THE ROLE OF FIDA IN COMBATING WOMEN TRAFFICKING AND PROSTITUTION. BEING A PAPER PRESENTED BY: PROF. YUSUF ALI SAN; KULIYAN GARI OF ILORIN AT G-PINNACLE SIGNATURE HALL PIPELINE ROAD ILORIN ON 28TH JULY, 2025.

1.0. Abstract

Human trafficking and prostitution remain some of the most severe human rights violations facing women globally. In Nigeria, where social, economic, and cultural factors heighten vulnerability, the need for legal and social interventions has never been greater. The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) plays a key role in addressing these issues. This paper explores FIDA's multifaceted response to trafficking and prostitution, including legal aid, policy advocacy, awareness campaigns, and collaborations with national and international organizations. Through case studies, stakeholder analysis, and evaluation of legal frameworks, this paper argues that FIDA remains a critical player in Nigeria's fight against gender-based exploitation.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Women trafficking and prostitution are forms of gender-based violence and exploitation that represent significant challenges to the realization of women's rights. The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) has emerged as a key player in the fight against human trafficking and prostitution. FIDA's interventions, driven by its mission to promote, protect, and preserve the rights and dignity of women and children, span legal advocacy, public enlightenment, policy engagement, and direct legal aid. FIDA, a non-governmental, non-profit organization committed to the promotion and protection of women's and children's rights, plays a critical role in addressing these issues, especially in regions like sub-Saharan Africa, where such practices are prevalent.[1]

Women trafficking and prostitution are deeply intertwined issues, that affect millions of women and girls, particularly in developing countries. In Nigeria, the situation is made worse by poverty, weak law enforcement, gender inequality, and socio-cultural practices. These crimes often go unnoticed or unprosecuted, leaving victims in cycles of abuse and exploitation.[2]

---

[1] https://fidang.org

[2] International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Nigeria, "FIDA Nigeria Activities-July 2020, FIDA Nigeria, July 2020, https://fida.org.ng/2020/07/ 2

The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) is one organization that stands out for its consistent and dedicated work in protecting women's rights. This paper examines how FIDA, particularly FIDA Nigeria, plays a leading role in fighting women trafficking and prostitution through legal aid, advocacy, public education, and systemic reform.

1.02. Background: Women Trafficking and Prostitution in Nigeria

Human trafficking and prostitution remain persistent and deeply rooted issues affecting thousands of women and girls in Nigeria. These two phenomena, though distinct in legal and social terms, are closely linked with many trafficked women, eventually forced or coerced into prostitution, both within the country and abroad. The socio-economic, cultural, and legal dynamics in Nigeria make women particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

Prevalence and Nature of the Problem

Nigeria is classified by the United Nations and the U.S. Department of State as a source, transit, and destination country for trafficking in persons. According to data from the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), thousands of Nigerian women, are trafficked annually, with many ending up in

countries like **Italy, Libya, the United Arab Emirates**, and other parts of **Europe and the Middle East.**

Domestically, trafficking occurs from rural to urban areas, where young girls are lured under the pretext of job opportunities or education, only to be exploited in domestic servitude or commercial sex work. International trafficking, often facilitated by organized criminal networks, subjects women to inhumane conditions, including sexual abuse, threats, physical violence, debt bondage, and psychological manipulation

Definition and Scope of Women Trafficking and Prostitution

Women Trafficking

Women trafficking refers to the **recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of women through** the use of **threat, force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power**, or **vulnerability** for the purpose of exploitation.

Exploitation includes forced labor, sexual exploitation, servitude, and slavery-like practices.

According to the **United Nations Palermo Protocol (2000)** which is the international standard for defining and combating trafficking.

"Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion... for the purpose of exploitation."[3]

In the context of women, this often manifests as trafficking for:

- Sexual exploitation
- Domestic servitude
- Forced marriages
- Illegal surrogacy or organ trade

Definition of Prostitution

Prostitution is the exchange of sexual services for money or other forms of compensation. While not all prostitution is the result of trafficking, many women involved in prostitution are coerced or deceived into it, particularly in vulnerable situations.

Prostitution, when forced or coerced, is a major form of trafficking. In many cases, victims of trafficking are used for commercial sex work under duress.

[3]Supplement to the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime - Palermo Protocol, 2000

Nigeria is both a source, transit, and destination country for trafficked women. Benin City in Edo State, for instance, has gained notoriety as a trafficking hub. Many victims are trafficked for sexual exploitation in Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and within Nigeria.

Nigeria is recognized by the United Nations and the US State Department as both a source and destination country for trafficked women and estimates that millions of women and girls are trafficked across international borders each year, primarily for sexual exploitation and other forms of exploitation. Within Nigeria, internal trafficking is also rampant.

Young women from rural communities, conflict-affected areas, or economically disadvantaged backgrounds, are particularly at risk and seen as easy target for their vulnerability.

Overlap Between Prostitution and Trafficking

The issues of prostitution and human trafficking, particularly as they affect women, are deeply interconnected. While not all prostitution results from trafficking, and not all trafficking results in prostitution, the two often overlap in the following ways:

[4]Premium Times Nigeria, "Inside Edo's trafficking crisis", 2021

1. Entry Through Coercion or Deception

Many women involved in prostitution are trafficked under false pretenses, promised jobs, education, or a better life. Once trafficked, they are coerced, threatened, or manipulated into prostitution. This is a clear point where trafficking and prostitution intersect.

2. Exploitation of Vulnerability

Traffickers often prey on the economically disadvantaged, displaced, or marginalized. Once under control, victims are pushed into prostitution blurring the lines between consensual sex work and forced sexual exploitation.

3. Control and Lack of Consent

In trafficking, victims are often:

- Held against their will
- Threatened with violence or legal consequences
- Forced to repay "debts"

In such situations, even if the woman is engaged in prostitution, the absence of free will qualifies the act as trafficking.

4. Legal and Policy Confusion

In many jurisdictions, prostitution is criminalized, while trafficking is treated as a human rights violation.

Victims of trafficking forced into prostitution may be prosecuted as criminals, instead of being recognized as victims.

This overlap causes confusion in law enforcement and weakens victim protection efforts.

5. Organized Crime and Human Smuggling Networks

Many trafficking rings that smuggle women across borders are specifically organized to feed into the commercial sex industry, showing a direct operational overlap between trafficking, drugs networks and prostitution markets.

2.0. FIDA'S ORIGIN, MISSION, AND STRUCTURE[5]

The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) was founded in 1944 in Mexico City, during a period of increasing global advocacy for human rights and gender equality. It was established by a group of women legal professionals committed to the promotion of women's rights, children's welfare, and the rule of law. Since its inception, FIDA has grown into a globally respected non-governmental, non- profit organization, with consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Establishment of FIDA Nigeria

FIDA Nigeria was officially established in 1964, becoming one of the earliest and most active African branches of the international organization. It was founded by a group of pioneering Nigerian women lawyers, who were inspired by the global movement and recognized the urgent need to address legal, social, and cultural barriers affecting women and children in Nigeria.

[5]The Guardian Nigeria. (2022) FIDA Nigeria reintegrates survivors with families.

FIDA Nigeria operates as an autonomous national branch, though it remains affiliated with the international body. It has grown significantly over the years, now boasting branches in almost all 36 states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory.

FIDA Nigeria has a National Executive Committee and state branches. Each branch runs programs on Legal Aid, Public Outreach, and Policy Advocacy. Members work voluntarily or are seconded from other organizations.

Mission of FIDA Nigeria

> ***"Promote, protect, and preserve the rights, interests, and well-being of women and children in Nigeria through the use of legal frameworks, advocacy, and education."***

This mission is pursued through a combination of legal aid services, public advocacy, capacity building, and partnerships with stakeholders in government, civil society, and international agencies.

The **core values of FIDA are Transparency, Accountability, teamwork, integrity, mutual respect, commitment,** and **service**.

2.1. Core Focus Areas of FIDA Nigeria 10

- **Access to Justice**: Providing free and subsidized legal services to indigent women and children, particularly in cases of domestic violence, child abuse, and trafficking.
- **Women and Child Rights Advocacy**: Engaging in public interest litigation, advocating for law reform, and conducting awareness campaigns to protect human rights.
- **Gender-Based Violence Prevention**: Leading campaigns against rape, sexual harassment, trafficking in persons, and harmful traditional practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM).
- **Legal Education and Community Outreach**: Hosting legal literacy programs, sensitizing communities about their rights, and promoting the importance of female empowerment.
- **Collaboration and Networking**: Partnering with NAPTIP, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), UN Women, and other bodies to address systemic issues affecting women and children.

FIDA Nigeria is a trailblazer in legal advocacy for women and children's rights. With its roots in a global movement and a strong local presence, it continues to play a pivotal role in challenging gender-based violence, combating human trafficking, and

empowering women through the instrumentality of the law. Its mission aligns with national and international efforts to build a just and equitable society.

3.0.LEGAL FRAMEWORKS ADDRESSING TRAFFICKING AND PROSTITUTION

The issues of human trafficking and prostitution, particularly as they affect women and children, are addressed through a combination of international, regional, and national legal instruments. These frameworks provide definitions, prescribe penalties, and establish mechanisms for prevention, protection, and prosecution.

1. International Legal Frameworks:

a. United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol, adopted in 2000 and entered into force in 2003):

- Supplementary to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.
- Defines trafficking and emphasizes prevention, protection of victims, and prosecution of offenders.
- Urges states to criminalize trafficking and protect victims' rights regardless of their legal status.

b. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the UN General Assembly on 18th December, 1979):

- Recognizes trafficking and exploitation of prostitution as forms of gender-based violence.
- Calls on states to take appropriate measures to eliminate these practices.

c. Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (25th May, 2000)

- Prohibits and criminalizes the sexual exploitation of children in prostitution and trafficking contexts.

d. International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions

- ILO Convention No. 182, adopted in 1999 focuses on the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour which includes trafficking and child prostitution.
- Requires member states to take immediate action to eliminate these practices.

2. Regional Legal Frameworks (Africa)

a. African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR, 1981)

- Guarantees human dignity and prohibits all forms of exploitation and degradation.

b. Maputo Protocol (2003)

- The Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa.
- Explicitly calls on states to prevent and punish trafficking and exploitation of women.

3. Nigerian Legal Frameworks

a. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended)

- Guarantees Fundamental Human rights (Sections 34, 35, 36).
- Prohibits slavery, inhuman treatment, and forced labour.

b. Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act (TIPPEA) 2015

- Enacted to domesticate the Palermo Protocol.

- Establishes NAPTIP (National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons).
- Defines and criminalizes trafficking in persons.
- Prescribes stiff penalties for traffickers and provides for victim rehabilitation and compensation.

c. Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015 (VAPP Act)

- Criminalizes sexual exploitation, forced prostitution, and harmful practices.
- Provides broader protection, especially for women and children.

d. Child Rights Act, 2003

- Prohibits child trafficking, child prostitution, and all forms of child abuse.
- Mandates rehabilitation and reintegration of rescued children.

e. Criminal and Penal Codes of the various States.

- Contain provisions on prostitution, procurement, and exploitation.
- Some state laws criminalize prostitution without distinguishing between voluntary and coerced participation, leading to challenges in victim protection.

The fight against trafficking and prostitution is supported by a comprehensive legal framework at all levels. However, effective enforcement, public awareness, and legal support such as those provided by organizations like FIDA are crucial to bridge the gap between law and justice, especially for vulnerable women, women living with disabilities and children.

4.0. ROOT CAUSES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND PROSTITUTION

a. Poverty and Economic Hardship

Poverty is arguably the most significant root cause of trafficking and prostitution, particularly in Nigeria. Millions of Nigerians live below the poverty line, and for many young women, the prospect of earning money through migration or sex work becomes a survival strategy. Traffickers often take advantage of this vulnerability, by presenting seemingly legitimate offers of employment or education abroad, only to later coerce victims into sexual exploitation.

b. Lack of Education and Employment Opportunities

The lack of education, limits an individual's ability to access gainful employment and increases susceptibility to trafficking schemes. Girls who drop out of school are especially vulnerable, as they often lack the skills or qualifications necessary to

[6]United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), "Root Causes," in Trafficking in Persons & Smuggling of Migranta Module ? Key Issues, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, accessed May 27, 2025, https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/tip-and-som/module-7/key-issues/root-causes.html. 16

compete in the labor market. Without access to vocational training or professional advancement, some may see prostitution as their only viable means of income and economic survival.

c. Gender Inequality and Discrimination

Gender-based discrimination is deeply entrenched in many societies, including Nigeria, and significantly contributes to the trafficking and exploitation of women and girls. Cultural norms that prioritize male education and leadership often leave women in subordinate roles, economically dependent on others. In such environments, traffickers exploit the systemic marginalization of women, offering false promises of independence and empowerment. Moreover, girls subjected to early or forced marriages often flee abusive homes, only to fall into the hands of traffickers.

d. Conflict, Displacement, and Insecurity

Armed conflicts, insurgency, and communal violence have led to mass displacement across Nigeria, particularly in the North-East. Internally displaced persons (IDPs), especially women and children, are prime targets for traffickers due to their lack of shelter, income, and protection. In overcrowded IDP camps, reports of exploitation- including transactional sex for food or safety-are alarmingly common. The breakdown of law and order during times of conflict also makes it easier for trafficking rings to operate undetected.

e. Weak Legal and Institutional Frameworks[7]

While Nigeria has made progress in establishing anti-trafficking laws such as the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act (TIPPEA) 2015, implementation remains inconsistent. In many cases, victims of trafficking and coerced prostitution are treated as criminals, rather than as individuals in need of protection and rehabilitation. Corruption within law enforcement and at border checkpoints further exacerbates the problem, allowing traffickers to escape prosecution.

f. Migration and the Illusion of a Better Life

Irregular migration driven by the desire for a better life is another powerful factor in trafficking. Many Nigerians, particularly the youth, are eager to escape economic hardship by migrating to Europe or the Middle East. Traffickers exploit this ambition by posing as travel agents or job recruiters. Once abroad, victims find themselves trapped in exploitative conditions, stripped of their documents, and threatened into silence. In many cases, the initial deception is so subtle that victims only realize the truth when escape becomes impossible.

[7]Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, 2015

g. Inadequate Social Services and Support Structures

Finally, the lack of robust social--services including shelters, counseling, legal aid, and job placement programs--makes it difficult to prevent or recover from trafficking and prostitution. Even when victims are rescued, they often face stigmatization, homelessness, and lack of access to reintegration programs. Without consistent governmental and non-governmental support, many are re-trafficked or return to prostitution as a means of survival. Strengthening the social welfare system is therefore essential for a long-term solution.

h. Family Dysfunction and Abuse

Family breakdown, neglect, domestic violence, and sexual abuse increase the likelihood of children, especially girls, running away and becoming easy prey for traffickers or turning to prostitution for survival.

5.0. FIDA'S STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS IN COMBATING WOMEN TRAFFICKING AND PROSTITUTION

FIDA in Nigeria, employs a multi-pronged strategy to combat women trafficking and prostitution. These strategies are rooted in legal expertise, community engagement, and advocacy for systemic change. Below is a breakdown of FIDA's key interventions:

1. Legal Aid and Representation

One of FIDA's primary interventions is providing free legal representation to victims of trafficking and prostitution.

- FIDA provides pro bono legal services to women and children who are victims of trafficking, sexual exploitation, and prostitution such as Legal counseling and advice, Court representation, Support during investigations and prosecutions
- This intervention ensures access to justice for indigent and marginalized victims who would otherwise be silenced by poverty or stigma.
- FIDA organizes legal aid clinics in markets, churches, mosques, IDP camps, and rural communities. These clinics offer women opportunity to speak confidentially to a lawyer and seek redress.
- FIDA lawyers file lawsuits on behalf of survivors, prosecute traffickers (in collaboration with the state), and provide legal protection such as restraining orders or custody rights.
- Victims who lack legal identity or documents, FIDA helps them obtain birth certificates, affidavits, and court affidavits needed to rebuild their lives.

2. Legislative and Policy Advocacy[8]

Legislative and policy advocacy is a core strategy used by organizations like FIDA to influence laws, policies, and institutional frameworks that protect the rights of women and children. In the fight against human trafficking and prostitution, this form of advocacy is essential for creating an enabling legal environment, that emphasizes prevention, protection, prosecution, and rehabilitation.

FIDA does not only operate in court room sit also engages with lawmakers and policymakers to shape a more just legal environment.

- FIDA contributed to the drafting and review process of the **Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act (TIPPEA) 2015.**
- FIDA actively campaigns for the domestication and implementation of the **Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) 2015** in all Nigerian states.

International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Nigeria. "FIDA Nigeria Press Statement on World Day against Trafficking in Persons" July 30, 2023. https://fida.org.ng/fida-nigeria-press-statement-on-world-dav-against-trafficking-in-persons/ 21

- Played a key role in the domestication and implementation of international treaties, such as CEDAW and the Child Rights Act.

- Advocacy that led to the establishment of **NAPTIP 2003 (National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons)**

- FIDA also lobbies for gender-specific provisions in criminal laws, to protect vulnerable groups and ensure proper punishment for exploiters. It educates women about their rights through town hall meetings, radio shows, and community workshops.

3. Public Awareness and Community Engagement[9]

Public ignorance and cultural complicity, fuel trafficking and prostitution. FIDA works to change public attitudes by visiting schools to educate students, partnering with religious and traditional leaders to denounce exploitation, using local languages and storytelling to break cultural silence, and producing radio dramas, jingles, and social media campaigns.

International Journal of Migration Health and Social Care, Val. 17 (2021) 22

FIDA campaigns and community mobilization programs aimed at:

- Educating the public on the dangers of trafficking and forced prostitution.
- Sensitizing parents, youth, community and religious leaders on signs of trafficking.
- Promoting safe migration practices and gender equality e.t.c.

These outreach efforts are especially impactful in rural and high-risk communities where knowledge gaps are greatest.

4. Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs

As part of its holistic approach to supporting victims of trafficking and prostitution, FIDA implements rehabilitation and reintegration programs aimed at helping survivors recover, rebuild, and reintegrate into society with dignity and independence.

- **Psychosocial Support and Counseling:**

  FIDA provides or facilitates access to trauma-informed counseling and emotional support for victims. This helps survivors process their experiences and begin the journey to healing.

- **Shelter and Temporary Care**: Through partnerships with shelters, NGOs, and government agencies, FIDA helps survivors access safe housing and basic needs such as food, clothing, and healthcare.
- **Skills Acquisition and Economic Empowerment**: Victims are linked to vocational training and livelihood programs (e.g., tailoring, catering, hairdressing) to ensure economic self-reliance. Microloans and empowerment initiatives help survivors start small businesses. 10 In some cases, programs also include financial literacy and startup support.
- **Educational Support**: Where possible, FIDA supports formal education or adult literacy for young victims or those who missed schooling due to trafficking.
- **Family Tracing and Reunification**: In cases involving minors or displaced victims, FIDA works with relevant authorities to trace families, assess safety, and where appropriate, facilitate safe reunification.
- **Legal Identity and Documentation**: Victims often lack valid identification or legal documents. FIDA assists in obtaining birth certificates, national IDs, and other vital documents necessary for reintegration.

[10]Nigerian News Direct. "Oye FIDA, NAPTIP Semitise Markat Women on Dangers of Human Trafficking Nigerian News Deest. Nagus 2023 httpe@nigerianewsdirect.com/oyo-fida-naptip-sensitise-market-women-on-dangers-of-human-trafficking

- **Community Reintegration and Monitoring**: FIDA facilitates community sensitization to reduce stigma and promote acceptance of returning victims. Survivors are monitored post-reintegration to ensure ongoing support and prevent re-trafficking.

5. Partnerships and Collaborative Efforts

FIDA collaborates with key stakeholders like **NAPTIP, International *Organization for Migration, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Ministry of Women Affairs and Civil Society and community-based organizations e.t.c.*** *These collaborations*:

- Enhance the reach and sustainability of interventions
- Facilitate referral pathways for rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration of victims
- Promote resource sharing and strategic alignment in national anti-trafficking efforts for investigations, data sharing, and advocacy.

Local NGOs also support grassroots outreach and shelter services.

Through a combination of legal services, advocacy, education, capacity building, and collaboration, FIDA continues to play a vital role in the fight against human trafficking and prostitution. These strategies not only provide immediate support

to victims but also contribute to long-term systemic change that protects women's rights and promotes justice across Nigeria.

6.0. CHALLENGES FACING FIDA IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKING[11]

Despite its commendable efforts, the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA)especially in Nigeria faces several persistent challenges, that hinder its effectiveness in combating human trafficking and prostitution, particularly as they affect women and children

a. Limited Funding and Resources

One of the most significant challenges FIDA faces, is inadequate funding. Effective legal aid, victim rehabilitation, public education, and advocacy programs require substantial resources. Many FIDA branches operate with minimal budgets, relying heavily on donor funding and volunteer services, which limits their ability to provide comprehensive services such as shelter, counseling, and reintegration for victims of trafficking and prostitution.

[11]United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020 (Vienna. United Nations, 2021), https//www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tip/2021/GLOTIP 2020 15jan web.pdf.

b. Corruption

Corruption within law enforcement agencies and the judiciary hampers FIDA's efforts. Traffickers sometimes bribe officials to avoid prosecution or facilitate illegal activities. Moreover, limited political will from some government officials, means that anti-trafficking initiatives do not always receive the prioritization or support they need.

c. Cultural and Social Stigma

Victims of trafficking and prostitution often face harsh social judgment, shame, and stigma within their communities. This cultural barrier, discourages many victims from seeking help or cooperating with legal proceedings. FIDA must work not only to provide legal assistance but also to challenge these deep-rooted social attitudes, which is a slow and difficult process.

d. Insufficient Public Awareness

Despite ongoing awareness campaigns, many communities remain unaware of the dangers of trafficking or the legal protections available to victims. Myths and misinformation persist, making prevention and early intervention challenging. This gap in public knowledge limits the effectiveness of FIDA's outreach efforts.

e. Challenges in Cross-Border and International Cooperation

Trafficking often involves international networks. FIDA's efforts are sometimes hindered by poor coordination between Nigerian authorities and their counterparts in destination countries. Jurisdictional challenges and differing legal frameworks make tracking, rescuing, and prosecuting traffickers difficult.

f. Limited Data and Research

Reliable data on trafficking and prostitution in Nigeria is scarce. Without comprehensive statistics and research, it is difficult for FIDA to tailor interventions, measure impact, or advocate effectively for policy change. This lack of data also affects the ability to secure funding and governmental support.

g. Reintegration and Rehabilitation Gaps

Providing legal assistance is only one part of supporting victims. Effective rehabilitation involves psychological counseling, skills training, and economic empowerment. However, the infrastructure for long-term victim support is inadequate, increasing the risk of re-trafficking or return to prostitution.

h. Weak Implementation of Existing Laws

Although Nigeria has comprehensive laws like the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act (TIPPEA) and the Violence

Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act, e. t. c enforcement is often selective, inconsistent, or poorly coordinated.
Law enforcement agencies may lack proper training, resources, or commitment to effectively investigate and prosecute trafficking cases.

7.0. Recommendations

1. **Strengthen Law Enforcement and Judicial Capacity**: Many trafficking cases collapse, due to poor investigations and weak prosecutions. Training police officers, immigration officials, and judges on trafficking laws and how to handle victims sensitively will improve case outcomes and ensure justice for survivors.

2. **Provide Adequate Funding and Resources for FIDA and Stakeholders:**
   FIDA and similar organizations need sustainable funding to carry out legal aid, victim support, outreach, rehabilitation and reintegration programs. Government and donor support should be increased to expand their reach and effectiveness.
3. **Promote Public Awareness and Education**: Many victims are trafficked due to ignorance or false promises. More community sensitization campaigns, school programs, and media outreach can educate people on the dangers of trafficking and prostitution, helping to prevent exploitation.

4. **Improve Victim's Rehabilitation and Reintegration**: Survivors need support to rebuild their lives. FIDA in collaboration with Governments and NGOs should strengthen shelters, provide psychosocial and legal support, skills training. education, and livelihood programs to enable long-term reintegration.

5. Foster Strong Partnerships and Inter-Agency Collaboration: Trafficking is a complex issue that requires joint efforts. Strong collaboration between FIDA, NAPTIP, police, judiciary, religious leaders, community groups, and international partners, enhances coordinated action and service delivery.

6. **Enforce Existing Laws and Review Legal Gaps**: Nigeria has good laws like the TIPPEA Act and VAPP Act, but enforcement is often weak. Strengthening implementation and closing legal gaps such as removing criminal liability for trafficked persons will improve outcomes.

7. Empower Women Economically and Promote Gender Equality: Economic hardship and gender discrimination are major drivers of trafficking and prostitution. Empowering women through education, employment, and equal opportunities help reduce vulnerability.

8. **Address Corruption and Promote Accountability**: Corruption within law enforcement and immigration services often facilitates trafficking. Establishing clear accountability frameworks and anti-corruption monitoring mechanisms, will ensure laws are enforced fairly and effectively.

9. **Strengthen Data Collection and Research**: Reliable data helps in understanding trends and crafting targeted interventions. Government and NGOs should invest in research and data systems to inform policy and measure impact.

10. **Support Community-Based Prevention Programs**: Grassroots programs that involve traditional Rulers, youth groups, and local influencers can help change harmful social norms, encourage vigilance, and create safer environments, especially in high-risk communities.

Increase funding for FIDA and related NGOs, expand public-private partnerships for survivor support, improve police and judicial response through training, domesticate the VAPP and TIPPEA Acts in all states, and encourage male involvement in anti- trafficking campaigns.

2.10. CONCLUSION

The role of FIDA in fighting women trafficking and prostitution cannot be overstated. Through its legal, social, and advocacy work, it continues to bring justice to victims and challenge the structures that allow exploitation to thrive. With better support and more collaboration, FIDA can expand its reach and impact, ensuring a future where women and children are safe, empowered, and free from exploitation. Ultimately, a coordinated and well- resourced approach is necessary to eliminate trafficking and prostitution, and to create a safer, just society for all Nigerian women and girls.

References

- The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended)
- United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000)
- Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, 2015
- Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015
- FIDA Nigeria Publications and Annual Reports
- NAPTIP Annual Reports (2020-2024)
- UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons