

# A ROLE OF SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION IN PREVENTION OF BABY FACTORY IN NIGERIA

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*The phrase “baby factory” is often employed indiscriminately with “baby farms” or “baby harvesting”. “Baby factory” can be interchangeably used as “child trafficking or infants trafficking” in this study exploration. This article aims to understanding of predominance of baby factory from the knowledge of social workers in Nigeria about their role in the neutralizing activity of the traffickers. The greater part of this research was to discover the role of social work profession in prevention of baby factory in Nigeria and the social workers recognized that baby factory is another key issue, they need to confront in the society, especially in the rural areas where victims are more vulnerable and as well as global concern to the international social work. However, the social work profession need to be furnished with necessary equipment in order to reduced and prevent baby factories delinquent successfully in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** “Baby factory”, role of social work, prevention.

## INTRODUCTION

The phrase “baby factory” is often employed indiscriminately with “baby farms” or “baby harvesting”. “Baby factory” can be interchangeably used as “child trafficking or infants trafficking” in this study exploration. Children that fall within the classification of these baby factories are usually from newborns to toddlers. Onuoha (2014) poses that ‘baby factories encompass all activities that are associated with trading in babies – including sales, receipts and transfers within or through national outskirts by purchasing, kidnapping or false selection, extortion or double dealing to be utilized for fulfilling social, quantifiable and

tradition purposes among others'. According to Huntley (2013) baby factory phrase is without a legal definition, but it is utilized by the media to paint a picture of illicit undertakings comprising of constraining a person's movement as opposed to their consent, coerced pregnancies, trade in babies and unlawful adoptions. Although due to the shaded and sensitive nature of the wrongdoing, there are no records of the exact period when baby factories emerged in Nigeria or the country they originated from. Baby factories are a relatively new phenomenon unlike other practices of adolescent abuse, hard labor of children and baby abandonment, among other.

TABLE 1. SHOWING THE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF BABY FACTORIES IN NIGERIA

<b>Date discovered</b>	<b>Community/ State</b>	<b>Geopolitical zone</b>	<b>Description of the baby factory</b>	<b>Number of pregnant girls rescued</b>
14 July 2014	Isiala Ngwa, Abia state	South East	A household positioned at Isiala-Ngwa South Indigenous Zone.	19
21 March 2014	Ogun State	South West	Four-bedroom bungalow located at Crescent, Fagbunle Bus Stop	8
30 January 2014	Okitipupa, Ondo	South West	Healing Home	5
17 June 2013	Aba, Abia	South East	Cross foundation International	16
14 October 2011	Ihiala, Anambra State	South East	Spormil Hospital and Maternity (aka Iheanyi Ezuma Foundation)	30

Sources: Onuoha, 2014

TABLE 2. SHOWING PLAYERS AND CHARACTERS OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN BABY FACTORIES IN NIGERIA

S/No	Actors	Roles and Activities
1.	Doctors	Responsible for running the baby farms
2.	Nurses/ midwives	Provide professional services (antenatal support/care) for the pregnant girls
3.	Male syndicate Employees	Responsible for impregnating girls whose babies are eventually sold
S/No	Actors	Roles and Activities
4.	Corrupt security agents	Accepting bribes to overlook the operators of the illicit trade
5.	Young girls	Carry and deliver the babies (who are usually sold)
6.	Scouts/facilitators	Responsible for recruiting young girls and able-bodied men into the illicit business
7.	Document forger	People who acquire fake records and artificial legal documents to offer babies for sale
8.	Clients	People who buy the babies

Sources: Onuoha, 2014

## RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

Baby factories are a modernized form of child trafficking in Nigeria. Child trafficking is a global problem from the international aspect of social work which affects every country. A case of this is seen in that of March 2014, when Chinese authorities uncovered four baby selling underground grids, in the process, they saved 382 babies and arrested over a thousand suspects just like similar cases were found in countries like Benin Republic, Gabon, Guatemala, Namibia and among other nations (Onuoha, 2014). A baby factory is a place, which constitutes different types of human abuses and misuses. Subsequently, it was portrayed as a symbol of the modern age slavery. Nigeria, like many other countries, is a place of origin, travel, and destination of trafficking of human beings. Babies are progressively being trafficked for purposes of sale, women for prostitution and children for black magic sacrifices known as witchcraft rituals (Huntley, 2013). Needless to say, a baby

factory leaves nightmarish and awful impacts on the casualties and their relatives; usually, residents of areas where baby factories operate live their lives in dread. The effects associated with baby factory operations are of mental, physical, economic and social aspects of the victim's lives with huge emotional magnitudes (Redlinger et al., 2004). These baby factories are simply the defilement of adolescents' or baby's privileges and it is wrongdoing in societies that affects the well-being of the victim (Redlinger et al., 2004). The babies are unconscious of the fact that they are sold at birth and the adopted parent will continue to serve as their family pending their adult age for proper exploitation. The babies will leave all their childhood experiencing maltreatment in the hand of wrong families and such child suffers psychological social, economic and physical delinquent believing their parents are ridiculous. Therefore, as a social work professional, I am countering to the issue of baby factory in Nigeria because it causes psychological, social emotional pains which affect the wellbeing and increases social breakdown that encourages various crimes such as exploitation, illegal adoptions, forced pregnancies, adoption of babies into the wrong families, and selling of babies' organs for ritual purposes.

The aim of the research is to have understanding of predominance of baby factory from the knowledge of social workers in Nigeria about their role in the neutralizing activity of the traffickers. The objective of the research is to discover the role of social work profession with perspective of giving preventative approaches for curbing the menace of baby factories in Nigeria.

The research questions: what roles does social work profession undertake in prevention of baby factories in Nigeria?

## CRITICAL SOCIAL WORK

Baby factory in Nigeria is a subject that was explored from the angle of critical social work. Critical social work is built on the basis of critical theory. In a narrow sense, critical theories are understood by the social work profession as a theory originated from institute known as

“Frankfurt school of Marxism” as comprehensive in the field of social sciences and expressed as “critical theory” that incorporates all the areas of study communications and “human subjectivity” as well as its development within the social and political context of people’s lives, people’s ability to influence the course and direction of their lives, including through participation in social actions, leading to a change in the social and political conditions of their lives. In more than thirty years of existence, the critical social work has shown that it is a model of such communication theories and practices that are best suited to work with people, families, individuals of different societies and groups in cases of racial, ethnic and cultural diversity. Critical social work is related to the pedagogy of liberation (Freire, 2005). This work with people, which helps them to understand the wellsprings of persecution that lead to oppression in their countless lives and their existing knowledge, skills and resources to avoid harassment, modify the consequences of its action and speak out against it. The notion of ontological questions seeks for the nature of reality. The ontology of critical theorists is ‘historical realism’ and most believe that there is nobody ideal in reality, however that such is deciphered through social, political, racial, ethnic, sexual orientation values and cultural views (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The ontology of baby factory is often captured in the notion of cultural and social realities from the cross-cultural aspects of international social work. The international federation of social workers (IFSW) (2002) gave the broad definition of social work:

*“As a profession that promotes social change, problem-solving in human relationships, and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work”* (Hare, 2004 p. 409).

The International association of schools of social work (IASSW) (2001) likewise embraced this definition in June 2001 at Copenhagen in Denmark during the congress of IASSW–IFSW seminar and the associations agreed to the definition to be universal meaning of social work. However, the key assignment of social work profession is to oversee people

and energize the quality of human health to see the wellbeing of their lives (Reamer, 1998). UNESCO (2001) gave a clarification of well-being referred to by Hare 2014 as:

*“A state of successful performance throughout the life course integrating physical, cognitive, and social-emotional function that results in productive activities deemed significant by one’s cultural community, fulfilling social relationships, and the ability to transcend moderate psychosocial and environmental problems”* (Hare, 2004 p. 410).

Hutchings and Taylor (2007) have also added that ‘wellbeing has a subjective measurement in the feeling of fulfillment connected with satisfying one’s potential’ (p. 386).

## THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) (2002) stated that professional social work is focused on problem solving and cause change to happen in individual lives. Therefore, social workers are known as agents of change in the society and have important role to play the lives of individual, families and communities they serve. In cases of baby factories in Nigeria, the social work profession engages the following intervention.

### 1. EMPOWERMENT, LIBERATION AND PROTECTION OF THE VICTIMS

The enablement and emancipation of people is of extreme significance to social work profession in promoting their wellbeing, all over the world. For instance, in industrialized nations, developing societies and further in advanced countries (Evans, 1992). From the onset, social work has been especially concerned about individuals who are vulnerable and abused, and additionally the individuals who are adapting to the issues and changes of living. The objective of enabling individuals to handle their lives more adequately has as of recent times turned out to be more noticeable in working with individuals in the field of social work, for

example Paul-Sew, who highlights strengthening the techniques in the diversion and change programs in republic of South Africa in terms of empowerment of the individual, subsequently, its opportunity from politically-endorsed racial isolation (Gray, 2006). Several definitions of empowerment have been proposed (Adams, 2008; Rondeau, 2000; Kemp, 1995; Lee & Hudson, 1996). Richards & Thyer (2004) and assessment of empowerment of people looked into different definition of empowerment and defined it according to Lorraine Gutierrez (1990): "Empowerment is the process of increasing personal, interpersonal or political power so that individuals, families and communities can take action to improve their situations. It is a means of addressing the problems of powerless populations, and the role powerlessness plays in creating and perpetuating social problems in both developing and developed societies" (p. 230). The ideas of empowerment and liberation are derived from theories of Paulo Freire, known to be celebrated as a Brazilian instructor between the year of 1921 to 1997. Freire accentuated different procedure that leads to conscientization, which can be defined as: "The learning process is to be perceived as social, political, and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 2007 p. 3). By the definition, application of the theories of empowerment and liberation is called 'critical consciousness' that empowers individuals in order to consider their regular experience in dealing with everyday activities in relations to social and political situations that impact their experiences. According to Freire, urges on individuals' ability to move in a direction that would allow them to incredulous plan every social condition in their endeavor (Kemp, 1995). Social work authors Payne, (1996), Johannesen, (1997), Narayan, (2000) have engaged with the theories of empowerment and liberation in several of their publication to deal with individual and families and underscored the significance of Freire's effort in the practice of social work and other social sciences field globally. Take for an example, the application of theory has great impartation on the lives of people living in Chile republic, when was applied to use by the social work professionals in the region and also was applied in different nations of Latin and North America. Freire's work and ideas have promoted the radical notion of social work in North American and South Africa. Application

of empowerment and liberation is the tool implemented by social work profession in preventing baby factory related issues in Nigeria. The baby factory protection procedure is shown in outline structure below.

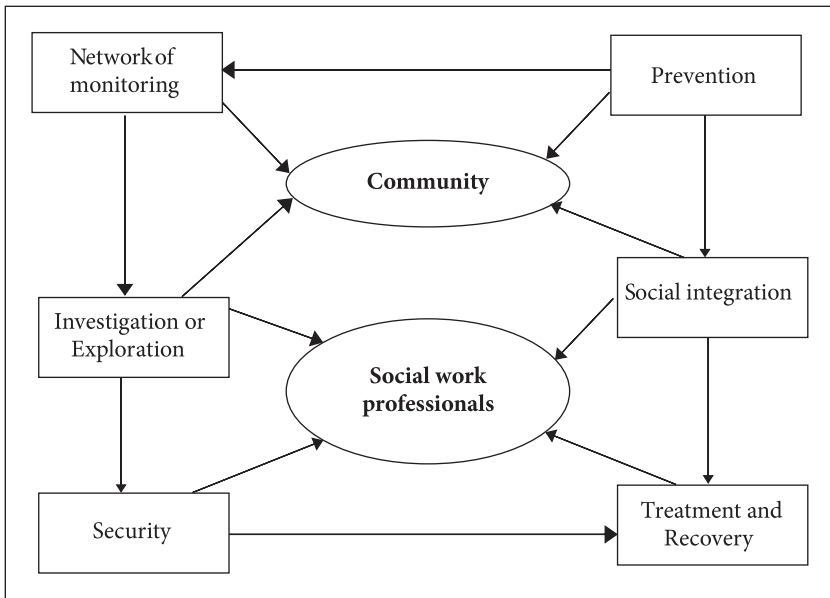


FIGURE 1. THE PROCESS OF BABY FACTORY PROTECTION (ADAPTED FROM SAMBO & SPIES, 2014)

## 2. APPLICATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

According to the United Nations, human rights is one of their basic undertaking as characteristic of human dignity to tendency to every individual and if deprived of it, we can't live as individuals (Gray & Webb, 2012). The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) reverberated this depiction and maintained the orderliness into social work to be grounded and take its origin as advocate in human rights profession, consuming equal rights to be fundamental as natural estimation for each person and furthermore, its primary aim is the advancement



of evenhanded social constructions of quality life for individuals with protection and regular security for improvement of lives to maintain proper dignity (Jones & Truell, 2012). Social work has continuously been concerned about individuals' rights as per the conventional inclination of their fundamental requirements for food, water, safe house and human services, and is focused on preserving and encouraging and giving rights to epitomize their support for further inspiration to social work activity. Social work career pays great attention to addressing the common human needs, and this attention is even more aggressively reflected in the cases of helpless, vulnerable and abused individuals such trafficking of women and children of the baby factories, also includes maintaining social justice, characterized as a perfect condition in which all individuals from a general public consume with equivalent necessary privileges, assurance, prospects, commitments, and equal social assistances (Healy, 2008). The profession of social work worldwide has utilized the incentive of social equity to participate in the social activity, and sometimes has been faced with detainment for their demonstrations in nations with tyrant administrations. The abuse of children in various structures is as old as mankind's history. It is likewise a global trend that has pulled in sundry classes of considerations which have pushed for severe punishments for the abusers. The battle to shield children from traffickers globally has been the plight of social workers, especially when we contemplate the legislation and policy of different nations. The prevention of baby factories requires legislation, policies and laws that are inclusive in addressing the causes as well as facilitating the prosecution and conviction of the recruiters, traffickers, exploiters, and all illegal people associated with the baby factories.

## METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

This research was carried out by qualitative research method using collective case study research design. The collective case study is to give a general comprehension utilizing in various baby factory cases across Nigeria to contextual investigations that either happened on the same site or originate from different destinations within the nation. The primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews. There are

six (6) participants, who are qualified social workers, who have experience in the field of practice and as well have the ability to reflect and discuss their field experience. The participants are staff of social services and human trafficking organization in Nigeria and purposive sampling was used, adopted from (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004) to emphasize the uniqueness of each participant and to maximize discovery of the ideas and experiences of the subjects and to explore variations among different categories.

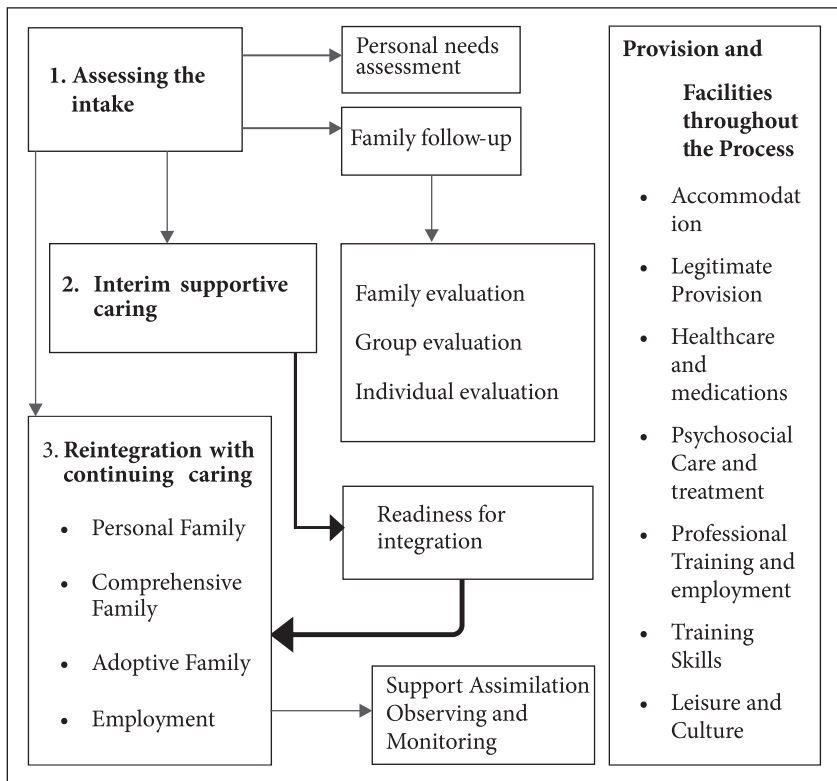


FIGURE 2. PROCESSING RECOVERY WITH THE STAGE INTEGRATION OF BABY FACTORY (ADAPTED FROM SAMBO & SPIES, 2014)

## RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH “A ROLE OF SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION IN PREVENTION OF BABY FACTORY IN NIGERIA”

The empirical outcome has revealed the role of social work profession as short, intermediate and long term prevention:

**The short term prevention:** the empowerment of the victims through: Running information and awareness campaigns, Empowerment projects, Social mobilization and Capacity building. The short term prevention strategies is to liberate victims by empowering women in the villages that often are involved in the problem of baby factory. Social work profession suggest that women are more vulnerable to trafficker, therefore must be empowered through employment opportunity by creating avenues of engagement in terms of giving capital that will help them to embark on small scale businesses in their daily activities. The children, youth, vigilante groups, primary and secondary school teachers, police and among other, should be empowered by running information and awareness campaigns and social mobilization that will protect them from traffickers.

Mrs. Busayo said: *“She feels social workers should utilize radio and television, as a powerful medium to raise awareness about baby factory”*.

It was observed that social worker raises awareness about trafficking through information distribution to individuals, groups and communities. The social worker verbalized that prevention must also take place at an individual, group, institutional, civil society and community, and in the country as a whole.

Mrs. Oyenike said: *“she thinks creation of opportunities is vital for social work as to give knowledge to vulnerable communities and well given opportunities such as economic empowerment should be introduced to the community members as skills development programs”*.

The social work professionals are agents of change, they participates in various activities that help the communities, for example, creating foundation that reduce poverty through ventures that plan to enhance

the financial status of the families with low levels of instructions. The single women, widows and mothers are empowered to be productive in their lives. The establishment of a child and youth Centre that provides training programs that you can receive educational and vocational skills with establishment of community vigilant groups to support an activity that takes action against traffickers at local level and teachers and professional, such as police, to be informed about the new trend of human trafficking.

*Mrs. Ademola said: “she think information about baby factory should be distributed at institutions like schools, hospitals and churches, in the urban as well as the rural areas and she further suggested that the social workers ought to draw in with learning that engage teachers and other expert professionals such like doctors, nurses, police officers, immigration officers and those in foreign affairs. She believes that once the teachers and other role players are equipped with knowledge regarding baby factory they would become effective change agents in the prevention of baby factory”.*

However, social workers can endeavor to spread more noteworthy open mindfulness in schools, healthcare institutions and among other professionals that are concerned with monitoring children who are vulnerable to trafficking by building strong capacity among them. The children and the youth must be adequately informed about the baby factory and the possible ways to report any cases of trafficking in the regions by going to the police station. There should be more schools to give proper education to children and all the victims of baby factory should be given scholarship to attend school free of charge so that they will not be re-trafficked. The engagement of youth will be helpful to prevent such problem of baby factory to constantly reappear. Family evaluation concentrates in the monetary aspect of the entire family that would bolster all the needs of victims in order to protect them from the danger of traffickers coming back for them. This will provide supporting incentives for the family to be able to sustain and meet the immediate needs.

**The intermediate prevention:** identifying the victim’s risk of being trafficked and rendering protection measures, such as treatment and contribution in administration advocacy to advance policy rules and

regulations with application of laws that will protect the victims and give justice to the traffickers. The intermediate level remains occupied with the insurance of ladies and infants with an aim of preventing them from being recaptured by the baby factory operators. Babies and mothers at risk of being transferred should be secured, particularly for those kidnapped and rescued. Social workers built up for exhaustive restoration administrations for the casualties through secure asylums for the ladies and their families and social work profession give psychosocial consideration and recuperation administrations for the casualties. Social workers in this level are agents of restoration that focuses on the system of associations for recuperation, reintegration and lawful security administrations in accordance with national needs to reinforce infant's welfare and insurance.

Mrs. Rosemary said: *"she feels that social workers should make sure that rescued victims are accommodated in a friendly and secure place to protect them from being trafficked again"*.

Social workers, maintaining social justice, characterized as a perfect condition in which all individuals from a general public are informed to undertake social responsibility in order to ensure their essential privileges, assurance, rights, commitments, and social assistances by informing the societies especially teachers, church leaders and community leaders with learning of significant global instruments and national polices and international laws regarding the worst forms of baby factory, child trafficking, children's rights and national criminal codes. More so, social workers ensure that the trafficked children and women must be kept in an inviting environment in all situation that shields them from trafficking, media and the community. Trafficked women must experience that this environment is supportive and not one that will hurt or punish them away because of their past experience. The youths are educated and well inform to ask for help when regarding all employment opportunities that come through the media or unknown friends and relatives.

Mrs. Omolola: *"thinks social workers, who work with the youth, should guide them to make more appropriate choices regarding opportunities which may come"*

*their way. The youth needs to seek advice and guidance before they respond to opportunities that were offered by unknown people”.*

The standards of human rights and social equity are principal to the social work profession. Social workers in all areas of their professional endeavors are working with clients and families, where they serve as service providers, who must urge and anteroom the legislature to update current arrangements to forestall baby factory. The social workers should advocate for both mothers and children who are vulnerable to trafficking and those who are already victims of trafficking. Critical social work represents the interests of powerless victims of trafficking to powerful individuals and changes social structures. These empower victims to be self –confident in the societies due the basic human right to report cases of trafficking in the communities.

*Mrs. Bimbo feels social worker should initiate sustainable projects to empower vulnerable groups like children and their families to be self-reliant in the community. She also think social workers should encourage and motivate individuals, groups and community members to be assertive enough to report any suspicious behaviors in the areas they stay that may be linked with trafficking. She gave a scenario where neighbors in a particular suburb were suspicious of strange activities in their neighborhood for some time. She considers only when they reported their concern to the police, did they realize that the concern was for a good reason.*

**The long term prevention:** Rendering empowerment services through rehabilitation and reintegration. The administration of long term restoration of anticipation and reintegration must be rendered by social workers. Social advising and rehabilitative help for the victim is essential to set up the victims for the social reintegration and family reunification. Social workers reintegrate the victim into group which includes the encouraging openness to the class, professional work and group exercises that will increase the mental and physical wellness. The procedure requires social workers to find and follow- up of the victim’s family, combined with intensive security and danger evaluation to decide the long term care of the victims.

*Mrs. Busayo said: “She feels social workers should use all available resource to ensure the victim is reunion with their family”.*

Reintegration process deals with treatment of victims as well carries out evaluation procedures that engages social workers and other professional to work as a team that will help the victims of the baby factories to regain their momentum either physical, rational or social that will lay the foundation for proper reintegration into families or groups. The reintegration also prepares the social worker to deal with the process that it will take time for the victims to adapt into the environment as a long time engagement. This process requires clear understand and finding of the victim's relationship and following after the families to be able to accepted the back with them, also combined exhaustive security to manage the risk and take duly procedures for acceptance of the trafficked person (Sambo & spies, 2014). Social workers empowerment seeks to help the victims and vulnerable groups to gain power in decision making. What's more, the victims take control over their own particular lives by decreasing the impact of social or individual squares by practicing their current force, expanding limit and in addition fearlessness in their lives. They move along with their new lives and become relevant in the communities.

*Mrs. Omolola: "thinks social workers, who work to integrate the victims should often check on them to see how they are doing in the society and she feel by doing so they can't be trafficked".*

The process regularly checks the victims to see their involvement in the societies. The recovery is very important to help victims to talk about the incidence so that the social workers can be aware of the treatment that the victims must undergo for proper check and assessment of the mental and emotional state to be monitored and observed.

## CONCLUSIONS

Taking everything into conclusion, the research has opened up the case of baby factory in Nigeria with an energizing and productive experience. The social work professionals were able to demonstrate their knowledge in the prevention of baby factories. The greater part of this research was to discover the role of social work profession in prevention of baby

factory in Nigeria and the social workers recognized that baby factory is another key issue, they need to confront in the society, especially in the rural areas where victims are more vulnerable and as well as global concern to the international social work. However, the social work profession needs to be furnished with necessary equipment in order to reduce and prevent baby factories successfully in Nigeria. Social workers now engage in counseling young people in domestic violence shelters, hospitals and health clinics, child welfare departments, homeless individual and other professional settings about the new trend of human trafficking known as the baby factory. The social work profession takes it as a role to inform the communities on how not to be victimized and describe their preventions on baby factories.

1. Social work profession has unique role in prevention to evaluate, spot, and intervene positively among individuals not to be trafficked or re-trafficked by making specific plans that ought to map the hidden agendas of the traffickers and provide assistance to all survivors. Such as people who has being exploited in private homes as domestic servants and also create awareness that will inform the entire population about the effect of baby factory on their lives and children.
2. In order to achieve the desired results in prevention, social work professionals employ different interventions that are grounded in empowerment, protection and liberation of people that have already been trafficked and putting into consideration all necessary information such as the age, developmental stage, form and duration of exploitation, in line with relationship with traffickers, citizenship, previous history of victimization and among a host of other factors to build protection measures around the individual and community concern.
3. Social work profession in an effort to provide adequate support, take the lead into data analysis of trafficked individuals in the society and place them in different social organization and group that will transform and provide counseling that on how to forget the past and move ahead of whatever that had really transpire in their lives and prepare them for greater future by re-integration into the society.



4. Social work is a profession that strengthens the empowerment of individual and give justice to the offenders and as well, undertakes the practices of both social equity and human rights. This will help fight against the trafficked group and to go up against segregation and persecution against them.

Finally, the role of social work professional cannot be over emphasized to engage in the future anti-trafficking endeavors. As a profession it should be pro-active and actively involved in fostering primary undertakings which waken the susceptibility of individuals who are primary potential victims of trafficking; particularly women and children. The research has as shown that social workers are creative, specialized, and have proof-based plans that are vital in prevention of baby factories in Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Social workers working in the field should note that they have all it takes to control and develop the new ideas to the society in this ways:

1. Social workers should be responsible for knowledge dissemination and defending mechanism:
  - By encouraging of hope for defenseless and trafficked ladies to forget the past and pursuit their future goal.
  - By sensitizing the trafficked individuals to promote their wellness.
  - By proper educating the youngsters on their essential rights and obligations which are fundamental for their survival and security, to prevent their future and prospects from potential baby factory traffickers.
  - By giving directives to the victims to resume their citizenship responsibility in the societies and imparting learning skills that work more effective with youth, ladies and kids in the modern days.
2. Social workers ought to advocate for defenseless kids and ladies and gatherings in the group and also teach them how to advance in building their future desire:

- By rousing the individuals to be business visionaries and follow after their dreams.
- By encouraging to start little with the experience they have from all the groups' discussion to engage themselves as defensive person from trafficked exploitation.

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ALKAUTHAR SEUN ENAKELE

## SOCIALINIO DARBO VAIDMUO PREKYBOS KŪDIKIAIS PREVENCIJAI NIGERIJOJE

### SANTRAUKA

Prekyba vaikais – tai modernizuota prekybos kūdikiais, vaikais Nigerijoje forma, kai vaikai pardavinėjami arba naudojami juodosios magijos aukojimams, kurie žinomi kaip raganavimo ritualai. Prekyba vaikais turi pražūtingą poveikį aukoms, kuris susijęs su socialiniais, psichologiniais, ekonominiais ir fiziniais aspektais. Prekyba vaikais pažeidžia vaiko teises ir yra nusikaltimas visuomenei, paveikiantis vaiko gerovę, pasireiškiantis tokiais nusikaltimais, kaip, išnaudojimas, nelegalus įvaikiniimas, priverstinis nėštumas ir vaikų organų pardavinėjimas ritualiniams tikslams. Tyrimo tikslas – atskleisti vyraujančią supratimą apie socialinio

darbo profesijos vaidmenį, neutralizuojant prekeivių žmonėmis veiklą. Tyrimo uždavinys – atskleisti socialinio darbo vaidmenį prevencinėje veikloje, siekiant pažaboti prekybą vaikais Nigerijoje.

Pasirinkta kokybinio tyrimo metodologija siekta užfiksuoti subjektyvias tyrimo dalyvių patirtis, naudojant kolektyvinę atvejo studiją. Siekiant suprasti tyrinėjamą reiškinį, duomenys buvo rinkti pusiau struktūrizuoto interviu metodu iš kvalifikuotų socialinių darbuotojų, teikiant prevencinę pagalbą prekybos vaikais aukoms. Tyrime dalyvavo šeši dalyviai, turintys vertingos patirties Nigerijos socialinių paslaugų ir prekybos žmonėmis organizacijose. Atliktas tyrimas grindžiamas socialiniu darbu, kurio pagrindas kritinė teorija. Kritinė socialinio darbo teorija susijusi su įgalinimo pedagogika, išlaisvinimu ir apsauga, dalyvaujant žmogaus teisių gynime, socialinio teisingumo siekime ir socialiniuose veiksmuose, siekiant pakeisti socialines bei politines gyvenimo sąlygas. Atliktas tyrimas atskleidė trumpalaikę, tarpinę ir ilgalaikę prevencinio socialinio darbo vaidmens perspektyvą per įgalinimą, teikiant apsaugos priemones, reabilitaciją ir reintegraciją. Socialiniams darbuotojams rekomenduota tinkamai šviesti jaunimą apie jų pagrindines teises ir pareigas, kurios yra svarbiausios jų išgyvenimui ir apsaugai, siekiant apsaugoti juos nuo prekybos vaikais.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** prekyba vaikais, socialinio darbo profesija, vaidmuo, prevencija, Nigerija.