

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AS MECHANISM FOR ADDRESSING WOMEN TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA

DR O.O. OLUDARE Ph.D

Department of Christian Religious Studies,
Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, Ogun State.
oludareolurotimi@yahoo.com +234 (0) 803 237 4755

Abstract:

The consequences of women trafficking are profound and devastating. Victims experience physical and psychological trauma, loss of dignity, and violation of their basic human rights. Trafficked women are often trapped in a cycle of abuse and exploitation, with limited avenues for escape. Families left behind also suffer, both emotionally and economically, as the absence of a family member can disrupt the stability of households. Addressing the issue of women trafficking is essential not only for the protection of individual rights but also for the promotion of the trafficked individual woman and the family. Women who have been trafficked and their families face significant challenges in achieving their aims in life. One potential mechanism for addressing women trafficking is religious education. Nigeria is a religiously diverse country with a predominantly Christian and Muslim population. Religious education refers to the process of teaching and learning about religious beliefs, practices, values, and traditions. It is a form of education that explores the religious dimensions of human culture, history, and society. Religious education aims to provide individuals with knowledge and understanding of different religions, their teachings, and their impact on individuals and communities. It also encourages critical thinking, respect for diversity, and the exploration of personal beliefs and values within a religious or philosophical context. Religious institutions, such as churches and mosques, play a central role in the lives of many residents and are influential in shaping values and behaviours. Religious education, both formal and informal, is a significant part of the curriculum in these institutions. The relevance of religious education in combating social issues is well-established. Religious teachings often emphasize principles of justice, compassion, and the dignity of all human beings. Religious leaders hold positions of moral authority and have the potential to influence community members' perceptions and behaviours. Therefore, examining the role of religious education in addressing women trafficking is timely and essential for devising effective strategies to combat this pervasive problem and foster sustainable family development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Addressing, Consequences, Trafficking, Mechanism, Religious,

Introduction:

Women trafficking poses a significant and multifaceted challenge in Nigeria, with far-reaching implications for sustainable family development. This pervasive issue is characterized by the illegal recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of women and girls for purposes of exploitation, such as forced prostitution or labour. Despite the fact that there are research and effective interventions specifically tailored to address women trafficking, women are still falling victim of trafficking and this has detrimental influence on the stability and well-being of families. The consequences of trafficking extend beyond the individual victim to encompass the entire family unit. Trafficked women frequently endure physical and psychological abuse, including sexual exploitation and violence. Upon returning to their families or escaping trafficking situations, they often carry deep emotional scars. These emotional traumas can manifest as depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder, affecting not only the victim but also the family members who must provide emotional support.

The consequences of women trafficking can extend over the long term. Even after a trafficked woman returns home or is rescued, the family may continue to grapple with the aftermath, including ongoing emotional and psychological issues, financial instability, and legal

challenges. Addressing the problem of women trafficking in Ogun State requires a comprehensive understanding of its root causes, consequences, and potential solutions. It is against this background that this paper intends to examine religious education as a Mechanism to address women trafficking in Ogun State. Religious education can mobilize communities to take collective action against trafficking through advocacy, awareness-raising, and community-based interventions (Bryant, 2019). Religious leaders and institutions often hold significant moral authority and social influence within their communities, enabling them to galvanize support for anti-trafficking efforts and mobilize resources for prevention, protection, and rehabilitation initiatives. By leveraging religious networks and platforms, religious education can amplify the voices of survivors, challenge stigma and discrimination, and advocate for policy reforms that address the root causes of trafficking and promote sustainable family development.

The Concept of Religious Education

Under normal circumstance, religious education can be defined as a lesson, instruction or coaching of a specific religion. In contemporary and secular society, religious education involves a particular kind of teaching which is so much not associated with the academic world and usually considers religious faith as the basic ideology and working modality, as well as a required condition of attendance. We can also say that religious education is a phrase given to education concerned with the study of religion. It can be referred to the teachings achieved through a church or religious association for information with regards to doctrinal beliefs and faith, or for learning in various areas of religion, but with no unequivocally religious or ethical aspires, e.g. in a school, college or university. The expression frequently has common characteristics with religious studies. (Wikipedia, 2010)

In Great Britain religious education is a mandatory subject in the state educational system. Primary schools are obligated to educate students on a religious studies curriculum of according to the local and national standard guidelines. In Scotland, educational systems for primary and secondary schools have divided religious education into two categories. The first is for age 5 to 14 and the other from age 14 to 18. Age 5 to 14 is required to study Religious and Moral Education while age 14 to 18 is required to study Religious, Moral, and Philosophical Studies. In England, religious education is a compulsory subject that is taught to primary and secondary school students under the 1944 Educational Act which was later amended as Education reform Act 1988 and most recently amended as School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Religious education is also obligatory in all state financed schools. When studying religious education, the instructor does not just teach one religion like Christianity. It comprises of diverse religions. The teachings usually cover religious leaders, the creation of the world in a particular religious perspective, religious and moral themes. Though, the syllabus is mandatory to reveal the principal situation of Christianity in religious existence and for this reason Christianity forms the most important of the content of the subject. Parents and guardians have the right to exempt their children from participating in religious education anytime during the period of study, of which the school authority have no right to disallow. (Department of Children, Schools and Families, 2018).

Schools in Great Britain are required to conduct on a daily basis act of worship according to educational system law, of which at least 51 percent who participates must be Christians in the beginning over the course of the academic year. These organized activities may seem multi faith in nature but it is usually pointless and worthless to those who do not practice Christianity particularly those who are Muslims due to the fact that they have a totally different way of worship and conducting their prayers. The association of teachers in Great Britain have condemn the act of school worship and called for a government appraisal of the practice. (BHA, 2006) with all this involved, students that are age aged 16 and above will still need an informed consent from their parents to pull out from such collective prayers. Due to lack appropriate support from teachers and the government of the state reluctance to magnetize controversy, only a quarter of

secondary school for instance actually meets the terms and conditions of the code of practice and standards of the education inspectorate OFSTED (Wilkins, 2015).

In Scotland the educational system states national procedures which state expectations of pupils learning. The local authorities in each part of Scotland will sketch a syllabus for each of its schools. Whilst in England, each and every local authority has a confined decided curriculum which gives authorization to subject teaching for each key stage and if possibly for each year. In England, the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is responsible for approving schools and colleges and they have made provision for religious education studies across the country by providing a non-statutory National Framework for Religious Education, which gives strategies and standards for the stipulation of religious education at all key phases, and forms the eight-levels as functional in National Curriculum subjects. (Qualification and Curriculum Authority, 2004) In 2008, the National Union of Teacher (NUT) recommended that parents and guardians should possess the right and privileges to particular education in their personal faith and that imam, rabbis and priest can be encourage to come and offer religious tutoring to students in all state schools. (Goff, 2018).

Objectives of Religious Education

The purposes of studying religious education are numerous. However, that will not prevent me from stating some of the most crucial purposes. The first of these purposes refers to the function of religion as component of the general curriculum. England and Wales have made religious education a mandatory subject for students to study in schools as obligated by law. Religious education forms part of their fundamental curriculum which has to be taught to all students of all required school age, and ahead of the least school leaving age. It is made available to students who hail from strictly religious family settings and also to those who are not. This purpose refers to the general learning result or outcome of religious education, so therefore it can be expressed as making participation to all students. In this situation students are not considered to be believers or non-believers but as students in general. (Hull, 2013).

The second purpose is the fact that religious education provides individuals understanding to those who are religious in nature. Previous studies have made clearer difference between the responsibilities of religious nurture (the fostering of religious faith) and that of religious education in contributing to a significant perception on the scenery of religion. This peculiarity, though still valuable, is conceivably excessively clear. We have to realize early enough compared to previous ten year ago that religious education does not have an involvement in creating or building up encouragement of faith as well as in education of the secular person. Religious education is not intended to be beneficial to only those who are spiritual or religious, if it happens to so it will seem more like a bizarre practice. Off course it encourages students who are already from religious families but also is a starting point for those who are still not from religious homes. So what kind of encouragement do you think religious education can provide for young people in today's society? It will obviously consist of the verification of their personality. It will also offer them the chance to fit into place in the study of their own culture along with the culture of other young children like themselves. Putting this into consideration, the students will be able to assess their self-indulgent. Religious education will make an input towards their personal development and maturation as religious advocate ready to take a mature and intelligent part in fully developed society (Hull, 2013).

Moral And Religious Education in Schools

Moral and Religious Education in schools encompasses formal instructional programs and informal learning experiences aimed at promoting moral development, ethical reflection, and cultural understanding among students (Girardet, 2018). This educational approach integrates teachings from various religious traditions, philosophical perspectives, and ethical frameworks to cultivate virtues, ethical reasoning skills, and respect for diverse religious and cultural beliefs.

Moral and religious education in schools plays a vital role in fostering ethical development and character education by providing students with opportunities to explore moral values, principles, and ethical dilemmas (Wolff, 2015). Through classroom discussions, role-playing activities, and reflective exercises, students develop empathy, integrity, and responsibility, which are essential for moral decision-making and ethical behavior. Moral and religious education programme often emphasize universal ethical principles such as compassion, justice, and respect for human dignity, while also acknowledging the diversity of moral perspectives within religious and cultural traditions.

Moral and religious education in schools promotes religious literacy and understanding by providing students with knowledge of diverse religious traditions, beliefs, and practices (Girardet, 2018). Students learn about the historical, cultural, and philosophical aspects of major world religions, as well as their contributions to art, literature, music, and society. This education fosters appreciation for religious diversity, interfaith dialogue, and mutual respect among students from different religious and cultural backgrounds. By promoting religious literacy, moral and religious education helps students navigate an increasingly pluralistic and interconnected world with understanding and respect for diverse religious perspectives. Moral and Religious Education in schools encourages critical thinking and ethical reflection by engaging students in discussions of moral dilemmas, ethical theories, and contemporary issues (Wolff, 2015). Students are encouraged to analyze ethical arguments, evaluate competing perspectives, and apply ethical principles to real-life situations. Through guided inquiry and dialogue, students develop the ability to think critically about moral and religious issues, articulate their own values and beliefs, and engage in constructive dialogue with others. This process of ethical reflection promotes intellectual growth, moral autonomy, and the development of informed and responsible citizens.

Moral and religious education in schools contributes to citizenship education and social cohesion by fostering civic virtues, democratic values, and a sense of belonging to a larger community (Girardet, 2018). Students learn about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, the importance of civic engagement, and the principles of democracy and human rights. moral and religious education programmes promote social justice, empathy, and solidarity, encouraging students to work towards creating a more just, equitable, and inclusive society. By fostering a sense of shared values and common purpose, moral and religious education contributes to building social cohesion and promoting peaceful coexistence in diverse societies. However, moral and religious Education in schools plays a crucial role in fostering ethical development, religious literacy, and social cohesion among students. By providing opportunities for moral reflection, religious understanding, and interfaith dialogue, moral and religious education prepares students to navigate complex moral and religious issues with wisdom, compassion, and respect for diversity.

Overview of Women Trafficking

Women trafficking, also known as human trafficking for the purpose of exploitation, is a grave violation of human rights and a significant global concern (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)2020). It involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of individuals through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of exploitation, which may include forced labour, sexual exploitation, or servitude. Women trafficking affects millions of individuals worldwide, with women and girls disproportionately impacted (UNODC, 2020). According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), an estimated 4.8 million people are victims of forced sexual exploitation globally, and women and girls represent 99% of victims in the commercial sex industry (ILO, 2017). Women trafficking occurs in various forms, including forced prostitution, forced labor, forced marriage, and organ trafficking, and it spans across borders and regions, affecting individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Women trafficking is driven by complex socioeconomic, political, and cultural factors that create vulnerabilities and exploit opportunities for trafficking (UNODC, 2020). Poverty, lack of economic opportunities, conflict, discrimination, gender inequality, and

social marginalization increase individuals' susceptibility to trafficking. Other risk factors include migration, displacement, lack of education, social isolation, and limited access to legal protection and support services. Traffickers prey on these vulnerabilities, often deceiving or coercing individuals into exploitative situations through promises of employment, marriage, or a better life.

Women trafficking has devastating consequences for victims, including physical, psychological, and emotional harm (UNODC, 2020). Victims of trafficking may experience violence, sexual abuse, physical injuries, trauma, and mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Trafficking victims often face stigma, shame, and social ostracism, further exacerbating their suffering and hindering their access to support and rehabilitation services. Trafficking also undermines victims' rights, autonomy, and dignity, perpetuating cycles of exploitation and vulnerability. The international community has developed legal frameworks and policies to combat women trafficking and protect victims' rights (UNODC, 2020). International instruments such as the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (Palermo Protocol) provide a comprehensive framework for addressing trafficking, including prevention, prosecution, and victim protection measures. Many countries have enacted anti-trafficking legislation, established specialized law enforcement units, and implemented victim assistance programs to combat trafficking and support survivors. However, challenges remain in effectively enforcing laws, prosecuting traffickers, and providing comprehensive support services to victims. Preventing women trafficking requires comprehensive strategies that address root causes, reduce vulnerabilities, and empower individuals and communities (UNODC, 2020). Prevention efforts may include raising awareness about trafficking risks, providing education and economic opportunities, promoting gender equality and social inclusion, strengthening child protection systems, and enhancing cooperation among governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector. Intervention strategies focus on identifying and assisting victims, prosecuting traffickers, and ensuring access to justice, healthcare, and social services for survivors.

Experiences of trafficked persons

Understanding the experiences of trafficked persons provides valuable insights into the complexities of human trafficking and underscores the urgency of addressing this global phenomenon. Research and firsthand accounts shed light on the harrowing realities faced by trafficking victims, including the trauma, exploitation, and challenges they endure throughout their ordeal. **Exploitation and Abuse:** Trafficked persons often experience severe exploitation and abuse at the hands of traffickers, including physical violence, sexual assault, and psychological manipulation (Zhang et al., 2020). Many victims are subjected to forced labour in hazardous conditions, working long hours for little or no pay, with no freedom to leave or negotiate their terms of employment. Others are forced into commercial sexual exploitation, enduring repeated acts of rape, coercion, and dehumanization.

Psychological Trauma: The experiences of trafficked persons commonly result in profound psychological trauma, including symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety (Zhang et al., 2020). Victims endure immense psychological distress due to the trauma of exploitation, the loss of autonomy, and the constant fear for their safety and well-being. Many struggle to trust others, form relationships, or reintegrate into society following their ordeal, facing ongoing psychological challenges long after escaping their traffickers. **Social Isolation and Stigma:** Trafficked persons often face social isolation and stigma, both during their exploitation and upon their return to their communities (Zhang et al., 2020). Many victims are ostracized or shunned by their families and communities due to the stigma associated with trafficking, sexual exploitation, or involvement in illegal activities. This social rejection further compounds the trauma experienced by victims, leaving them feeling abandoned, ashamed, and marginalized.

Legal and Practical Challenges: Trafficked persons encounter numerous legal and

practical challenges in accessing justice, protection, and support services (Zhang et al., in Adediran, 2022). Many victims fear retaliation from their traffickers or lack the legal documentation and resources to seek assistance. Language barriers, cultural differences, and mistrust of authorities further impede victims' ability to report their exploitation or access essential services, leaving them vulnerable to continued abuse and exploitation. Long-Term Recovery and Reintegration: Recovering from the trauma of trafficking and rebuilding their lives presents significant challenges for survivors (Zhang et al., 2020). Many victims struggle to secure stable housing, employment, and support networks, facing economic insecurity and social isolation. Long-term recovery and reintegration efforts require comprehensive support services, including trauma-informed counseling, vocational training, legal assistance, and social reintegration programs tailored to the unique needs and experiences of trafficking survivors.

A religious educational perspective on women trafficking

Besides economic and political factors there are others such as cultural and psycho-spiritual factors which precondition women to allow themselves to be used as objects to satisfy men's desire for pleasure and power and discourage women from standing on their dignity as human beings in their full right as persons. Experience and study show that most people take it for granted that men and women are not equal by any means; that men are pre-eminent human beings and women are secondary. Many actually believe, literally, on the basis of the biblical stories of Adam and Eve (Uchem, 2011).

In the book of Genesis, there are texts or rather their male-centered interpretations over the years to the effect that women: were created second, as an afterthought by God and, therefore, occupy a secondary place in the order of creation; that men are the normative human beings while women are derivatives, men's helpers, existing [only] to serve men's needs and desires (Uchem, 2012). It needs to be said that this is spiritual and theological abuse of women and it is the root of the sexual abuse of women; likewise, all the conclusions based on false, literal, historical and factual reading of the Bible. It was the analytic psychologist, Carl G. Jung, who insisted (Uchem, 2011) that most of human existence and conduct lie largely in the unconscious domain while the conscious aspect represents only but a small fraction of the total personality, like the tip of an iceberg (Schultz, 2016. Schultz, 2017. Sharp, 2018). Certain elements in the collective human unconscious, known as archetypes, find expression in myths in all human societies across the world. Consequently, human beings are myth-making creatures. By myth is meant a foundational story of a human community which gives it meaning and a sense of purpose. Many such myths also have embedded in them very uncomplimentary beliefs about women. Unfortunately, believers uncritically tend to regard them as equally inspired word of God.

The role of governments in fueling women-trafficking

Activists have pointed accusing fingers at governments, saying that they are not doing enough to end the trafficking of women and children. Onyejekwe (2015) put it this way: "Around the world, governments allow trafficking of women and girls for forced labor and servitude to flourish with near impunity. Lured with fraudulent promises of lucrative opportunities, women migrated within and across borders for work." Ann Jordan, director of the Initiative Against Trafficking in Persons at the International Human Rights Law Group in Washington, D. C., holds the view that in poor countries where organized crime is often in collusion with some public officials, that no amount of anti-prostitution legislation will end trafficking (Onyejekwe, 2015). One reason that has been advanced is that next to drugs and arms trafficking, women-trafficking is their largest source of revenue. Thus, they turn a blind eye to what is happening.

The hypocrisy of some governments in the matter of women-trafficking is evident in the link between prostitution, economics and politics. For instance, on the political side, while many governments deplore the phenomenon of human trafficking and some even execute death penalties for drug-trafficking, coupled with stringent immigration laws, they do not have equally strong legal arrangements to curb and eliminate human trafficking, particularly women-

trafficking. In contrast to penalties for drug and arms trafficking, the penalties for human trafficking are lower in many countries. There is a fundamental connection between legal recognition of prostitution industries and human-trafficking. Some countries have legalized prostitution in the belief that it would curb child prostitution and trafficking. Human-trafficking for prostitution has therefore become a gigantic global, multi-billion-dollar business, which turns over more money each year than the total of all military budgets in the world; and it is fueled by the global demand for sex-for-sale.

At any rate, experiences from countries such as Germany and Australia now show that the legalization of prostitution has not improved the conditions in which prostituted women are sexually exploited (Onyejekwe, 2015). It is actually ironic that at a time when government and international agencies are hiring gender consultants to conduct gender analyses and to eradicate violence against women that the same governments and their agencies are deliberately blurring the line of connection between trafficking and prostitution. They advocate what they call 'voluntary prostitution' as legitimate work, and even the recognition for trafficking as 'migration for sex work.' Fortunately, as will be demonstrated later, some governments have grown wiser and recognized the intrinsic link between prostitution and women trafficking and are taking appropriate steps to address the twin problems.

Eradicating Women Trafficking: Selected Responses

In light of the enormity of the problem of human trafficking, a multi-faceted approach should be adopted in addressing it. For Donna Hughes (2010), a social activist, efforts to eradicate trafficking should concentrate on providing assistance for the victims and imposing steep penalties on the perpetrator. In this author's view, vigorous efforts should go into awareness creation especially on the tricks and traps used by human traffickers so as to prevent potential victims being caught unawares. Activists can also adopt the recommendations of Sr Kayula Lesa, Coordinator for Church Social Teaching at the Zambia-based Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), as reported in the Catholic Information Service for Africa (CISA: newsletter of May 11, 2010). "We still have the opportunity to save someone from being trafficked because victims tend to be those who have never heard of human trafficking (Adediran, Olugbuyi & Adebajo, 2013). We have a duty to educate our families and people in our communities." The Nigerian based Committee for the Support of Women's Dignity (COSUDOW) is a project of Nigeria Conference of Women Religious founded in 1999 which both rehabilitates returnees/survivors of international trafficking and sensitizes the populace on the problem. COSUDOW reunites the survivors with their families and provides them with psycho-social as well as material and financial support either for schooling or for skills development and business start-up.

No doubt some people stand to gain from others' losses. Accordingly, it is pertinent to beware of people and forces that do not want the trafficking in women to end and so will do anything to oppose efforts aimed in that direction. Therefore, 'ending sex trafficking' demands taking a firm stand as did a US based organization, Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW). In a letter to the editor of the New York Times (2013), reacting to an article entitled 'Free Speech and an Anti-Prostitution Pledge,' the executive director of CATW, had this to say: You use a free speech argument to oppose the United States government's requirement that organizations that receive federal funds have a policy opposing prostitution and sex trafficking. ... the prostitution industry, the endpoint of sex trafficking, must be opposed if we stand any chance of ending sex trafficking (Norma, 2013).

It is quite instructive to note that the United States has a law prohibiting the use of any government money to "promote or advocate the legalization or practice of prostitution" (United States, 2003). The law requires practically all recipients of government funds to "have a policy explicitly opposing prostitution," to make an anti-prostitution pledge and refrain from any speech "inconsistent with" the government policy on the matter. It is quite encouraging to know that the US has recognized the connection between prostitution and women trafficking. This is a

very good example of how a government can take a clear stand that will contribute substantially in curbing women trafficking since it is linked with prostitution (Orukotan, Adediran & Adeyanju, 2014).

The earlier citation illustrates how one organization, Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), used one of the most powerful organs of public opinion, a newspaper, to challenge the evil of human trafficking in support of the US government measures to curb women trafficking. CATW has a comprehensive approach to eradication of women trafficking; ranging from education on women trafficking, legislative advocacy and survivor support to campaign for 'ending the demand' for commercial sex. In a section entitled 'Take Action,' the group recommends five actions by which individuals can help end human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation as follows: learning more about the subject, educating others in one's community, speak out, advocating for the passage and implementation of strong anti-trafficking laws and for the allocation of funding for anti-trafficking work and victim assistance, and financial support of anti-trafficking work.

Convinced that it is really "the demand for women and children for commercial sex that is fueling sex trafficking," CATW has introduced the innovative 'end demand strategy' to end human trafficking, training "youth, teachers, professionals, police, governmental authorities and the public about the harm of sexual exploitation and to prevent women and children from becoming victims." Indeed, CATW has demonstrated the much needed political and social will required to eradicate and not just to ameliorate the problem of women trafficking by aligning itself with 'the Nordic Model,' which originated in Sweden in 1999 and then spread to South Korea in 2004, Norway in 2009, and Iceland in 2009. It is notable as the world's first human rights based legal approach to ending human trafficking. It is also the first law in the whole world to recognize prostitution as violence against women and a violation of human rights. The Nordic law criminalizes the purchase of commercial sex and offers the exploited an exit strategy.

Overcoming woman trafficking through Religious Education

Religious education, rooted in moral teachings and ethical principles, can serve as a powerful mechanism to address the issue of women trafficking and promote sustainable family development. By leveraging religious teachings, values, and community networks, religious education initiatives can raise awareness, challenge social norms, and empower individuals and communities to prevent trafficking, support victims, and foster resilient family structures.

Religious education provides moral and ethical guidance rooted in religious teachings that condemn exploitation, injustice, and violence against women (Bryant, 2019). Religious scriptures and traditions often emphasize principles of compassion, justice, and human dignity, which can serve as moral imperatives to combat trafficking and protect vulnerable individuals. By imparting these values through religious education programs, communities can cultivate a collective ethos of solidarity and empathy that rejects the dehumanization inherent in trafficking and promotes respect for the inherent worth and rights of every individual.

Religious education empowers individuals with the knowledge, skills, and resources to recognize and resist exploitation, thereby enhancing their resilience and agency in the face of trafficking risks (Macias-Konstantopoulos et al., 2019). Through religious teachings on empowerment, self-worth, and collective action, religious education initiatives can equip individuals with the confidence and assertiveness to assert their rights, seek support, and challenge systems of oppression and exploitation. By fostering a sense of community solidarity and mutual support, religious education can also provide a protective buffer against the vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit, strengthening family bonds and social networks.

Religious education can play a vital role in the healing and reintegration of trafficking survivors by providing spiritual and emotional support, fostering forgiveness and reconciliation, and facilitating community acceptance and support (Macias-Konstantopoulos et al., 2019). Religious teachings on compassion, forgiveness, and redemption offer survivors a framework for processing trauma, rebuilding their lives, and restoring their sense of dignity and worth.

Religious communities can also offer practical assistance, such as shelter, counseling, and vocational training, to help survivors overcome the challenges of reintegration and rebuild their lives within supportive family and community settings.

Conclusion

The success of these programs highlights the importance of integrating religious education into broader anti-trafficking strategies to enhance community resilience and promote sustainable family development. Continued research and investment in religious education programs are essential for building more robust and effective responses to the complex challenges of women trafficking.

Recommendations

Based on the discussion of this study, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

1. Religious leaders should increase the reach and accessibility of religious education programmes across Ogun State, particularly in rural and high-risk areas.
2. Religious education programmes should be inclusive and cater to all religious groups to ensure broad community participation.
3. Curriculum planner should develop and integrate specific anti-trafficking modules within religious education curricula.
4. Religious education programmes should cover topics such as the dangers of trafficking, methods of recruitment, and strategies for self-protection and resilience.
5. Religious organizations should provide specialized training for religious leaders and educators on the complexities of human trafficking and effective methods for prevention and intervention.
6. The training of religious education programme should include recognizing signs of trafficking, offering support to victims, and collaborating with law enforcement agencies.

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