities. Also, 15 respondents were selected from the sample size of the study using purposive sampling method. Data were collected using structured and open-ended questions as well as in-depth interview. Data were also collected from secondary source. Data from questionnaire were analysed using weighted average, while data from in-depth interview were analysed using narrative technique. Data from secondary source were analysed using relational-content analysis. Findings from the study revealed, among other things, that poverty, craving for better life and porous nature of Seme-Idirko borders are among drivers of cross-border human trafficking undermining security in Seme-Idiroko border communities. Among other things, it was recommended that the government should urgently embark on poverty alleviation programmes in Seme-Idiroko border communities with a view to mitigating drivers of cross-border human trafficking undermining security in the border communities.

Introduction

Safety of individuals and effective border protection in Lagos and Ogun States are bedeviled by increase in the drivers of cross-border human trafficking in Seme-Idiroko border communities. The issue of security started with the establishment of Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which placed the duty of maintaining security within a defined territory onsovereignstate. Security then was ensured through effective border protection by the state in order to protect national sovereignty (Adeleke, 2021). In 1994, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) came up with the issue of human security, making the individuals the referent object of security, which is related to protection of the individuals from drivers of human trafficking such as poverty, illiteracy, diseases, and unemployment. This is reinforced by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) which in Section 14 (2) (b) states that the primary responsibility of the government is the welfare and security of the people (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). In reality, the government has usually employed force in ensuring security, but such strategy cannot mitigate drivers of cross-border human trafficking in the country.

Drivers of cross-border human trafficking have supply side and demand side. The supply side of the drivers of human trafficking include poverty, unemployment, porous borders, corruption, which make it easy for vulnerable people to be recruited by human traffickers in Nigeria and other underdeveloped countries, while demand side of drivers of cross-border human trafficking are demand for cheap labour, demand for cheap sex and demand for cheap human organs in developed countries (Okereke &Okoli, 2020). Given the foregoing, and provisions of Articles 2 and 27 of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol, majority of the victims of human trafficking are successfully trafficked into Seme-Idiroko border communities or through the border communities to other countries for the purpose of exploitation.

Drivers of cross-border human trafficking have continued to undermine security in Seme-Idiroko border communities given the high level of unemployment, lack of basic social amenities, and other challenges that plague the border communities. As at 2017, over 15,000 and 5,000 vulnerable Nigerian girls were victims of sex trafficking in Italy and Mali respectively and majority of them were trafficked through Seme-Idiroko borders (Okereke &Okoli, 2020). With the increase in the number of vulnerable youths trafficked out of the

country for labour or sexual exploitation, the government lose their potential contribution to the economy. Out of 10,635 victims of human trafficking rescued from 2011 to 2021, 49% of them were rescued from border states of Lagos and Ogun States, with majority of them unemployed and illiterate youths (NAPTIP, 2021), which shows that security at Seme-Idiroko border posts is largely compromised. With the connivance of some residents of border communities in Seme-Idiroko in Nigeria and Podji-Ague-Igolo in Benin Republic, human trafficking has continued to fester in Lagos and Ogun states resulting in increase in kidnapping, armed robbery, smuggling of illicit goods, sex trafficking, labour trafficking, arms trafficking, among others, in the border communities. Therefore, this paper is geared towards the identification of drivers of cross-border human trafficking with a view to assessing how it affects the safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities as well as effective protection of Seme-Idikoko border posts.

Conceptual Elucidation

Border Community

Before defining border community, it is vital to define the concept of border. According to Bellezza (2013), border is defined as a concept that is linked to sovereignty and territoriality of states. The definition of border by the author did not show how illicit crossing of borders can jeopardise security in border communities, which is vital in this paper. Jatau (2019) defined border as a bridge between one country and another country as well as a driver of economic benefits to the border communities, especially when the residents of such countries take advantage of price and market differences in such areas. Though the definition by the author showed that economic advantages or disadvantages in border communities are vital in definition of border which is vital to this paper, it did not show the relevance of borders in categorizing states as weak or strong, which invariably show the ability or inability in mitigating drivers of cross-border human trafficking.

Eselebor and Kehinde (2021) defined border as the limit of a country's sovereignty and the extent to which a state can prevent illicit trans-border crossings through its borders. The authors equally defined borders as one of the yardsticks used for the categorization of states as weak, failed or strong in international community. However, the definition of security by the authors did not distinguish between soft border and hard border, which is crucial to the

understanding of how drivers of cross-border sex or labour trafficking can be prevented in Seme-Idiroko land borders.

According to Adesina (2019), border is defined by categorizing the concept into soft border and hard border. Soft border is defined as the type of border that permits people and goods pass through the land borders without stringent checks, and this is linked to open and regulated or controlled frontiers. On the contrary, hard border is defined as the type of border with stricter measures and fortified security gadgets. This is related to the idea of border in this paper because is linked to the issue of porous nature of Seme-Idiroko land borders impinging on security of the border communities. However, the definition did not capture the political, social and legal aspects of border which is needed in this paper.

Hagen (2021) defined border as line separating social, legal or political territories from one another, which is crucial for better understanding of the porous nature of Seme-Idiroko border posts and transnational crimes in the border communities. However, the definition of border by the author did not meet our requirement for this paper. Therefore, border is defined in this paper as internationally recognized demarcation between Nigeria and Benin Republic in Seme and Idiroko land borders encompassing border posts and border communities, while border community is defined as Seme and Idiroko (Nigeria) as well as Kpodji-Agua and Igolo (Benin Republic) that are shared borders and are affected by transnational crimes in any side of the border.

Human Trafficking

Definitions of trafficking bySan Francisco Human Rights Commission (2015);Punam and Sharma (2020) showed that the concept is a complex phenomenon driven by social, economic, cultural and other factors. For the authors, trafficking basically involves exploitation which could be in the form of subjecting victims to slavery or sexually exploiting them. This is vital in this paper because it gives us a clue to the understanding of drivers of sex and labor trafficking, which is important to this paper. Therefore, trafficking is defined, in this paper, as forceful movement of persons through Seme-Idiroko land borders into and out of Nigeria for the purpose of exploiting them.

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which is the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish trafficking in persons offenders, especially women and children, in Article 3 which is approved by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 55/25 of November 2000 defined human trafficking as recruitment, transportation, transfer, or receipt of persons through the use of force, fraud, deceit or abuse of power for the purpose of exploiting them (Rusev, 2013). According to Lea (2014), Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish human trafficking offenders otherwise known as the Palermo Protocol was ratified by 142 countries, with 28 of those countries passing domestic laws prohibiting human trafficking.

Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) came into existence in 2000 to reinforce the Palermo Protocol using strategies of 4Ps: prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnerships in the fight against human trafficking. According to United States Department of State (2017), TVPA defined sex trafficking as extreme form of human trafficking. It equally established the sex with a girl under 18 years is considered as human trafficking whether there was consent or not. TVPA equally established that human trafficking can take place without physical transportation of victims from one location to another.Human trafficking is defined by examining its demand and supply sides. The supply side of human trafficking means the push factors such as poverty, marginalization, unemployment, violence, injustice, and lack of access to education on its supply side. The demand side of human trafficking is defined as the pull factors such as demand for cheap labour, and demand for cheap sex in economically advanced countries (Vogel, 2015).Human trafficking is, therefore, defined in this paper as a transnational crime that involves forceful recruitment and transportation of people across Seme and Idiroko land borders through the use of fear, force deceit, fraud, threats, and abuse of power for the purpose of sexual or labor exploitation or both.

Security

Many scholars including Eroukhamoff (2018), Akbar (2015), Ema and Onyishi (2014), Adeleke (2021), among other have defined security from different perspectives including realist, idealist, constructivist and securitization perspectives. For the realists, security means protection of a state and its vital interests from mainly external attacks. The ability of states to achieve security for the realists is largely dependent on their military power (Degaut, 2015).

The referent object of security for realists is the state, while the value protected is national sovereignty, while the threats protected is attacks from external actors which are largely state actors. However, the meaning of security in this paper transcends mere military power to include the ability of states to cater for the basic needs of its citizenry which is vital in mitigating drivers of human trafficking from its supply side.

The idealists define security as protection of the individual and vital interests of a state from attacks. This shows that idealist perspective to security means human security plus state security (Akbar, 2015). The referent object in idealist perspective to security is the individual, while the value protected is wellbeing of the individual especially their safety and freedom. Threats individuals are protected from include hunger, war, illiteracy, and diseases which is related to the meaning of security in this paper given its focus on catering for the needs of people as security strategy.

From securitization perspective, security is subject and context specific (Eroukhanoff, 2018) and this is related to the perspective of constructivists that security is a socially-constructed concept (Adeleke, 2021). The perspectives of security from both securitization and constructivist theorists are also related to the meaning of security in this paper because supply side of cross-border human trafficking lead to illicit trans-border movements through Seme-Idiriko borders. However, the foregoing definition of security did not largely meet our purpose in this paper. Therefore, security is defined, in this paper, as promoting safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities as well as prevention of illegal cross-border movements through Seme-Idiroko land borders.

Theoretical Framework

Structural conflict theory of Marxism paradigm at national level of analysis was adopted in this study. The theory was propounded by Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin, among others. The theory has been modified into many variants including radicalist conflict theory by Karl Marx,liberalist structuralist theory by Johan Galtung and structural conflict theory by Marx Weber(Olorundami-Ayeni, 2021). Perspective to the theory by Karl Marx was adopted in this paper because it clearly explains the drivers of human trafficking undermining border security.

According to Adeleke (2021), radical structural conflict theory is focused on the relationship between the "haves" and the "have-nots" (groups), not on individuals. The relationship between the two groups is characterized by conflict and dependence, while order is maintained in human society through competition and conflict. In this kind of society, the "have-nots" are losers, while the "haves" are winners. Interests of the two groups are diametrically opposed.The major assumption of the theory is that conflicts are reflections of how a society is organised. The theory views societal problems such as trans-border crimes, human trafficking, inequality, exploitation, poverty, and disease as security threats. Exploitation of the "have-nots" by the "haves" is responsible for conflicts in the society and the conflicts can only be resolved through revolution by the "have-nots" (Jatau, 2019).

The theory is vital to this study because it helps in the understanding of the drivers of cross-border human trafficking in Seme-Idiroko border communities such as exploitation, poverty, injustice and unemployment and how those factors hamper security in Seme-Idiroko borders. However, the issue of dynamism associated with drivers of human trafficking is not captured by the theory.

Methodology

The design of the paper wassurvey and historical research designs. The population of the study was 46,105 respondents involving substantive staff from the Department of Enforcement, Investigation and Inspection in Nigeria Customs Service in Ogun and Lagos States, Department of Operation in National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, Lagos Zonal Office and victims and perpetrators of cross-border human trafficking; Department of Border Management in Nigeria Immigration service in Lagos and Ogun States; Department of Internal Security in Office of the National Security Adviser to the President; residents of Gbaji-Yeke in Seme; residents of Idiroko, residents of Podji-Ague; and Igolo.

The sample size of the study was 397 people determined using Rakash sample size formula, while 15 respondents were tentatively selected from the population units using purposive sampling for in-depth interview, but after the interview of 13 respondents, the researcher discontinued with the interview in line with the saturation theory (Bello, 2021).Primary data

were collected using closed-ended and open-ended questionnaire, while Key Informants Interview (KII) guide was used in generating data from experts. Secondary data were collected from NAPTIP websites and NAPTIP Reports from 2011 to 2022 on human trafficking in Lagos and Ogun States using internet-enabled computer and search engines. Data from 5-Point Likert Questionnaire were analyzed using weighted average= $\frac{\text{Sum of Products}}{\text{Number of Respondents}}$ (Adeleke, 2021). **Decision Rule**: Decision rule is that any weighted average value ranging from 1.00 to 2.49 is unacceptable, while weighted average value ranging from 2.50 to 3.49 is neutral. Also, weighted average value ranging from 3.50 to 5.00 is acceptable. Data from in-depth interview were analyzed using narrative-analytic method, while data from secondary source were analyzed using relational-content analysis.

Data Analysis

Identification of Drivers of Cross-Border Human Trafficking Undermining Security in Seme-Idiroko Border Communities

Findings from questionnaire, in this paper, showed that with weighted average of 4.00, the statement, craving for better life significantly increased the spate of illegal cross-border movements through Seme-Idiroko border, was agreeable to the respondents. Similarly, with weighted average of 3.86, the statement that porous nature of Seme-Idiroko borders significantly undermines efforts at promoting safety of lives and properties of individuals in border communities was agreeable to the respondents. Findings also showed that lack of proper commitment by the government in terms of provision of adequate amenities such as hospitals, tertiary institutions; among others, have encouraged residents of Seme-Idiroko border communities from indulging in cross-border sex and labour trafficking.

Findings from in-depth interview showed that majority of the respondents were of the view that illiteracy, poverty, lack of necessary amenities in Seme-Idiroko border communities, desire to come out of poverty through "short-cut", deception by the perpetrators of cross-border sex and labour trafficking, demands at home to travel and make it abroad, and huge profits from cross-border sex and labour trafficking are some of the drivers of cross-border sex and labour trafficking undermining security in Seme-Idiroko border communities.

Findings from the previous studies on the drivers of cross-border sex and labour trafficking are slightly related to the findings of this study in terms of issues covered, but largely

different in terms of depth of issues covered, location of the study, and scope of the study. The findings by Oyekami and Okunola (2017) showed that the drivers of human trafficking in Nigeria include unemployment, patriarchal character of the Nigerian state, poverty and disjointed social values in the country, which is slightly related to the findings of this study in terms of issues covered, but largely differs from it in terms of the inability of the findings to link the drivers of cross-border sex and labour trafficking to security or insecurity in Seme-Idiroko border communities. Findings from a study by Okeshola and Adenuga (2018) identified drivers of human trafficking in Nigeria as globalisation, poverty, weak legal system, conflict, lack of political will, and economic recession, which are slightly related to this study, but differs from this study in terms of depth of coverage and scope of the factors identified as drivers of cross-border sex and labour trafficking in Nigeria.

In addition, findings by Jatau (2019) identified poverty, porous borders, among others, as drivers of human trafficking in Nfum, which are slightly related to the finding of this study in terms of issues covered, but differ from the findings of this study in terms of scope and specific variables examined. Also, findings by Agwu, Okoye, Ekoh, Chukwu, Onalu, Onuh, Amadi, and Nche (2020) identified drivers of human trafficking in Edo State as economic factor, educational factor, globalisation, and political factor, which is slightly related to the findings of this study in terms of issues covered, but differs from it in terms of non-linkage of the drivers of human trafficking, especially sex and labour trafficking to protection of lives and properties of people in the border communities of Seme and Idiroko. The findings from a study by Hartmann (2021) identified widowhood, single mother syndrome, unemployment, political instability, natural disaster, financial hardship arising from loss of guardians, broken families, and cultural practices as drivers of human trafficking in Nigeria, which is closely related to the findings of this study in terms of issues covered. However, the findings of the study differ from this study in terms of scope of issues covered.

Findings from study by Okereke (2023) showthat a total of 711 victims of cross-border human trafficking comprising 423 and 288 victims were rescued from Ogun and Lagos States' land borders from 2011 to 2022, while many others escaped through the largely porous borders through transit country (Benin Republic) to destination country for exploitation. This showed that the borders are largely porous and drive the crime of human trafficking. In view of the foregoing, findings from the in-depth interview, questionnaire, and

secondary sources support our findings that poverty, craving for better life and porous nature of Seme-Idirko borders are among drivers of cross-border human trafficking undermining security in Seme-Idiroko border communities.

Various Ways and Manners Drivers of Cross-Border Human Trafficking Undermined Security in Seme-Idiroko Border Communities

Findings from questionnaire on ways drivers of cross-border human trafficking undermined security in Seme-Idiroko border communities showed that with weighted average of 4.19, the statement, high level of labour trafficking significantly enhance illicit movement of people into Seme-Idiroko border communities, hence undermining human security in the border communities, was agreeable. Majority of the respondents opined that underground economic benefits from cross-border sex trafficking largely encourage corruption among border security personnel in Seme-Idiroko borders, making the later compromise security in Seme-Idiroko border communities. With weighted average of 3.93, the statement, unchecked drivers of cross-border human trafficking have significantly increased insecurity in Seme-Idiroko border communities was valid and acceptable to the respondents.

Findings from the previous studies on how drivers of cross-border sex and labour trafficking have undermined security are slightly related to the findings of this paper in terms of issues covered, but largely different from it in terms of depth of issues covered, location of the study, and scope covered in the paper. Findings by Jawando and Adeyemi (2020) used the social theory in the understanding of the risks of STDs associated with the use of sex by women to avoid confiscation of the goods by border security personnel at Seme borders, which is related to the findings of this study in terms of the economic determinants of cross-border sex and labour trafficking. This is also related to the findings by Abiodun, Akinlade, and Oladeye (2021) which identified socio-economic and political problems, existence of market for victims of cross-border human trafficking, and enabling environment as drivers of cross-border human trafficking in Nigeria. However, findings by Abiodun, Akinlade and Oladeye (2021) did not identify specific issues found in this study as driving cross-border sex and labour trafficking and undermining protection of lives and properties in Seme-Idirokoborder communities.In view of the foregoing, findings from the in-depth interview, questionnaire, and secondary sources largely show that unchecked drivers of cross-border

human trafficking have significantly increased security threats in Seme-Idiroko border communities, and this is agreeable and acceptable in line with the decision rule.

Possible Strategies for Mitigating Drivers of Cross-Border Human Trafficking Undermining Security in Seme-Idiroko Border Communities

Findings from questionnaire, in this paper, showed that with weighted average of 3.72, the statement, use of drones to monitor those crossing the borders would largely prevent illicit border crossings through Seme-Idiroko borders, was agreeable to majority of the majority of the respondents. Majority of the respondents opined that preventing the use of fake travel documents would largely promote safety of lives and properties of people in Lagos and Ogun States through reduction of the spate of movement of criminals into Seme-Idiroko border communities. Similarly, findings from in-depth interview showed that poverty alleviation; increment in salaries and allowances of border security personnel; use of surveillance equipment, improved information flow; as well as adequate manning of borders between Nigeria and Benin Republic are crucial in mitigating the menace of cross-border human trafficking, especially sex and labour trafficking hampering security in Seme-Idiroko border communities. Also, intelligence sharing would ensure adequate security in Seme-Idiroko border communities, while provision of adequate social and infrastructural facilities in border communities to give the residents a sense of belonging in the country would largely discourage connivance between the locales and human trafficking in perpetuating the crime of human trafficking in the border communities. Findings equally showed that the use of biometrics in profiling those that cross the borders; and creation of adequate awareness in border communities on the dangers of cross-border sex and labour trafficking are some of theviable strategies for mitigating the menace of cross-border sex and labour trafficking through Seme-Idiroko borders.

Findings from previous studies are slightly related to the findings of this paper in terms of issues covered, but differ significantly from it in terms of depth of issues covered. A study by Adunola (2011) focused on child trafficking by examining the causes, effects and remedies of the crime in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State, which is related to this study in terms of focus of the study. The study recommended protection of human rights and effective implementation of relevant international laws ratified by Nigeria as part of the strategies for mitigating the challenges confronted by government in the fight against cross-

border human trafficking in Nigeria, which is slightly related to the findings of this paper in terms of specific issues covered.

A study by Duru and Ogbonnaya (2012) focused on combating human trafficking in Nigeria through evaluation of state policies. The study identified creation of NAPTIP; strengthening of institutions charged with the responsibility combating human trafficking in Nigeria; and ratification of Palermo Protocol as strategies for combating human trafficking in Nigeria as viable alternatives for mitigating the menace of cross-border human trafficking undermining security in Seme-Idiroko border communities.This is largely disconnected from the findings of this paper as the later focuses on cooperation between Nigeria and Benin Republic in combating cross-border sex and labour trafficking in Seme-Idiroko border communities. Therefore, findings from this paper show that poverty alleviation and effective border protection are some of the viable strategies for mitigating drivers of cross-border human trafficking undermining security in Seme-Idiroko border communities, and this was accepted in line with the decision rule.

Discussion of Findings

Examination of Drivers of Cross-Border Human Trafficking Undermining Security in Seme-Idiroko Border Communities

The results from questionnaire, in-depth interview and previous studies support our findings that drivers of cross-border labour or sex trafficking in Seme-Idiroko border communities such as pressure at home to travel and make it abroad, lack of adequate parental care, poverty, illiteracy, deceit by perpetrators of human trafficking and huge profits from the crime of cross-border sex and labour trafficking largely undermine safety of individuals and effective border protection in Nigeria. Findings also showed that the drivers of cross-border sex and labour trafficking are not largely checked by the government, which resulted in increase in the level of penury, misery and hunger in the border communities. This further gives rise to a situation that compels vulnerable individuals to think of possible ways to leave the shores of Nigeria to more developed countries in search of greener pastures. The foregoing challenge is worsened by increase in the use of satellite television in many homes in Nigeria, which portrays Europe and other developed countries as heaven-on-earth, where

everything is available. Therefore, our finding that poverty, craving for better life and porous borders are among the drivers of cross-border human trafficking undermining security in Seme-Idiroko border communities is supported by structural conflict theory by Karl Marx, which established a nexus between poverty as well as other drivers of cross-border human trafficking and social conflicts.

Examination of How Drivers of Cross-Border Human Trafficking have undermined Safety of Individuals in Seme-Idiroko Border Communities

The results from the examination of how drivers of cross-border human trafficking have undermined safety of individuals in Seme-Idiroko border communities, in this paper, agreewith the finding that cravings for better life largely increase the spate of illegal border crossings through Seme-Idiroko border communities. Findings equally showed that porous nature of Seme-Idiroko borders significantly undermines efforts at ensuring safety of lives and properties in the border communities, while high level of labour trafficking largely enhances illicit movement of people into Seme-Idiroko border communities. In addition, cross-border sex trafficking largely encourages corruption among border security personnel in Seme-Idiroko borders through bribing of border security personnel by human traffickers to pave the ways for illicit transportation of their victims through the border post. Another major driver of cross-border human trafficking in Seme-Idiroko borders is the underground economic benefits from the crime, which undermines security in the border communities. Therefore, the unchecked drivers of cross-border human trafficking have significantly increased insecurity in Seme-Idiroko border communities.

The theoretical consequence of the foregoing results is that the government, in line with the tenets of structural conflict theory by Karl Marx, equally contributes in driving cross-border sex and labour trafficking in Nigeria through so many ways. The foregoing is buttressed by the fact that Nigeria government has not provided adequate infrastructural facilities in the border communities of Seme and Idiroko in terms of provision of adequate amenities such as hospitals, tertiary institutions; among others, and this challenge increasingly encourage residents of Seme-Idiroko border communities to indulge in cross-border criminality. Also, the government's lack of political will; lack of adequate intelligence gathering by border security personnel; lack of adequate cooperation between border security agencies in both the Nigerian and Benin Republic sides, reinforce with other factors in driving cross-border sex

and labour trafficking through Idiroko and Seme border communities, with its many implications for protection of lives and properties in the border communities.

Findings by Jungudo (2014); Onyekanni and Okunola (2017); Okeshola and Adenuga (2018); Jawando and Adeyemi (2020); Hartmann (2021), among others, are slightly similar to the findings of this study in terms of issues covered, but differ from it largely in terms of depth of examinations of the various ways drivers of cross-border sex and labour trafficking have undermined efforts at preventing crime and criminality in Seme-Idiroko border communities of Lagos and Ogun states respectively. Therefore, the findings from both the primary and secondary data support our findings that the unchecked drivers of cross-border human trafficking have significantly increased security threats in Seme-Idiroko border communities.

Strategies for Mitigating drivers of Cross-Border Human Trafficking in Seme-Idiroko Border Communities

The results from primary and secondary data largely supported our findings that poverty alleviation and effective border protection are some of the viable strategies for mitigating drivers of cross-border human trafficking undermining security in Seme-Idiroko border communities. It was found that measures such as poverty alleviation; increment in salaries and allowances of border security personnel, use of surveillance equipment, improved information flow; and intelligence sharing; and adequate manning of borders between Nigeria and Benin Republic would go a long way in combating cross-border sex and labour trafficking affecting Nigeria's security in Seme-Idirko border communities. Related to the foregoing is the fact that provision of adequate social and infrastructural facilities in border communities to give the residents a sense of belonging in the country, and the use of biometrics in profiling those that cross the borders would largely reduce increasing security threats in Seme-Idiroko border communities.Findings equally showed that creation of adequate awareness in border communities on the dangers of trans-border crimes are some of the viable alternatives for mitigating the menace of cross-border sex or labour trafficking affecting safety of lives and properties in Lagos and Ogun States.

Conclusion

This paper has been an attempt to identify drivers of cross-border human trafficking undermining security in Seme-Idiroko border communities. The paper further examined the various ways and manners drivers of cross-border human trafficking undermined security in Seme-Idiroko border communities. Findings from the paper revealed that many factors including poverty, massive youth unemployment, neglect of border communities of Seme and Idiroko, corruption among some border security personnel, among others, undermined security in Seme-Idiroko border communities. However, findings further showed that the government has not adequately combated the drivers of the crime of human trafficking undermining security in the border communities due to lack of political will, porous nature of the borders, among other factors. Therefore, it is concluded that unless the government embarks on adequate poverty alleviation programmes and effective border protection in Seme-Idiroko borders using biometrics, the crime of cross-border human trafficking would continue to fester in Lagos and Ogun States in particular and Nigeria in general.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were vital in the paper:

i. the federal government should urgently embark on poverty alleviation programmes in Seme-Idiroko border communities with a view to mitigating drivers of cross-border human trafficking undermining security in the border communities;

ii. the federal government should urgently make budgetary provisions through the National Assembly for increment in the allowances of border security personnel in Seme-Idiroko border communities to discourage them from accepting bribes from perpetrators of cross-border human trafficking to compromise security in the borders;

iii. the federal government should urgently deploy drones for aerial surveillance around Seme-Idiroko borders to checkmate illicit cross-border movements into and out of the border communities;

iv. the residents of Seme-Idiroko border communities and transient population should be adequately sensitized by NAPTIP officials on strategies adopted by perpetrators of cross-border human trafficking to make it difficult for them to fall victims of the crime; and

v. the federal government should use biometrics in profiling all migrants crossing Seme-Idiroko border posts to discourage illicit cross-border movements through the borders.

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