



THE ACTIVITIES OF “BABY FACTORIES” IN SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA, AND THEIR IMPACTS ON THE EDUCATION AND WELLBEING OF THE VICTIMS

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Abstract: *Baby factory is a term used in Nigeria to describe a location where criminal activities of harbouring girls of school age with unwanted pregnancies against their will and selling their babies when they are delivered take place. Sometimes girls who are not pregnant are deceived or kidnapped and kept in “baby factories” where they are impregnated for the same purpose of selling their babies. This study investigated the activities of baby factories in South-Eastern Nigeria and their impacts on the education and well being of the victims. This work used descriptive survey design. The population of the study was the entire parents and teachers in South-Eastern Nigeria. 600 respondents were selected using random sampling technique. Out of the 600 respondents, 200 comprising 100 parents and 100 teachers were drawn from each of 3 states selected from South-East (200x3 = 600). Oral interview and self structured questionnaire containing 18 items were used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviations. Findings revealed poverty, corruption, human trafficking among others as the reasons for baby factories in South-Eastern Nigeria. The findings also identified school dropout, denial of basic education, emotional trauma among others as the impacts of baby factories on the victims. Recommendations were made by the researcher.*

Keywords: *baby factory, poverty, corruption, sexual abuse, school dropout.*

Introduction:

“Baby factory” is a phenomenon involving the keeping of teenage girls with unwanted pregnancies in hostage, and those not pregnant to be impregnated so as to bear babies for sale. It also denotes a place or location where young girls of school age are deliberately encouraged to be pregnant or even forcefully impregnated for the purpose of delivering babies for sale most immediately after birth. (Nwaolikpe 2018, Okosun 2013). According to Omonobi (2013), the girls bear the babies for a token and the babies are sold for huge amounts of money in illegal child adoption markets. Ombelet and Jonhson (2016) in defining “Baby factories” opine that the victims are either voluntarily or forcefully made

pregnant and kept illegally until their babies are born and then sold for monetary gains. To Makinde, Olayele, makinde, & Huntley (2017), and Adewole (2016), “Baby factories” are farms or baby harvesting that involves breeding, trafficking, selling and abusing of infants and their biological mothers.

The word “Baby factory” according to Nwaolikpe (2010) has no legal definition. The terms are used in Nigeria to describe the criminal activities in the country which involve the harbouring of girls of school age with and without unwanted pregnancies against their will and the forceful impregnation of those without pregnancy and the sale of their babies to individuals for illegal adoptions. Eseadi, Achagh, Ilomuanya & Oghuabor (2015) commenting on this



issue opine that social media coined the term “Baby factory” to describe this ugly situation, while academic researchers use the term to inform the world about the emergent of the social menace.

Historically, the evolution of “Baby factories” began in 1980’s when baby dumping or baby abandonment became one of the serious human rights issues that challenged Nigerian nation (Egbue 2001, Ojedokun and Atoi 2012). At that time, many cities in Nigeria such as Lagos, and Aba in Imo state experienced babies being dumped or abandoned in gutters, dustbins and market places by young girls who conceived outside wedlock and were being rejected and chased out by their parents due to customs and social stigma of having bastards in the families (Nwaka and Odoemene 2019). At that time, many girls who conceived outside marriage usually roamed the streets without food or shelter. Their vulnerable and helpless conditions pushed them to unsafe abortions.

Moved with pity to save these pregnant homeless teenagers from physical danger, starvation, and unsafe abortions, some religious orders (Reverend Fathers and Sisters) of Roman Catholic Church started building what was then called “Compassionate homes” or “needy homes” where these expectant mothers were sheltered and taken care of until their babies were born. Nwaka and Odoemene observed that these girls were usually given the options of either taking their babies or leaving them behind when they would go home. Sometimes, the girls might leave their babies behind, and when this happened, the babies were given out for legal adoption by the “needy homes” operators. As time went on, this attempt to give physical and psychological protections to unwed teenage mothers and their babies through “needy homes” caught the interest of some individuals who used the method for material gains. This generated to a new and unfortunate phenomenon called “Baby factory”.

“Baby factories” were officially reported in three states by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Nigeria in

2006 through an investigation by a Swedish journalist Terese Christiansson with a hidden camera (Ele 2016). Since then, “Baby factories” have existed, flourished in Nigeria and multiplied in geometrical progression. Speaking on the intensity of this very unclean business, Obaji (2017) laments that at least 10 children are reportedly sold every day across the country. According to him, the Nigerian security operatives discover several new “baby factories” where young girls of school age are held captive to give birth to babies who are sold illegally either to adoptive parents or into slavery through trafficking.

Many people have talked about “baby factory” in Nigeria. Social media have made limitless reports. Government agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations, international bodies and academic researchers have investigated and written a lot on the causes, prevalence, proliferation and the menace of baby factory in Nigeria and how to curb it.

However, there is dearth work on how this illegal business affects the teenage mother victims, their education and overall wellbeing. A little or nothing has also been done in the fate of the babies born in baby factories to be sold to uncertain destinies, their education, developments and lives in general.

“Baby factory is a menace. It is a vice that breaks the anti-human trafficking laws, and amounts to another form of slavery which is the abduction of young girls, and child theft which are against the law. Describing the criminal nature of baby factory, the International Crime database Reports state that the phenomenon of baby factory in Nigeria is a widespread crime which is systematic in nature since some of the operators are allegedly serial human trafficking network (Huntley 2013). Adewole (2015) sees baby factory as primitive, debasing, dehumanizing, immoral, despicable and at variance with godly principles, social norms and natural justice.

“Baby factories” are operated by highly organized and sophisticated criminal syndicates who have their agents spread across the country. Madike



(2013), Eseadi (2015), and Adelaja (2014) further observe that the perpetrators are usually the owners of these factories. Some of them are more worrisomely medical practitioners who run their business with the help of their nurses and other employees among whom may be specifically hired to impregnate the women and girls. For instance, in 2008, police arrested one Dr. Akunne for running a baby factory disguised as maternity and social welfare home where he forcefully impregnated teenage girls and confined them in a facility against their will. In order to seal his crime, and prevent the girls from contacting their relatives for help, he would take their cell phones and delete the contacts. Dr. Akunne has been arrested three times for child trafficking and operating baby factories, before his last arrest and prosecution in 2008. Again, Dr. Orikara's The Cross Foundation Hospital was also raided by Police twice in June 2011 and in 2013 who reported that The Cross Foundation Hospital was really a baby factory.

In both cases, pregnant teenagers and women were rescued from his facility (Huntley 2013). Onuoha (2014) laments that it is unfortunate that medical practitioners and the law enforcement agencies are also involved in this illicit business in one way or the other. It has been observed that "Baby factories" are usually disguised as hospital and maternity, orphanage homes, social welfare centres or bottling companies including some quack private hospitals.

There are three categories of mothers that may be found in "Baby factories". The first category includes school girls, school drop outs and some other teenage girls and young women who have unplanned or unwanted pregnancies. These people in order to avoid social stigma and shame approach the baby factory operators secretly to be taken care of until their babies are born. Sometimes, these unfortunate pregnant teenagers are deceived into believing that they will be taken care of in a humanitarian ways, not knowing that their babies will be sold off while they themselves will be kept in hostage for another set of pregnancies.

According to Ishola (2014), the Baby factory operators scout for girls to be kept in their "factories" for their illicit business.

The second category is a set of girls who are in poverty level, and are in need of jobs or financial help but are helpless. They may not be pregnant but due to bad conditions are lured through deceit into such "factories" with the fake promises of employment and material help. In such case, young men are usually contracted by "Baby factory" operators to impregnate these girls and when the babies are born and sold off the mothers are ironically settled with meager amount of money while the operators take the "Lion share". For instance, A victim rescued by soldiers from 82 Division of Nigerian Army in Enugu state according to Sahara News (2015) lamented that she was given N120,000 (\$309.00) after the sale of her baby. However, the operator of the Baby factory confessed after arrest that she sold the baby for N40,000.00 (\$ 1,030.00). The last group includes girls of school age who are abducted or kidnapped and forcefully kept in hostage and impregnated usually routinely by their abductors or hired men who are paid for the job.

The men who impregnate them are heavily fed to be able to have sex with as many girls as possible. These men rape them with impunity to make them pregnant without any thought of infecting or contracting sexually transmitted diseases STDs from these unfortunate girls.

"Baby factories in their proliferated plural have been identified to exist across Nigeria, more especially in south-Eastern Nigeria as confirmed by media reports of police raids in such facilities. (Adelaja 2014, Huntley 2013, Ele 2015).

For instance, in Enugu State, in 20th January 2018, police discovered a baby factory where babies are sold for N300,000. (Pulse News 2018). In 14th June 2015, 9 pregnant girls were rescued from baby factory in Udi, Enugu (Igata 2015). In January 2016, Police rescued 4 pregnant teenage girls in baby factory in the state. The operator of the baby factory according to



police has earlier been arrested for this crime but has been released without prosecution, Dacham (2016). In Abia state, the story is the same. In June 2011, 32 pregnant girls were rescued in a baby factory camouflaged as “Cross Foundation Hospital. In 2010, 77 girls were also rescued in other parts of the state (Madike 2013). In June 2017, a pastor has been arrested by the police for operating a baby factory where 3 pregnant girls and another victim who has just been delivered a baby that has been sold were rescued. (Tope 2017) Baby factory activities are so rampant in Abia state that the state House of Assembly according to Ayitogo (2020) has called on Federal Government to forest the activities of baby factory which has continued unabated to an alarming proportion as babies are being sold as ordinary wares. In Ebonyi state baby factory was early as Alabi 2018 reports that the state is one of the three states in Nigeria where baby factory has earlier been reported. Speaking on the baby factory activities in Ebonyi state, Nworie (2016) comments that the state has been a victim of child trafficking which its practice has given rise to baby factories where babies are sold like other products in the market. For instance, in 2013, in Abakaliki, police nabbed two suspects who allegedly sold a boy to baby factory (Vanguard 2013). In Anambra state business booms as the state according to Pulse News (2015) leads in baby factory business. According to the source, Imo state scored second, while Abia and Enugu states share the third position in the business. In November 2019, a special Anti-Child Trafficking Task Force in Anambra discovered two houses in Obosi where pregnant girls kept until childbirth and their babies are sold off, (Chukwudi 2019). In 2011, police raided a baby factory disguised as a maternity home and rescued 8 babies, and 20 pregnant young girls (Odowu 2011).

In Imo State, in 2018, the state government recovered 257 babies in the state (Ekeoma 2018). This according to report was worrisome. In 2019, 14 pregnant teenage girls, and 4 babies were rescued from baby factory (Sun News 2019). According to Alozie

(2020), 3 baby factories has also been discovered in February 2020 in Imo state.

Although the scourge of baby factory is predominant in the South-Eastern states of Nigeria, other states in the country experience the menace. For instance, in Lagos State according to Elkana (2019), Nigerian Police freed 19 pregnant girls from baby factories where males were sold for £1,000.00 and girls for £700.00 in the black market in 2019. In Lagos state, more than 160 babies have been rescued from baby factories in 2018 (BBC News 2018).

In Rivers’ state, one Dr. Chinyere in 2013 was arrested for operating a baby factory disguised as In-Vitro Fertilization facility (IVF) where the doctor usually induced fake pregnancies by injecting concocted substances into infertile women to make them appear pregnant, after which babies would be presented to them as their own (Nwisi 2013). In Port Harcourt, Nigerian Police rescued 24 babies, and 4 pregnant mothers from illegal maternity home in 27th February 2020. (Vanguard News Papers 2020).

In Borno state, the government according to Premium Time (2017) discovered a baby factory in Galadima area of the state where babies were being sold. 4 babies and the operator of the baby factory have been arrested.

“Baby factory” business just like other phenomena in a given situation has reasons for its existence and continuity. These are discussed as follows

- Poverty as the first reason is a disease with many tentacles that spread to many areas of life. Unfortunately still, Nigeria is a poor underdeveloped nation and by nature and tradition, women are the poorer specie and more gullible due to women suppression. For instance, majority of the population under study lives below the income poverty level on less than 1 dollar per day, due to illiteracy, lack of job and women suppression. Furthermore, poverty level is higher in rural areas, making children and women more vulnerable to all kinds of vices. Adelaja (2014) commenting on this



opines that most of the mothers in “baby factories” are from abject poverty background which makes it easy for them to be enticed by any monetary offer by “baby factory” operators. Poverty according to Adewole (2016) also makes young girls from very poor families see “baby factories” as a veritable opportunities for getting economic or financial stand as they give birth and sell the babies for peanuts. Secondly, poverty increases the chances of unwanted pregnancies and concomitantly increases the chances of teenage girls with such pregnancies selling their babies to desperate buyers for money.

- Human Trafficking is another reason that makes baby factory business to flourish. Baby factor is a new trend in human trafficking. UNESCO linked baby factory in Nigeria to trafficking and saw Nigeria as one of the leaders in human trafficking for prostitution, and child labour as stated in their policy Paper “Human Trafficking in Nigeria: Root Causes and Recommendation” (Huntley 2013). Traffickers in Nigeria are responsive to demand which prompted them to create new criminal schemes of which one is “baby factory”. Since 2006, baby harvesting also known as “baby factory” has taken a more dangerous and complex form involving human trafficking alongside other illegal activities. For example, recent mass media reports according Huntley show that girls and young women are being brought by traffickers to “baby factories” with false promises of jobs and or safe abortions. Then the victims are confined and forced to give birth to babies that are sold for international or domestic servitude, adoption, rituals, organ harvesting, slave labour or sexual exploitation. Some of these girls are even trafficked to other countries during pregnancy, while others are kept hostage in the factories” where they continually give birth at gross for sale.
- Another reason for “baby factory” is corruption among the enforcement agents and the judges. Both according to Huntley (2013) can easily be bribed to

reach favourable outcomes for illegal businesses. It is disheartening that the enforcement agents and the judges who should fight for the rights of the poor masses make the arrest and prosecution of “baby factory” operators inefficient and contribute to high profit and low risk of the “baby factory” and other illicit businesses in Nigeria. There is an evidence that some of the “baby factory” operators arrested by the police were released without prosecution. For instance, the owner of a baby factory disguised as Uzoma Clinic and Maternity in Enugu State was arrested in 2006 and 2008 consecutively. But was released within few days respectively. One famous medical doctor – Dr. Akunne used to engage in “Baby factory business. Several times was he apprehended by the police, and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps – ‘NSCDC’ and paraded in Enugu before journalists, only for him to wriggle himself out and bounce back. Dr. Akunne continued in this dirty business for many years (Adibe 2013). In some other occasions, the accused would be granted bail with the case adjourned indefinitely (Adepegba 2010). Obaji (2017) asserts that the crime of “baby factory” has been on the increase because some security agencies and state officials aid “baby factory operators. Obaji cited an example of how one of the perpetrators of this evil, narrating the secret behind her success boasted “the police are not a problem for me”.

- Socio-cultural stigma also contributes to “baby factory” operation. Social stigma attached to pregnancies by unwed girls and children outside marriage in South-Eastern Nigeria is very serious. Unmarried women and girls with pregnancies are usually disgraced, ostracized and chased out of the family house, and children born in that way are given derogatory names such as “bastards”, illegitimate children or “outcast” and are never given any inheritance (Agbo 2015). Consequently, unmarried girls usually run away from home immediately they discover that they are pregnant, to



avoid socio-cultural stigma and shame associated with their conditions. They therefore become desperate to find a means of terminating the pregnancy through abortion, or giving birth secretly and making financial gains out of it. Most of the time as stated by Nwaka and Odoemene (2019), they prefer the later due to health and financial implications of abortion, and the gain of the later. This makes them vulnerably ready source of recruitment by “baby factory” operators, and they find these orphanage homes a haven for dropping their babies secretly without public awareness.

- Gender discrimination is another reason. In traditional South-East (Igbo) society, females are considered as inferior to males and tolerate violence against women. This is because this society has patri-ilineal system of inheritance. A family without a male child is believed to have been doomed and worthless as custom demands that only the sons occupy the family house and inherit the property. Husband and wife therefore desire male children desperately for their marriage and legitimacy of marriage on each other (Agbo 2015). Many parents thus regard girls as poor investments and do not send them to school. They believe that girls belong to their future husbands and educating them is just like watering another man’s garden, and so find their daughters suitable for early marriage, domestic work and skill acquisition. This in turn limits chances for career development and opportunity to find lucrative jobs for girls, but leads to poverty, illiteracy and gullibility among the girls who in their efforts to break even succumb easily to the temptation of giving birth and selling their babies. This therefore ensures a steady supply of women and teenage girls for “baby factory” operators.
- Infertility also contributes to “baby factory” business. Infertility is seen in South-Eastern Nigeria as a curse on women and the families they are married to. South-Easterners believe that children

are a blessing from God and any family that does not have a child especially a male is under a curse, and that curse must (superstitiously) be from the female couple, not the male. Makinde, Olayele Makinde, and Huntley (2017) state that the major patrons of “baby factories” are therefore infertile women who are desperate to have children in which a male must be included in order to remove the shame and stigma of childlessness and to have legitimate rights of their husbands’ property as stated earlier in this research work. The quest for male child is seen in the differences in the prices of babies. Baby boys are costlier than girls, and may be sold at N1,000,000.00 (\$4,348.00) while girls are sold at N800,000 (\$3,636.00) (Omouobi 2013). This practice is predominantly seen in the South eastern Nigeria that is occupied by Igbo tribe.

- Illegal adoption: In Eastern Nigeria, child adoption according to Agbo (2015), Ombelet and Johnson (2016) have never been acceptable culturally before pre-colonial era.

Adoption is still a stigma among the people. Consequently, families do not accept a child whose biological make up is foreign in those families as a legitimate child. This is because adopted children are not allowed to take some important cultural titles or be crowned as a traditional ruler of a given community, or the eldest man in a family with all the rights and benefits accrue from such positions, neither do they have a share in communal lands. Jude (2013) asserts that although child adoption is not done legally, childless wives who are desperate to have children they can call their own adopt children illegally and the surest way is to opt for “baby factory” services where they buy children with the pretence that they really give birth to those children. These women in order to make their gimics seem real go to “baby factories” where they are given herbs or concoctions that would make their body swell especially their legs and tummy to make them appear pregnant so as to deceive their husbands and the public. At the time of “delivery”, they



go to those fake clinics and procure babies. For instance, in July 2011, according to Madike (2013) a desperate married woman who patronized a “baby factory” in Aba, Imo State was given some herbs which enabled her to deceive her husband into believing that she was pregnant. However, there are other women who are fooled to believe that the “factories” are miracle centers where infertile women conceive miraculously by drinking the same concoctions. These women are usually advised never to go to any other hospital or maternity for ante-natal or any other reason. At the time of the so-called delivery, they are sedated during a sham labour and assisted in delivery process after which babies from these “baby factories” are presented to them as their own. According to BBC News 2012, as in Madike (2013), a victim who was arrested confessed of having such experience and also stated that she was warned not to do any scan as the baby was a miracle baby, after which she was duped N1,000,000.00 – one million naira, and a baby was handed over to her to accomplish the miracle.

- There is a high rate of unemployment in Nigeria, which forces young people especially girls to desperately engage themselves in all sorts of illegal means of survival. As a result, girls usually fall prey to “baby factory” operators who deceive them into believing that the operators would offer them jobs. Upon arrival, the girls are turned into baby producing human machine for baby factory business. For instance, a woman rescued from a baby factory in Lagos state in 2019 according to Elkana (2019) explained that she was tricked into going to Lagos to pick a house help job, but unfortunately, she was told by her madam that she would not leave the premises till one year. Meanwhile, at the time of her rescue, she was already pregnant and had slept with seven men.

The effect of the activities of “baby factory” business are inexhaustible as the victims, the society, economy, religion and the whole nation are not left

untouched. However, this write up looks into the effects on the victims’ education and wellbeing.

Educationally, many research works have shown that the targets of baby factory operators are usually on girls of school age. The girls are denied of basic education as they are kept hostage and forced into prostitution. In this case, prostitution and bearing children for sale replace education, learning and training in skills to empower individuals and better their lives. Commenting on this, Nwaolikpe (2018), and Onuoha (2014) state that the activities of baby factories are common among school girls who are in problems of unwanted pregnancies and school drop-outs. Female school drop outs in the hands of baby factory operators are prevented from going back to remedy their academic deficiencies or for learning skills. School girls are also hindered from continuing or furthering their studies. Baby factory also blocks other girls of school age from entering into schools.

Baby factory also affects the baby victims whom at birth are sold into international or domestic slave labour, organ harvesting, sexual exploitation and for rituals with the exception of few ones who might fall into the good hands of childless couples. These babies face the ugliest uncertainties of their lives at birth. They are denied of all rights to education and of being full human beings by people who call themselves human beings. These babies are traded from conception and according to Alichie (2015) a price is paid for them in their first few days on earth. The malnutrition and poor environment that ravage the lives of these babies from pre-natal stage usually affect their cognitive development, resulting to mental retardation and inability to learn at later age. Even those teenage mothers that have been rescued from baby factories usually show signs of depression and other emotional problems that may affect learning.

Emotional trauma

Nothing pains the heart like lack of freedom. Freedom to move about, and see the world. Freedom to socialize, freedom to learn, freedom to eat what one



wants to eat, freedom of worship. There is always joy in freedom. The emotional trauma of the girls and women held captive at the hands of “baby factory” perpetrators start from the fact that these victims are maltreated and denied the freedom to go home and reunite with their families, learn, move, live their lives and be useful to themselves. Secondly, the emotional pains of emptiness or vacuum that stab the hearts of victim mothers may even be worse as their babies are snatched away from them and given to other “mothers” on the waiting list. According to safe world for women (2014), when a woman gives birth, the cry of the baby soothes away the pain of child birth, but in the case of mothers in “baby factories” the labour pains usually remain with them as their babies are taken away to unknown places with the uncertainties that accompany such journey. The emotional traumas at the loss of the babies who are sold off for adoption and or for other purposes such as child trafficking, organ harvesting, ritual purposes can be enormous due to the feelings of uncertainties of what might happen to them. When a baby dies, the mother can pray for the departed soul but when a baby is lost, the pains are likely to live as long as the mother lives. There is also emotional pain that accompanies rape through which some of the girls are impregnated. It is emotionally painful when one is forced to do what one does not consent especially in sexual relationship. All these may result to mental ill health.

Furthermore, the mother’s emotional state during pregnancy has effects on the development of her baby’s brain, which may result to lower cognitive development and other health problems. Research has proven that fetus gets chemical signals about the mother’s mental stress through the placenta which may lead to low birth weight and poor health outcomes, that may have long term consequences on the infant through childhood to adulthood, and infant mortality (Agbo 2019, March of Dimes 2013).

Malnutrition: Pregnant mothers in “baby factories” suffer from malnutrition as they are not fed with balanced diet expected of their condition. The

operators of “baby factories” ration the quality and quantity of food given to the pregnant women in order to reduce expenses. The starvation and other impoverishments, unhygienic environment are likely to expose mothers and babies to high risk of malnutrition, infections and diseases. Some of the victims according to National Mirror (2013) lamented “we are kept and fed miserably until we put to birth”. Another report from raided “baby factories” showed that the girls are crammed into miniature rooms where they slept on bare floors and sometimes on straw mats (Madike 2019). Agbo (2018) observed that poor nutrition on the part of pregnant women has been proven to have adverse effects on the fetus. Such abnormal developments may result to visual and auditory impairments, mental retardation and retarded growth including low birth weight and infant mortality.

Health Problems:

Acute dearth of health care services exposes the victims of “baby factories” (both mothers and babies) to many health challenges. The girls due to their enslavement do not receive adequate health care services or ante-natal care because “baby factory” business is done secretly. So the pregnant teenage mothers are not taken to or allowed to go to hospital for ante-natal check-ups, neither do the operators of “baby factories” invite health officials to treat them. (Okoli and Okpalede 2014, Nwaolikpe 2018). This may result to many unlimited health complications for the women and their babies. “Baby factories” operate with reckless sexual relationships which may result to spread of STDs including HIV/AIDS that may affect both sex partners and the unborn babies. Blood-type incompatibility which results to many health problems including sickle cell anaemia may also be common in “baby factories”.

Sexual and Physical abuse:

These are other problems that the victims experience in “baby factories”. The vulnerable young



women usually experience sexual and physical abuse in the hands of baby factory operators. Most of the time, they are repeatedly abused physically to restrain them from escaping (Okoli and Okpaleke 2014).

Hunger is another variable that can attack someone physically. In order to minimize their expenses, “baby factory” operators subject the girls to severe hunger. These girls are also sexually abused as they are raped by sex-starved men, all in the aim to impregnate them. Of course, rape goes with physical pains of forced sex and any effort to stop the rape goes with strangling, and thorough beatings of the victims.

The rampant and common ways by which children are produced and sold as commodities in Nigeria more especially in South Eastern part of the country has destroyed the future of many girls of school age, doomed the fate of many babies and put shame on the face of Nigerian nation. The social media, national and international bodies, governmental, and non-governmental organizations have written, reported, lamented and made declarations and limitless efforts to curb the menace of baby factories. Academic researchers have investigated on its prevalence, causes and effects on the society. However the researcher felt that not much has been done on how baby factory affects the education and over all well-being of baby factory mother victims and their babies. Hence, the core focus of this study is to investigate on the activities of baby factory and its impacts on the education and well-being of the victims.

The main objective of this research is to investigate on the activities of ‘baby factory’ in South-Eastern Nigeria, and its impacts on the education and well being of the victims. Specifically, the research aims to

1. Find out the reasons for baby factory existence in South-Eastern Nigeria.
2. Find out the impacts of baby factory on the education and well-being of victims.

Research Question I: What are the reasons for the existence of baby factories in South-Eastern Nigeria

Two research questions guided the study. These include;

1. What are the reasons for the existence of baby factories in South-Eastern Nigeria?
2. What are the impacts of baby factories on the education and well-being of the victims?

Method:

The study utilized a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was the entire parents and teachers in South-Eastern Nigeria. This group was used because the researcher found it difficult to reach baby factory victims as they shy away from the society due to social stigma, and parents and teachers are the closest people to their daughters and students who fall victims to baby factory business.

600 respondents were randomly drawn from 3 selected states in South –Eas, using random sampling technique. Out of the 600 respondents, 200 comprising 100 parents and 100 teachers were selected from each of 3 states. ($200 \times 3 = 600$). Before the selection of the respondents, ballot papers of “yes” and “No” were used to select parents and teachers who are well informed about baby factory activities. It was from those who were well informed that the respondents were selected from. Oral interviews and self structured questionnaire containing 18 items were used to elicit information from the respondents for the study. The questionnaire was on a four points likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (AG), Disagree (DG), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Data collected were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviations. The instrument was face validated by 2 experts in Educational Psychology department from Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu. The reliability index of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability formula and an estimate of .79 was obtained. A mean score of 2.50 and above were considered acceptable, while scores below 2.50 were rejected.



S/N	Reasons for the existence of baby factories in South-Eastern Nigeria	Parents N = 300			Teachers N=300				
		X ¹	SD ¹	Dec	X ²	SD ²	Dec	X ¹ X ²	Dec
1	Poverty	3.83	.92	*	3.86	.97	*	3.85	*
2	Human trafficking	3.39	.73	*	3.38	.74	*	3.39	*
3	Corruption	3.26	.62	*	3.61	.72	*	3.44	*
4	Socio-cultural stigma	3.15	.65	*	3.17	.77	*	3.16	*
5	Gender discrimination	2.70	.69	*	2.81	.92	*	2.76	*
6	Illegal adoption	3.33	.71	*	3.23	.69	*	3.28	*
7	Infertility	3.82	.63	*	3.75	.96	*	3.79	*
8	unemployment	3.26	.72	*	3.61	.72	*	3.44	*
Cluster mean		3.34	.71		3.43	.81		3.39	

The data in table I indicated that the respondents agreed that all the items from 1-8 are reasons for the existence of baby factories in South-Eastern Nigeria, since these items have mean scores ranging from 2.76 -3.45 with grand total mean of 3.39.

Research question 2: What are the impacts of baby factories on the education and well being of the victims?

Table 2: Mean scores and standard deviations of the impacts of baby factories on the education and well being of the victims

S/N	The impacts of baby factories on the education and well being of the victims	Parents N = 300			Teachers N=300				
		X ¹	SD ¹	Dec	X ²	SD ²	Dec	X ¹ X ²	Dec
1	School dropout	3.16	.93	*	3.47	.67	*	3.85	*
2	Denial of basic education	3.26	.90	*	3.44	.70	*	3.35	*
3	Emotional trauma	3.44	.70	*	3.25	.90	*	3.22	*
4	Mental ill health	3.12	.84	*	3.14	.93	*	3.13	*
5	Malnutrition	3.39	.73	*	3.37	.86	*	3.38	*
6	Abnormal development	2.40	.91		2.33	.85		2.37	
7	Infant mortality	2.36	.79		2.42	.71		2.39	
8	Physical Health problems	3.31	.85	*	3.24	.85	*	3.28	*
9	Physical abuse	2.78	.86	*	2.51	.73	*	2.68	*
10	Sexual abuse	3.38	.74	*	3.26	.93	*	3.32	*
Cluster mean		3.10	.83		3.00	.74		2.83	

The data in table 2 revealed that the respondents agreed that 8 items, that is; items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 & 10 are the impacts of baby factories on the victims, since these items have mean scores ranging from 2.68-3.85 with a grand total mean of 2.83.

Discussion

The data in table one identified the reasons for the existence of baby factories in South-Eastern to include poverty, human trafficking, corruption, socio-cultural stigma, gender discrimination, illegal adoption,



infertility and unemployment. The findings of Huntley (2013), Eseadi et al (2015) Alabi (2018) and Omblet and Johnson (2016) are in support of the finding that poverty is the leading cause of baby factory in Nigeria. According to Omblet and Johnson, poverty increases the chances of unwanted pregnancies and girls selling their babies. The findings of Eseadi et al, and Huntley are in support of the data analysis of this study that corruption, human trafficking and infertility also fuel the existence of baby factory in Nigeria. Data analysis by Alabi (2018), and Omblet and Johnson (2016) are in line with these research findings that social stigma is a reason for baby factory. Nwaka (2019) and makinde et al (2017) in their research finding support the data analysis of this study that unemployment is a reason for baby factory in South-East.

The data analysis in table two revealed that school dropout, denial of basic education, emotional trauma, mental ill health, malnutrition, physical health problems, physical and sexual abuse are the impacts of baby factories on the victims. The findings of Makinde et al (2016) and Okoli and Okpaleke (2014) support the findings of this research that sexual abuse, physical abuse, denial of education are some of the impacts of baby factories on the mother and baby victims. Makinde et al (2016) concluded that baby factories are new systematic abuse structure where mothers and children suffer short and long term abuse that lead to health problems, including denial of education and child's rights.

Conclusion:

Baby factory is a phenomenon that involves the keeping of pregnant teenage girls against their will along with those who are not pregnant, and impregnating the later, all for the purpose of selling their babies. This is very rampant in Nigeria more especially in South-Eastern part of the country due to poverty, corruption, human trafficking among other reasons. Baby factory is a menace that has devastating effects on the victims, the society and the whole nation. It is a dagger that stabs education as school girls, school

dropouts, and other girls of school age are mostly involved and affected as they are denied the chances for basic education and continuing of schooling or the acquisition of skills for self reliance. Their babies are sold off to uncertain destinations and into uncertain destinies. Baby factory, activities spoil the image of Nigeria before other countries of the world. Emotionally, the act of keeping the girls hostage can be emotionally devastating leading to mental ill health while the restrictions of freedom to health care services, starvation, forced prostitution, sexual and physical abuse can affect the health of the victims physically. Therefore, baby factory business should be curbed by all means.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- There should be consistent raiding of suspected baby factories as well as arresting and prosecution of the operators and their clients by law enforcement agents. Before this, the operators should be paraded in public places and have their names, pictures and stories published in social media to shame them and warn others.
- Government should strengthen Nigeria child adoption laws by staging machineries in positions to monitor compliance to standards in the approved motherless baby homes.
- Public awareness should be created by civil society on the menace of baby factories.
- Families should be counseled to build strong family relationships, trust and confidence and enhance effective communication between parents and daughters. This will help parents to monitor the affairs of their daughters with unwanted pregnancies, accept them, care for them, and appreciate their babies. By doing these, they bring succour to their daughters.
- The root causes of baby factory business should be addressed in order to stop the evil.
- Clear laws that delineate inter-country adoption and infant trafficking should be enacted.



- Parents should take adequate care of the financial and psychological needs of their unmarried daughters.
- Baby factories should be recognized as child trafficking routes.

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