

***Baby Factories in Nigeria: Implications for Education and Women Empowerment***

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**Abstract**

The growth of Baby Factories has added a new dimension to the incidence of trafficking in persons in Nigeria. The main purpose of baby factories, also referred to as baby farming, baby harvesting and baby manufacturing is the production and sale of babies for commercial purposes. Because of poverty, illiteracy and stigmatization occasioned by unplanned/unwanted pregnancies, young women who are mostly school drop-outs are lured into baby factories, where they are made to give birth. Thereafter, their babies are taken away and sold. Some girls go through this vicious cycle of pregnancy - birth - baby sale, more than once. Because of the secrecy involved in the operations of baby factories, consideration is hardly given to the welfare, health concerns and psychological problems of the victims. The objectives of this study, which will take place in the South Eastern States of Nigeria, are to investigate the effects of baby factories on the lives of victims, find out the preventive measures instituted by communities to fight the scourge, as well as interventions put in place by government through education to help victims and their families. Both quantitative and qualitative methods will be employed for the study. A policy framework for education and empowerment of women and girls will be formulated as issues of baby factories have great psychological, social and physical impact on victims and families.

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## **Introduction**

The image of Nigeria as a nation has been battered by so many negative developments chief amongst which is corruption. Transparency International ranks Nigeria as the 8<sup>th</sup> most corrupt nation on earth, and the third most corrupt in Africa. Nigerians suffer a lot of indignities as a result of this negative perception brought about chiefly by the erosion of moral, ethical and social values for which the Nigerian nation was formally known. Before the 1980's, Nigerians cherished age old virtues of patriotism, honesty, respect for human life and dignity, hard work, truth, care for others especially the old, weak and needy. But with globalization, human rights and melting of cultures, most of the cherished values of the nation have been eroded. Emergency millionaires have become a new feature of our communities. These are people who make money through questionable means which include all forms of trafficking both human and non human. Human life which was once seen as sacred is no longer respected. There are rampant incidents of kidnapping and child trafficking where human beings are trapped like animals, dehumanized and sold either in whole or in parts. In all these, money remains the motivating factor.

Child abuse and trafficking is a worldwide evil that exists in most countries of the world. But Nigeria has carved out an unenviable niche for herself as the place where the most dehumanizing form of human abuse takes place. This new form of human trafficking is referred to as baby trafficking, baby factories/baby harvesting/baby farming/baby manufacturing. Baby farms/factories are places (any place) where women give birth and give up their babies for sale voluntarily or otherwise. Those involved in this business only want to make money. Children harvested/farmed from these homes are sold to childless couples as well as the highest bidders both within and outside the country with male babies costing more than female ones. Whereas the owners of these factories make huge sums from their customers, the mothers go away with paltry sums ranging from ₦50,000 to ₦150,000. Childless couples who reside outside the country patronize these homes/facilities and by so doing embolden the perpetrators. The owners of the homes/traffickers operate from orphanages, hospitals, clinics, homes, churches, mental institutions, factories. These places are situated in towns, villages, communities. There are three main categories of women/girls who are involved in this illicit trade.

- Those who have unplanned/unwanted pregnancies (whether inside or outside wedlock), are afraid of the cultural stigmatization associated with unwanted pregnancies and who do not want to bring shame upon themselves or families. These women/girls willfully seek out baby factories/farms where they hide their shame.
- Those who out of financial desperation decide to willfully go into the homes/factories where they lease out their wombs and are impregnated by males hired for the purpose, with promises of good money that will enable them lead the exciting life they crave. Among this group can be found young female school dropouts (especially those from polygamous homes) and petty business women who have fallen on hard times and seek avenues to inject money into their businesses.
- Those who are forced/kidnapped and forcefully taken into the factories/places where they are impregnated by unknown males and forced to give up their

children after birth. The unsuspecting females are later turned into baby making objects and forced to give birth over and over again. Some are fortunate to leave the places alive. The unfortunate ones are never seen again.

The first official report of baby trafficking/harvesting/farming was made by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2006. The report stated that the abuse of young women/girls was taking place in orphanages, maternities and hospitals by doctors, nurses, midwives and other caregivers, States where the trafficking is prevalent according to the report are Abia, Lagos and Ebonyi States. Since then however, the incidence of baby factories has become a regular news feature in Nigeria. Earlier, Ahaoma (2004) had reported that a net work of baby factories masquerading as orphanages was discovered in Enugu State. According to Shikata (2013), a doctor at The Cross Foundation hospital in Aba in the Southeast State of Nigeria was arrested along with 32 pregnant teenage girls found in his clinic. The girls, aged between 15 and 17, told police they were offered about 25,000 naira (about US\$160) through infants are assumed to be sold for as much as 340,000 naira (about US\$2,200) to people who are desperate for babies. Recently, Madike (2013) also reported that the Imo State command rescued over 17 pregnant girls from a baby factory. Ajayi (2014) reported also that eight pregnant girls were freed from a baby factory in Ogun state. These reports represent just a fraction of all the reports received. But despite the attention and condemnation by all and sundry, the businesses of baby factories has continued unabated. One wonders why agencies of government at the federal, state and local government levels are powerless to stop this scourge.



Nine pregnant girls rescued from 'baby factory' in Enugu. (Igata, 2015).



Police uncover baby factory in Anambra (Okonkwo, 2014).

There are often sensational reports on the discoveries of baby factories in the country's clinics practicing baby factory. Few examples:

- **Police uncover baby factory in Anambra State** (Nwabueze, 2014).
- **Anambra ministry saves 30 babies from traffickers** (Nwanosike, 2011).
- **Parents beware: Baby thieves on the prowl ... 12 kids stolen in Onitsha** (Aloysius, 2012).
- **17 Pregnant teenagers arrested in Anambra baby factory** (Nwanosike, 2011).

Many reasons have been given for the increase of baby factories in Nigeria. Many believe that poverty is the primary motivation that propels the booming trade. The decline in the Nigeria's economy and the near total collapse of all institutions of government have left citizens desperate. Unemployment is rampant and many young people are disillusioned and helpless. Out of desperation they resort to activities that will generate income for them. These include kidnapping, drug trafficking, armed

robbery, and other crimes. Moral, ethical and social values have been sacrificed on the altar of greed. Even religious organizations have failed to raise the moral standards of people, as some churches are alleged to be involved in the nefarious trade. The new wave of insecurity in Nigeria occasioned by factors such as Boko Haram insurgency, kidnapping, armed robbery etc have also contributed to the near total collapse of law and order. People now no longer look out for members of their families, friends and neighbours. This explains why a crime like baby trafficking can take place in towns, communities, villages without noticeable resistance from men and women around. Those who trade in human lives are known to their relations, friends and neighbors but the people choose to look the other way, some because they do not care and others because they do not want to disturb the relative peace in their communities. Nigerian societies are functional human communities which should operate with ethical values, principles, and rules that guide the social behaviour of citizens. But the cohesiveness of these communities has been shattered by the stark economic realities of the day.

The high rate of illiteracy among Nigerians especially females is another reason why this trade in humans thrives. Education is a basic human right and an instrument of national development and social change. Education enables men and women to develop self confidence and find self fulfillment that will enable them make informed choices about their lives and bodies. Young girls who are not able to control their own lives cannot be of benefit to themselves or their communities. Education which should empower men and women to find greater self confidence, fulfillment to enable them make informed choices about their lives and bodies has not achieved its purpose. Educational institutions seem to have woefully failed to deliver on their mandate. The curriculum of schools does not reflect present social challenges and realities like child trafficking and baby factories.

Children (girls) who come from polygamous homes are mostly at risk of being trafficked in Nigeria. Polygyny is an accepted way of life. As such men take many wives and produce many children, some of which they may be able to cater for. Such children, due to poverty resort to all manner of antics which may lead to unwanted pregnancies and prostitution. The females, to hide their shame and maintain family honour, patronize baby factories where they give away their babies after birth. The secrecy that surrounds the business of baby factories provides the impetus that enables the practice to thrive. Both the victims and perpetrators shroud their activities in secrecy. Even parents and relations of both traffickers and the trafficked, are usually reluctant to discuss this nefarious business. In some cases, law enforcement officers connive with traffickers to hide evidence.

Childlessness amongst married couples gives impetus to baby factories. Nigerians place high premium on biological children. Therefore infertile couples are seen as cursed. Infertility in Nigeria is not the concern of only the couple involved. Relations, friends and religious bodies put so much pressure on those who are not able to bear children that they resort to all avenues to 'possess' children. Though solutions exist in form of adoption and assisted human reproduction technologies, it is common knowledge that these procedures are too expensive and unreliable. It is quicker and easier to get a baby from the numerous factories around. The demand pushes the supply.

It is worrisome to note that in spite of the general discontent felt by all and sundry in Nigeria about this evil trade, there is not much that has been done by either the Federal, State or Local governments to check the incidence of baby farming/harvesting. Have baby farms in Nigeria become a way of life? Are these farms now seen as providing employment for the teeming youths? What intervention practices have government put up to protect the lives of the women and the babies they give birth to? What is the role of government agencies like NAPTIP (National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons) in Nigeria? What plans, policies and processes are in place to bring succor to the helpless, hopeless, poverty stricken girls who are the trafficked? What enlightenment programs are in place to educate citizens about the health hazards as well as the emotional and psychological trauma associated with patronizing baby factories?

### **Overview of Trafficking in Persons**

Trafficking in Persons (TIP) commonly referred to as human trafficking is a globalized and modernized form of slavery. The United Nations (UN) Convention against Transitional Organized Crime and its Protocol on Trafficking in Human Beings define human trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003).

This is not limited to sexual abuse but applies to all forms of exploitation which often later include or turn into sexual exploitation. Trafficking has long been established in the country, but the manifestation of baby factories came into wider focus in Nigeria in 2011.

### **Factors in the Proliferation of Baby Factories**

Trafficking in human beings, which includes baby factories is a complex problem. Increasing numbers of girls are victims of baby factories. People become victims due to various reasons. This may include economic, socio-cultural, legal and political causes (Ministry of foreign Affairs 2003). According to Ezeilo (2005), in most traditional African countries the lives of women remain defined by traditional practices that endorse disempowerment and endorse unequal treatment. Because of low income resulting in poverty, families become increasingly vulnerable. Socio-cultural causes, include the oppression of women and girls within patriarchal families and social structures, in which women are subordinated to men and are objects of discriminating attitudes and oppression. Legal and political causes include lack of adequate legislation, viable administrative machinery and effective judiciary on the part of those who are trafficked. Subordination of women is even experienced in the baby factories where male children cost more than female ones.

### **Measures Taken by the Government to Check Baby Factories**

In Nigeria, the Federal Government has set up the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) to deal with the problems of

trafficking in Nigeria. The agency works in close collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. There are only nine (9) NAPTIP offices in Nigeria. The Nigerian Senate in an attempt to halt the increase in human trafficking sought capital punishment for human trafficking and baby factories in 2011. It urged the African Union (AU), United Nations (UN) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to strengthen cooperation among member states in a bid to combat the scourge of human trafficking. Some Senators even pushed for capital punishment for the offenders. Senate, however, mandated its Committee on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters to expedite further legislative action on the matter (Adetutu Folasade-Koyi, Daily Sun Newspaper, Wednesday October 5, 2011). While some states, like Enugu State have passed a law classifying kidnapping as a capital offence punishable by death, some other states are yet to pass such laws. This, notwithstanding, the crime of baby trafficking is still going on. Due to the increasing incidence of this crime, some state governments have even resorted to extra-judicial methods of demolishing houses and destroying the properties belonging to the perpetrator. The international and regional agreements which could help tackle the problem include: the UN Convention against Transitional Organised Crime and its protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children. This provides the first legally binding, comprehensive definition of trafficking in human beings to be agreed upon by the international community.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on the Political Economic Theory. The theory deals with the material conditions of people, social, economic, cultural, and educational, which manifests in disempowerment. People are disempowered due to the distribution of power and wealth, and the economic and political policies of the government. Thus, the people suffer poor income, unemployment and insecurity. These social conditions are responsible for the near collapse of moral and ethical values of people, leading to involvement in unspeakable crimes like armed robbery, kidnapping, rape and baby factories.

### **Statement of Problem**

The business of human trafficking in Nigeria has assumed a new dimension in the form of baby factories/baby harvesting and farming. This evil thrives in almost all neighborhoods and for some people has become a source of steady influx of funds. Children are regarded as a source of blessing in Africa and parents feel obligated to protect and care for their infants as they constitute the pride and joy of many families but the emergence of baby factories has devalued the value attached to lives in Nigeria. The purpose of baby factories is the production and sale of babies for commercial purposes. Due to poverty, greed, stigmatization and illiteracy, young women (mostly school drop outs) are lured into baby factories when they give birth. These babies are given away for paltry sums. Though many residents including parents and relations of the girls/women are aware of this evil trade, they watch helplessly as the little babies are sold to the highest bidders – mostly childless couples. The young girls, involved in this trade many of which are school dropouts suffer unspeakable indignation in the filthy factories disguised as hospitals, maternities and orphanages where they live in unhealthy crowded environments with very little

medical care. Communities seem at a loss about how best to tackle the evil. The government on its part also seems not to take sufficient interest in fishing out the victims or the perpetrators. This study therefore sets out to find out the factors that encourage baby factories, the government intervention policies that have been put in place to protect the victims of baby factories/farming and the implications of baby factories on women education and empowerment.

The objectives of this study are therefore: to find out the intervention strategies designed by government through education to curtail the growth of baby factories in Nigeria. The study also seeks to find out preventive measures put in place by communities to help victims of baby factories.

### **Research Questions:**

The following research questions guided the study.

- (1) To what extent are baby factories prevalent in South Eastern States of Nigeria?
- (2) What are the socio cultural factors that encourage baby factories in Nigeria?
- (3) What are the challenges to combating baby factories?
- (4) What intervention strategies have government and communities put in place to help victims?

### **Methodology**

The study employed the survey design. Area of the study is the south eastern states of Nigeria consisting of Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo states. Two states – Abia and Enugu were randomly selected and used for the study. The five south eastern states are all of the Igbo speaking ethnic group and share common cultural characteristics. Baby factories are rampant in these five states. The population of the states according to census figure of 2006 are 2,833,999 from Abia and 3,257,298 from Enugu.

### **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The sample consists of 800 respondents – 400 each from each of the two states of Enugu and Abia. To ensure equal representation, of the sexes equal number of males (200) and females (200) were selected from each state. Two Local Government Areas (LGAs) were randomly selected from each state for the study. In Enugu state, Enugu East and Udenu Local Government Areas were selected while Aba North and Osisioma Local Government Areas were selected from Abia State. 200 respondents from each of the four LGAs completed the questionnaire. They are made up of both males and females, married, unmarried and widowed of all income brackets and all religious affiliations. Staff of NAPTIP and those of some Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the 2 states were also interviewed for the study.

### **Instruments for Data Collection**

The study employed both quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (interview) methods for data collection. The questionnaire was of two parts – Section A sought information about the personal characteristics (demographic variables) of respondents while section B sought answers to questions on issues of the study. The data from the

questionnaire were processed and analyzed using percentages and frequency distributions while qualitative (interview) data were analyzed based on themes/content of the questions.

## Presentation of Data

The responses from the eight hundred questionnaires administered were included in the analysis that follows below. This return rate may be attributed to the technique of administration, which was other-administered by the researchers and trained field assistants. Also integrated in the present analysis are qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews with staff of NAPTIP and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)

### 4.1 Section A: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Socio-demographic Characteristics**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Enugu	400	50
Abia	400	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	400	50
Female	400	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
20 – 29	144	18
30 – 39	213	26.6
40 – 49	189	24
50 – 59	163	20.4
60 years and above	91	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Level of education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Primary school	84	10.5
Secondary school	505	63.1
Tertiary	211	26.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Income per month</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Less than ₦10, 000 per month	284	35.5
₦11, 000 – ₦20, 000 per month	202	25.3
₦21, 000 – ₦30, 000 per month	86	10.8
₦31, 000 – ₦40, 000 per month	104	13.0
₦41, 000 - ₦50,000 per month	56	7.0
₦51,000 and above	68	8.5

<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Main Occupation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Business	244	30.5
Civil servants	146	18.3
Unemployed	161	20
Student	126	15.8
Artisan	123	15.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Religious affiliation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Christianity	789	98.6
Islam	4	0.5
Traditional Religion	2	0.3
Others	5	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Married	476	59.5
Single	240	30
Divorced	1	0.1
Separated	3	0.4
Widowed	80	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Survey (2015)

Table 1 gives information about who the respondents were, their age, educational background, economic status, and activities as well as religious affiliation.

#### **4.2 Section B: Awareness and Knowledge of Baby Factories**

This section deals with the analysis of the respondents on their awareness of baby factories, reasons that encourage baby factories, the challenges encountered in combating baby factories, government intervention in curbing the malaise and suggestions for controlling baby factories.

##### **Distribution of Respondents on Awareness of Child Trafficking**

The focus is on awareness of child trafficking. Their responses are illustrated on figure 1 below.

**Table 2: Distribution of Respondents on Awareness of Child Trafficking**

<b>Ever heard about child trafficking</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	584	73
No	216	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Survey (2015)

Table 2 above shows that 73% of respondents are aware of trafficking while 27% are not. For some of them who are aware, child trafficking means sale/abduction of children for money, while others say it is illegal movement of children from one country to another for child labour or prostitution.

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents on how serious Baby Factories are**

<b>Seriousness of baby factories</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Very serious	309	57.8
Serious	185	34.6
Not serious at all	41	7.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Survey (2015)

Table 3 above indicates that majority of the respondents (57.8%) view baby factories as constituting a very serious problem, 34.6% do not. This view is supported by responses of those from the indepth interviews of officials of (NAPTIP) and NGOs in Aba and Enugu who view it as a very serious problem especially in the south-eastern states. There is only one NAPTIP office in Enugu for the entire eastern zone but staff there gave some instances of arrests by the police in Aba, of some doctors and matrons who own such baby factories camouflaged as maternity homes. Some of those reports were in the newspapers.

**Table 4: Distribution of Respondents views on those Reasons that Encourage Baby Factories (% in parenthesis)**

<b>Reasons that encourage baby factories</b>	<b>Mentioned</b>	<b>Not Mentioned</b>	<b>Total</b>
Infertility/need to have biological children	397 (49.6)	403 (50.4)	800(100)
Poverty/unemployment	703 (87.9)	97 (12.1)	800(100)
Cultural practice of ostracizing pregnant girls outside wedlock/marriage	457 (57.1)	343 (42.9)	800(100)
Poor regulation of orphanages	401 (50.1)	399 (49.9)	800(100)
Lack of/low levels of education	680 (85)	120 (15)	800(100)
Decaying moral and social values	696 (87)	104 (13)	800(100)
Complicity by those in authority/state actions	633 (79.1)	167 (20.9)	800(100)
High cost of fertility treatment for infertile women	612 (76.5)	188 (23.5)	800(100)
Desire to have male children	504 (63)	296 (37)	800(100)

**Source:** Field Survey (2015)

Table 4 above reveals that the most commonly mentioned reason that encourages baby factories in the view of the communities under study is poverty/unemployment as mentioned by 87.9% of the respondents followed by decaying morals and social values (87%) and lack/low level of education (85%). On the other hand, infertility/need to have ones biological children is the least mentioned reason that encourages baby factories as indicated by 49.6% of the respondents in the communities under study. Respondents also gave various categories of girls/women like young girls, uneducated girls, poor girls as well as women of reproductive age as those who patronize baby factories.

Data from the indepth interviews gave monetary gains (by the perpetrators), poverty and service to childless couples as the main reasons for high incidence of baby factories.

**Table 5: Distribution of Respondents view on challenges to combating this problem (% in parenthesis)**

<b>Challenges to combating this problem</b>	<b>Mentioned</b>	<b>Not Mentioned</b>	<b>Total</b>
Deficient legal system	617 (77.1)	183 (22.9)	800(100)
Parents/relatives of rescued pregnant prefer to settle out of court	505 (63.1)	295 (36.9)	800(100)
Reluctance of pregnant teenagers to present themselves in court as witness	319 (39.9)	481 (60.1)	800(100)
Interference of state actors/highly influential persons	548 (68.5)	252 (31.5)	800(100)
Poor records/data collection and analysis	587 (73.4)	213 (26.6)	800(100)
Corruption in the judicial and police system	653 (81.6)	147 (18.4)	800(100)
Relatives' wish to avoid publicity in order to protect their wards	528 (66)	272 (34)	800(100)
Lack of gainful employment for the girls	765 (95.6)	35 (4.4)	800(100)
Low level of education	739 (92.4)	61 (7.6)	800(100)

**Source:** Field Survey (2015)

Table 5 above shows that majority of the respondents (95.6%) mentioned lack of gainful employment for the girls as the greatest challenge encountered in combating baby factories, followed by low level of education 92.4% and corruption in the judicial and police system 81.6%, 77.1% indicated deficient legal system, 73.4% poor records/data collection and analysis while 68.5% indicated interference of state actors/highly influential persons. 66% mentioned relatives' wish to avoid publicity in order to protect their wards, preference of parents/relatives of rescued pregnant to settle out of court (63.2%) and reluctance of pregnant teenagers to present themselves in court as witnesses (39.9%). In terms of what their communities would do to eliminate baby factories, the respondents mentioned public sensitization, destruction of known baby factories/homes and reporting any incidence to law enforcement officials.

Interview with the officials of NAPTIP and NGOs shows that the challenges they face in dealing with this problem are: unwillingness of community members to expose their neighbours, fear of victimization from culprits, reluctance to be involved in police matters, inadequate infrastructure and inability to access some remote communities to monitor such activities.

**Table 6: Distribution of Respondents' views on the ways government should intervene to curb this malaise (% in parenthesis)**

<b>Ways government has intervened to curb this malaise</b>	<b>Mentioned</b>	<b>Not Mentioned</b>	<b>Total</b>
Introduction of poverty alleviation programmes	615 (76.9)	185 (23.1)	800(100)
Public enlightenment campaigns	724 (90.5)	76 (9.5)	800(100)
Strengthening of values and ethics education in schools	579 (72.4)	221 (2.6)	800(100)
Enforcement of free and compulsory education especially for girls	163 (20.4)	637 (79.6)	800(100)
Government to monitor the activities of baby factories	645 (80.6)	155 (19.4)	800(100)
Government to liaise with professional bodies like Nigerian Medical Association for strict compliance of members	548 (68.5)	252 (31.5)	800(100)

**Source:** Field Survey (2015)

Generally, a very high proportion (90.5%) of the respondents have the view that government has somewhat introduced public enlightenment campaigns to help solve the problem of baby factories in the communities studied. 80.6% are of the view that government should monitor the activities of baby factories in order to curb the malaise, 76.9% are of the opinion that government should monitor more closely the poverty alleviation programmes in a bid to create employment for youths, 72.4% are of the opinion that government should continue strengthening of values and ethics education in schools, 68.5% said that government should liaise with professional bodies like Nigerian Medical Association for strict compliance of members while 20.4% are of the view that enforcement of free and compulsory education especially for girls is another way government intervened to curb this problem.

In the opinion of IDI respondents, government efforts towards reduction of the incidence of baby factories should be in the area of public sensitization and sex education, legislation and strict enforcement of laws against trafficking, proper monitoring/regulation of orphanages, hospitals and maternity homes by health officials and professional bodies as well as prosecution of offenders.

**Table 7: Distribution of Respondents' suggestions for controlling this problem (% in parenthesis)**

<b>Suggestions for controlling this problem</b>	<b>Mentioned</b>	<b>Not Mentioned</b>	<b>Total</b>
Greater advocacy by civil society groups in order to promote awareness of the menace	609 (76.1)	191 (23.9)	800(100)
Proper implementation of poverty alleviation programmes	735 (91.9)	65 (8.1)	800(100)
Strict monitoring of orphanages and maternity homes	581 (72.6)	219 (27.4)	800(100)
Making education compulsory and available to all especially girls	512 (64)	288 (36)	800(100)
Subsidizing of fertility treatments to enable more women have their own children	639 (79.9)	161 (20.1)	800(100)

**Source:** Field Survey (2015)

Table 7 shows that majority of the respondents (91.9%) mentioned proper implementation of poverty alleviation programmes as a way by which baby factories can be controlled, followed by 79.9% who suggested subsidizing of fertility treatments to enable more women have their own children; 76.1% of the respondents mentioned greater advocacy by civil society groups in order to promote awareness of the menace; 72.6% mentioned strict monitoring of orphanages and maternity homes, while 64% suggested making education compulsory and available to all especially girls.

Officials of NAPTIP and NGOs made the following suggestions on how the communities on their own can help curb the incidence of baby factories: sensitization of community members by themselves; villagers should be on the alert for people who would engage in such a bad practice; such people should be sanctioned or the attention of law enforcement agencies should be drawn to their activities; local churches to be involved in sensitizing their members on the evil of baby sale; women leaders of associations to reconsider the practice of rejecting/ostracizing daughters who get pregnant outside wedlock and more NAPTIP offices to be setup to effectively monitor baby factories.

On their own part, these IDI participants made suggestions most of which are in line with earlier suggestions but also added proper girl-child and sex education, job creation and skill acquisition to empower young women and regulation of adoption laws. It is surprising that in spite of the public out cry on this evil business, a female official of an NGO insisted that a woman has the right to use her body the way she pleases.

## **Discussion, Summary and Conclusion**

### **Discussion**

In this section, the findings of the main research questions are brought together. Majority of the respondents had knowledge of the existence of child trafficking (73%), and were also aware of the problem of baby factories (66.8%). Most of those who were aware, perceived baby factories as a very serious problem.

In terms of the socio-cultural factors that encourage baby factories, nearly all the respondents (87%) mentioned poverty and unemployment as the major reasons for the existence of this problem. The same view was held by some staff of NAPTIP and some NGOs who added monetary gains by the owners (perpetrators) of baby factories as an incentive to carry on this trade.

On the category of girls/women who engage in baby factory business, about two-thirds (65%) were girls from poor families while 35% were girls from poor educational background. The major problems (challenges) faced in attempting to tackle the issue of baby factories were identified as lack of gainful employment for girls and low level/lack of education. Teenage pregnancy exposes girls to serious health problems which may lead to untimely death. Young girls who patronize baby factories mostly end up in prostitution. These girls mostly drop out never achieve their potentials and end up as outcasts in the various communities. In other words, without jobs and proper education, it is not easy getting girls out of this bad business. In addition, corruption in the judicial and police system and reluctance of relatives to expose their wards equally pose serious challenges in dealing with baby factory problem. Indeed, data from the indepth interviews equally supported the above views with the added information that community members were unwilling to expose their neighbours for fear of victimization from the culprits. To fight this scourge, respondents mentioned sensitization programmes to be carried out in the villages by the villagers themselves, involving the local churches, in addition to sex education and use of vigilante groups to fish out perpetrators.

The implication of baby factories for girls/women is that their lack of education or at best, low educational status, is the main reason for their impoverished status and their susceptibility to baby factory business. This is because education is a tool for empowerment. In effect, they have not been financially empowered to take care of their needs. Thus, when girls/women are educated to a reasonable level, they can complete for jobs, earn some reasonable income and be in a better position to take care of themselves, such that patronize baby factories will no longer be an attractive alternative for survival.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

This study investigated the emerging and increasing incidence of baby factories in Abia and Enugu States in the south east zone of Nigeria. It was noted that a number of factors are responsible for the scourge chief of which are poverty/unemployment and greed. This was the opinion of questionnaire and IDI respondents.

In conclusion, the phenomenon of baby factories will continue to be a feature in states and Nigeria in general, unless the issue of poverty is seriously addressed by the government.

### **Recommendations**

Some suggestions for dealing with the scourge include:

1. Government should ensure proper implementation of poverty alleviation programmes to enable the less privileged benefit from them.
2. Public sensitization of this evil business should be intensified.
3. Girl-child education should be made compulsory throughout the country.
4. Adoption laws should be regulated.
5. Orphanages and maternity homes should be strictly monitored by both government agencies and the relevant professional bodies.
6. The government through the school curriculum can institute educational programmes or strengthen the curriculum content in order to draw attention to the dangers of baby factories. The girls/women who patronize baby factories either as clients or as customers come from various communities. Many of them are unaware of the health dangers inherent in pregnancy and childbirth. The homes, maternities, hospitals, factories and churches where this evil is perpetrated are all found in communities not in forests and deserts. Members of the communities are aware of the activities of these baby merchants. But the host communities seem to be scared of those involved in the trade.
7. Finally, advocacy by civil society groups is also suggested to promote more awareness of the menace of baby factories.

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Newspaper quote:

Operatives of the 9<sup>th</sup> Mile Division of Enugu State Police Command raided a 'baby factory' located at Etiti in Amankwo-Ngwo Udi Local Government Area where they rescued nine pregnant girls. . . . We had strong intelligence about his activities. We had to put a tab on him for some time which eventually paid off. . . . Their names are....Francis Igata, Vanguard News, June 14, 2015.

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## Appendix I

### Questionnaire on Baby Factories/Trafficking in South-eastern Nigeria

**Instructions:** Please take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire. Your response would be highly appreciated. Please tick ( ✓ ) as applicable.

#### Section A

##### Personal Characteristics

- (1) Location: \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) Sex: Male      Female
- (3) Age: 20 years +      30 years +      40 years +      50 years +      60 years +
- (4) Highest educational qualification \_\_\_\_\_ -
- (5) Income per annum-How much do you earn per month  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (6) Occupation: Businessman      Salary Earner      Artisan      Student  
Unemployed Others
- (7) Religious Affiliation: Christianity      Islam      Traditional Religion      Others
- (8) Marital Status: Married      Single      Divorced      Separated      Widowed

#### Section B

- (9) Have you heard of child trafficking in Nigeria?  
Yes  No
- (10) If yes, what does it mean to you?
- (11) Have you heard of baby factories in your community?  
Yes      No
- (12) If yes, how serious is this problem in your community?  
(a) Very serious      (b) Serious      (c) Not serious at all      (d) Never heard of it
- (13) What are those reasons that encourage baby factories? (Please tick as many as appropriate)
  - (a) Infertility/need to have ones biological children
  - (b) Poverty/unemployment
  - (c) Cultural practice of ostracizing pregnancy outside wedlock/marriage
  - (d) Poor regulation of orphanage homes
  - (e) Lack of/low levels of education
  - (f) Decaying moral and social values
  - (g) Complicity by those in authority/state actions
  - (h) High cost of fertility treatment for infertile women
  - (i) Desire to have male children
- (14) What category of girls/women are involved in baby factories?
- (15) What are the challenges to combating this problem? (Please tick as many as appropriate)
  - (a) Deficient legal system
  - (b) Parents/relatives of rescued pregnant prefer to settle out of court

- (c) Reluctance of pregnant teenagers to present themselves in court as witness
  - (d) Interference of state actors/highly influential persons
  - (e) Poor records/data collection and analysis
  - (f) Corruption in the judicial and police system
  - (g) Relatives' wish to avoid publicity in order to protect their wards
  - (h) Lack of gainful employment for the girls
  - (i) Low level of education
- (16) What, in your opinion, has your community done to fight the scourge?
- (17) In what ways has government intervened to curb this malaise? (Please tick as many as appropriate)
- (a) Introduction of poverty alleviation programmes
  - (b) Public enlightenment campaigns
  - (c) Strengthening of values and ethics education in schools
  - (d) Enforcement of free and compulsory education especially for girls
  - (e) Government to monitor the activities of baby factories
  - (f) Government to liaise with professional bodies like Nigerian Medical Association for strict compliance of members
- (18) What are your suggestions for controlling this problem? (Please tick as many as appropriate)
- (a) Greater advocacy by civil society groups in order to promote awareness on the menace
  - (b) Proper implementation of poverty alleviation programmes
  - (c) Strict monitoring of orphanages and maternity homes
  - (d) Making education compulsory and available to all especially girls
  - (e) Subsidizing of fertility treatments to enable more women have their own children

## **Appendix II**

### **Indepth Interview (IDI) Guide for Officials of NAPTIP and NGOs**

1. In your opinion, what is the extent of (how widespread) baby factories in this area?
2. What are the reasons for the increasing incidence of baby factories in this area?
3. What challenges do you encounter in handling this problem of baby factories?
4. How can the incidence of baby factories be reduced by the government?
5. What role(s), do you think, the communities can play to eliminate or at least reduce baby factory incidence?
6. What are your own suggestions to curb this social malaise?