

1 Trafficking in Women and Children in Yoruba land The 2 Pre-Colonial, Colonial and Post Colonial Situations Compared

3 Dr. F. A Olasupo¹

4 ¹ Obafemi Awolowo University

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6

7 **Abstract**

8 Trafficking in human beings is today a global phenomenon with global consequences. Within
9 trafficking in human beings are specifics such as women trafficking, children trafficking and
10 women and children trafficking. Although trafficking in women and children is going to be the
11 subject matter of this paper, trafficking in human being generally is an old phenomenon with
12 a positive effect, until it became abused from the pre-colonial days to now. Culturally, some
13 aspects of Yoruba people's culture are consistent with it. Unlike the position of the United
14 Nations which prohibits extracting labor from women and children under certain age, the
15 Yoruba culture encourages it. A Yoruba proverb "ati kekere laa ti pee kan iroko, to ba dagba
16 tan apa ko nii kaa mo" (children are better caught and molded when they are young, or else it
17 would be difficult to do so when they are grown up), tells us why. The Yoruba believe in the
18 virtue of training children from tender ages in some forms of trade and craft. However, the
19 noble cultural intention of catching and molding children at tender age has been given a
20 dehumanizing tar by modern day trafficking in women and children, locally and
21 internationally. This paper intends to examine trafficking in women and children in the
22 pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial periods with the aim of establishing and understanding
23 the motivational (?) nexus of the operators of these illegal trades across the ages.

24

25 ***Index terms—***

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30 culture encourages it. A Yoruba proverb "ati kekere laa ti pee kan iroko, to ba dagba tan apa ko nii kaa mo"
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32 grown up), tells us why. The Yoruba believe in the virtue of training children from tender ages in some forms of
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34 given a dehumanizing tar by modern day trafficking in women and children, locally and internationally. This
35 paper intends to examine trafficking in women and children in the pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial periods
36 with the aim of establishing and understanding the motivational (?) nexus of the operators of these illegal trades
37 across the ages.

38 Trafficking in women and children was initially informed by training of children at tender age in the business
39 of trading and engagements in other forms of work. Among cultural factors that encouraged this in Yorubaland
40 were systems of marriage that was essentially polygamous, economy, traditional trading (including slave trade),
41 marketing and other social roles such as ceremonies (naming, marriage, death or house warming), information
42 gathering and dissemination. Women and children were culturally considered fit to do this because while women
43 were imbued by what Ogunremi termed "Freedom of talking and walking"; children were allowed to follow their

44 parents (mothers in particular) to farms, markets and on trading and thereby receiving tutelage on what their
45 parents were engaged in.

46 In doing these, women and children criss-cross neighboring villages, towns or kingdoms. But they were,
47 sometimes, in the process, exposed to dangers such as kidnapping, raping, forced marriage, (where the woman
48 concerned was a beautiful one) and slavery. The focus of this paper is to explore the mechanism of how Yoruba
49 cultural activities encouraged women and child trafficking that resulted in kidnapping for ritual purposes, rape,
50 forced marriages, labor and, sometimes, slavery in the pre-colonial days. A comparison of this with postcolonial
51 transatlantic and transcontinental trafficking in women and children would as well be made.

52 A word or term that needs clarification here is "traffic". Four distinct dictionary meanings of the word "traffic"
53 are provided by Hornby. But the one relevant for our purpose here is the one on "numbers of people or the amount
54 of goods moved from one place to another by road, rail, sea or air" ?? . Thus, trafficking, that is the movement
55 of a "number of people or the amount of goods moved from one place to another by road, rail, sea or air" is
56 legal if due process of doing so is strictly adhered to especially where it requires obtaining passport and visa
57 or declaring goods being trafficked before Custom and Excise. But it becomes illegal if these due processes of
58 obtaining passport and visa or declaration of goods before Custom and Excise are sidetracked. In the pre-colonial
59 days, those women and children who in the course of their "traffic" were kidnapped and put in "trafficking" as
60 slaves and serfs constituted illegal trafficking.

61 Conceptually however, Agnes sees human trafficking as "simply a modern day slavery which involves the
62 recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of fraud, deceit or T Ibid Ibid Factors
63 that led to women and child trafficking in the pre-colonial days included the following: economy, polygamy,
64 marketing, slave trade and slavery. These factors were operated by traditional leaders who were sovereigns of
65 their various communities. Of particular interest to this paper is the case of female traditional leaders (or rulers)
66 who also operated these factors like their male counterparts. Three categories of women traditional rulers exist
67 in some communities in Nigeria. There are those who are rulers over males and females in their communities.
68 Examples of this could be found in Niger, Eboin and Adamawa states. See picturesbelow. A

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71 The researcher making a point before the female king

72 There are also those communities who operate dual-sex political system in which case male king and female
73 king co-rule their communities on gender basis.

74 Ondo, Ekiti, Delta and Anambra states are examples of places where this system could be found.

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77 The researcher in the midst Female Regent and the female King of Ibulesoro dichotomized by gender, there was
78 no hard and fast rule about it. While "Men were predominantly craftsmen, farmers, hunters and soldiers?women
79 were predominantly traders and producers of commodities like dye, thread and oil which they took to the market
80 to sell". In addition to these occupations, there was another one -weaving -that both sex participate in, and
81 interestingly, creating gender in this as well ?? .

82 Traditional pre-colonial Yoruba economy was imbued by three vital sectors: farming, trading and craft
83 industries. Although each of these occupations was Interestingly as well, these occupations were such that
84 encouraged huge women and children traffic. Farming as an occupation, for instance, was and is still of three
85 types: oko ogba (farming in garden located behind the compound) oko eti"le ("farms cultivated in the thickly
86 forested land surrounding all the compounds" and oko iwaju (distant farms of between eight to twenty or more
87 kilometers 6 . With regards to trading, its establishment of industries outside their own towns and thereby
88 establishing inter village, town and kingdom commercial and industrial links ?? . In 1830"s and 1840"s for
89 instance, a prominent weaver, Oluokun, from Iseyin, in Oyo kingdom, came to Ibadan kingdom to establish "the
90 Oke-Oluokun quarter which became a famous center for weaving in the town" 8 .

91 Of these vital economic sectors however, farming in which most men engaged in required more hands that also
92 necessitated having more wives who would lend helping hands to their husband farmers ?? . As traders, women
93 extended their trading activities to carrying farm products to the market. These resulted in heavy women traffic.
94 But, for Hodder, what led to heavy women traffic during this period was because of the "necessity of adapting
95 trading to the dangers of movement through the country-side since it was unsafe for men to move away from their
96 farms while women enjoyed relative immunity from attack" ??0 . But there were also some of them (women)
97 who fell victim of trafficking. Some of them who were attacked during the wars or by marauders were trafficked
98 to slavery ??1 . Polygamy, as family institution, started women and child "traffic" although a legitimate one.
99 Wives of the husbands appear in the same uniform and also moved in groups to the markets, ceremonies and in
100 carrying out public duties. Karin Barber puts it this way: "Women undertake their public duties in large groups.
101 At any funeral and festivals, teams of women in "ankoo" go in procession round the town. Daughters who have

102 married bring back groups of thirty or forty of their "co-wives" to important family events, and no festivity can
103 go forward without the influx of female relatives to collect firewood, cook the food and serve the guests" ??2 .

104 Akin Mabogunje corroborated this when he said: "Under guild system, traders in the market organized
105 themselves according to commodity being dealt in? The social aspect of this guild necessitated a sense of (D D
106 D D)

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109 With regards to women and child traffic to the markets, even queens were not let out. In those days, queens,
110 monarchs" wives, were not left out in trafficking. As a matter of fact the queens, numbering between one
111 hundred and one hundred and eight in respect of Alaafin of Oyo and the Kabiyesi of Ajase (King of Porto Novo)
112 respectively, engaged in long distance traffic in the course of trading.

113 In short, polygamy as a form of association or group in those days contributed to legal and illegal trafficking.
114 This institution, polygamy, has inbuilt arrangement that allows the older wives to engage in some legal trafficking
115 in economic activities while at the same time safeguarding "integrity of the institution of polygamy by turning
116 the husbands sexual emotions to the younger wives within the accepted social framework" ??4 .

117 The arrival of foreigners and their religions strengthened this institution and its potential for women and child
118 trafficking. "While Islam has a clear cut tolerance of, or almost a mandate for polygamy, Christianity per se,
119 encouraged monogamy". But this is in the New Testament. Old Testament contradicts this as "Jewish patriarchs
120 and kings like Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon had multiple wives. Solomon, for instance, is reported in
121 I Kings 11:3 as having 700 wives and 300 concubines. This is a system which only male traditional rulers and
122 other affluent members of the society could afford but commoners also copy it without having the wherewithal to
123 sustain it. The upshot of their action is breading of children beyond their capacity to train which in turn result
124 in children undertaking antisocial activities to survive.

125 Today, it is a commonplace finding in our towns and cities, hoards of beggars, particularly women and their
126 children, able and disabled, stationed in a particular place -roundabouts and the adjoining pavements -and
127 trafficking from there to other parts of the town and cities for alms ??5 . Beggars trafficking is said to be a
128 lucrative business in which not only the disabled persons engage in it but able persons as well. Investigations
129 show that "a good number of these beggars had built houses which they put on rent instead of living" ??6 .
130 It is getting alarming, the way parents trafficked their children abroad to engage in beggary. In the run-up to
131 Ramadan, as Umrah pilgrims flock to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, numbers of beggars, of different gender, ages,
132 and nationalities, are found to increase. "These children", being forced by their parents be as many markets
133 as possible with the central one called Oja Oba (king"s market). Added to these were those in the neighboring
134 villages and towns. Traders criss-cross all these in the course of their trading. Craft industries such as blacksmiths
135 and weavers also engaged in traffic in search of raw materials and trademark was essentially traffic. Within the
136 town could which "demands some expenditure of money on the part of every member of the social groups" ??3
137 . belonging that fostered periodic outings (e.g. naming, burial or house warming ceremonies) of such social
138 groups with members all dressed alike in "aso-ebi", 13 Mabogunje A.L, (1961) "The Market Women" in Ibadan,
139 A Journal Published at University College, Number eleven. P16 ??4 Ibid. Falola, Op cit. P54. ??5 The Nigerian
140 Tribune of August11 2006, P16.

141 "to pester the pilgrims and beg", "are seen begging in and around the religious places" 17 . A disabled Nigerian
142 child beggar, Ahmad Ibraheem, found in this kingdom during a holy month of Ramadan begging, caught and
143 interviewed by Saudi Arabia"s Anti-beggary Department, said:

144 "My parents told me to go and beg and that I was doing a good thing and that God would reward me for my
145 helping them. My mother said that God has "blessed" me with this handicap so that I can earn money and help
146 the family"

147 The ten-year-old child who was caught by officials begging in the Grand Mosque and was brought to the center
148 said: "I like it here, it is clean and the people want to help us. The food is nice and they gave me nice clothes
149 to wear ??8 .

150 In the days of Oyo kingdom, the building of the palace of Alaafin of Oyo and the annual re-thatching of it was
151 not left to the inhabitants of the capital alone, women groups (some with children strapped at their backs) in
152 neighboring towns and villages such as Ejigbo, Iwo, Ogbomosho, Iseyin, Oke-Iho, Irawo, Shepeteri, Iganna, Ijio,
153 Ighobo and Shaki trafficked to the capital, Oyo, to lend hands ??9 . In the process of this kind of trafficking,
154 Alaafin of Oyo could without the consent of somebody"s wife order her to be brought to him for sexual fun or
155 outright takeover of her from her legitimate husband. Soyinka beautifully captured this in his play Death and the
156 King"s Horseman when he said, "the old rascal with a restless eye spots a beautiful girl passing by. Although she
157 is already betrothed to another, he insist on taking her as bride so that the grain that will not feed the voyager
158 at his passage drop here and take root as he steps beyond this earth and us" 20 .

159 In those days there is also what can be regarded as trafficking in death, but those who engaged in this kind of
160 trafficking were male traditional rulers. In the distant past, when powerful monarchs died, their wives, whatever
161 the number, must die with them. In this wise, the one hundred and one hundred and eight wives of Alaafin and
162 that of the kabiyesi of Ajase (Port Novo) respectively were expected to die with their monarch husbands -a case

163 of death trafficking! 21 . But Samuel Johnson controverts this. According to him, the whole of them (queens)
164 were often spoken of loosely as "the king"s wives because they reside in the palace, but 17 Osun Defender of
165 September 29, 2006.P 14 ??8 Ibid. ??9 Ojo G.JA, (1966) Yoruba Palaces, London: University of London Press.
166 P 63. 20 Shoyinka W, (1975) Death and the King"s Horseman, New York, W.W. Norton. P22. See also Aboyade
167 B, (1984) Wole Soyinka And Yoruba Oral Tradition in Death And The King"s Horseman, Ibadan: Fountain
168 Publications. P3. 21 Year strictly speaking the titled ladies and the priestesses at least should not be included in
169 the category" 22 . according to Johnson, those women who culture trafficked to death with the king when he died
170 were " Iya Oba (king"s official mother) and all the powerful priestesses e.g. Iyale Mole (the Ifa priestesses) the
171 Olorun-ku-mefun, the Iyamonari, the Iya"-le-ori (these are all priestesses)" from the male side, only the king"s
172 horseman died with him 23 . A prominent traditional ruler, the Awujale of Ijebuland, testified to this in an
173 interview he granted TheNews magazine in 2004. According to him, in Ijebu Ode when Oba passes on: "you
174 have to kill Eketa Oba straightaway. This is the first one that goes in. Others will follow; messengers who will
175 minister to him in the great beyond; who will help him to carry his luggage from here" 24 .

176 Recently, there were bizarre cases of molested corps of dead Obas e.g. Alake of Egbaland, Oyebade Lipede;
177 Makun of Shagamu, Oba Efuwape Adetayo Ogunsowo; and Alaiye Ode-Remo in Ijebuland, Oba Sunday Olufunsho
178 Adeolu. In the case of Olufunsho Adeolu, according to tradition, after his demise, his corps had: "Rope tied on
179 the neck of the dead king is meant to remove the head after several days when the body would have decayed on
180 a tree they hang it. Other parts of the body would then be cut into pieces for various types of rituals while the
181 heart of the king would then be removed and cooked" 25 .

182 However, in 1858 "King Atiba influenced the constitution and inauguration of the Consultative Assembly that
183 met in Ibadan" that year. This was attended by many Yoruba war generals and eminent citizens of the time"
184 26 . Among Thus, not all the one hundred and above wives were the kings" queens. In Oyo kingdom therefore,
185 22 Johnson S, (1921), The History of the Yorubas: From the Earliest Time to the Beginning of the British
186 Protectorate, London: Lowe and Brydone. P. 63 23 ??009) "They cut the Eleyinmi into bits and pieces" in The
187 Nation of December 13 th . P16. 26 Alaafin of Oyo, (1994) "Alaafin in Intellectual critique of Political Evolution
188 from Past to the Present, in a letter titled: Lest History Laughs at us" " to the then Head of State Gen. Sani
189 Abacha" in the Guardian on Sunday of March 13. far reaching decisions taken at the conference were abolition
190 of women trafficking to death with the king and also the cancellation of the tradition that the Aremo became
191 free. In any case, the contention here is that the institution of polygamy contributed in no small measure to the
192 development of women and child traffic and trafficking.

193 The development of market economy brought to the peak, the women and child "traffic" and "trafficking". As
194 in the case of polygamy, market economy also recorded impressive development of women and child "traffic". As
195 a matter of fact, it built on the foundation laid by polygamous institution. However, like in the institution of
196 polygamy, it also recorded very low illegal women and child trafficking; although the period was also a period of
197 great insecurity that irregularly threw up topsy-turvy situation. In the ensuing commotion, women and children
198 trafficked to and from the market got disrupted and resulted in kidnapping and trafficking them to the slave
199 market for sales as slaves.

200 As guild system began to develop in the market, traders in the market organized themselves according to
201 commodity being dealt in. each guild had its leader called Olori (head). While the heads organized their
202 members and led them to the markets especially long distance ones. According to Amadiume, the senior women
203 administered the periodic market days of the week 29 . When trafficking was becoming increasingly dangerous
204 in the pre-colonial days, they (women traders) found solutions, which were aimed at protecting their traffic:

205 The women, like the men, traveled in caravan for protection. In 1833, Lander observed one hundred wives of
206 the Alaafin trading at Ilora. Writing of Ibadan in the second half of the 19 th Century, Johnson says: the women
207 of those days were as hardy as the men and often went in a body of caravans to Ikere and Apomu for corn and
208 other foodstuffs although the road was unsafe for the kidnappers 30 27 Johnson, Op cit. P 57. See also Alaafin,
209 Op cit. ??8

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211 It is important to observe here that under market economy, women began to be conscious of their safety in the
212 course of their "traffic" from one market to the other especially the long distance ones. They had begun to, for
213 security reasons, "gathered at agreed times and places and trafficked together in caravan" ??1 For more than
214 four centuries, in the pre-colonial days, slave trade form the major form of trafficking in women and children that
215 forcefully immigrated thousands of Yorubas across the Atlantic to the New World of the Americas. Perhaps more
216 than any other ethnic group in Nigeria, Yoruba people experienced more triple heritage of slavery -indigenous,
217 Islamic and Western 32 .

218 While those of the Western were as recent as three centuries ago, those of the indigenous and Islamic dated
219 back to the birth of Islam in seventh century ??3 . Although the indigenous one, which started in the days of
220 Oyo Ajaka (war-like) was slightly earlier than that of Islam, the operational levels of both were largely similar.
221 Oyo Empire spanned three epochs: Oyo Ajaka (war-like) with the capital at Katunga; Oyo Ile (with the capital
222 at Igboho area); and the latest Oyo Alaafin (with the capital at the present Oyo) ??4 . See picture below.

223 (crown prince) must die with his father Alaafin. The conference suggested that he "could succeed his father
224 if he was found capable by the Oyomesi (Kingmakers) 27 . But as recently as 1946, this age-old custom was

225 still steadfastly adhered to, prompting the colonial officer, Simon Pilkings to intervene in for its stoppage ??8
226 Reasons why kings" wives must traffic to death with them in those days, according to Johnson, were that they
227 enjoyed great privileges during the kings" lifetime. They could commit any crime with impunity. Criminals
228 condemned to death and escaping to their houses ??1 Ade-Ajayi J.F, And Smith R, (1964), Yoruba Warfare in
229 the Nineteenth Century, London: Cambridge University Press. P 3.

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231 The two foremost traditional rulers in Yoruba land in particular and in Nigeria in general: The Ooni of Ife (Oba
232 Okunade Olubuse II) and Alaafin of Oyo (Oba Lamidi Adeyemi III)

233 With time, particularly under Oyo Ile, Islam and Oyo Empire found a common ground in slave driving
234 moreso when the two had had nuptial tie. According to Ooni of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijuwade, the first wife of
235 Alaafin Ajaka (war-like) "was Ibariba Aisatu" ??5 . Bishop Ajayi Crowther thus graphically put the slave-trade
236 relationship between Islam and Oyo Ajaka and Oyo Ile this way: "For some years, wars had been carried on in
237 my Oyo country which was always attended with much devastation and bloodshed. The enemies who carried on
238 these wars were principally the Oyo Mohammedans with the foulahs (Fulanis). They joined together making a
239 formidable force of about 20, 000. They had no other employment but capturing and selling slaves to Spaniards
240 and Portuguese on the coast" 36 . Again, while indigenous and Islamic types of slave trade and slavery were much
241 smaller in scale and allowed for greater upward social mobility -from slave to Oba (king in Yoruba) and Sultan
242 in the case of Islam, from peasant to paramount chief, that of Western types were not only on large scale but
243 also social-mobilityzero ??7 . Indigenous slave-system we have been considering in relation to women and child
244 traffic king "various European traders: the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English, the Spaniards and the Swedes",
245 had organized activities with the coastal peoples and those of the immediate hinterlands to collect slaves and
246 other products like ivory in exchange for their own goods. Important slave markets where women and children
247 were trafficked to for sales, as slaves, during this period were located in the following areas: Benin, Ode-Itsekiri,
248 Ijebu-Ode, Porto Novo and a minor one in Lagos -all Yoruba speaking areas. Through out this period, i.e. 15 th
249 -18 th centuries, they (European traders) relied on local rulers for the local organization and protection of their
250 trade ??8 .

251 The following deductions can be made from this short extract (i) that traditional rulers who were then sole
252 authorities in Yoruba speaking areas collaborated with the Whites in human traffic and trafficking that were
253 essentially women and children; (ii) that trafficking in human beings of Yoruba stock was in exchanging for
254 economic and technological advantages in terms of guns from European traders etc. ??9 (iii) that the Whites
255 needed these slaves not in their persons but cheap or free labor they would have to provide since they were
256 in enslavement and in bondage 40 ; (iv) it is important to also would be incomplete if its nexus with Western
257 slavesystem is not explored. According to Atanda, from the end of fifteenth century to the end of eighteenth,
258 ??5 Ibid. ??6

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260 observe the manner of traffic and trafficking between the traditional rulers and the European traders. While
261 traffickers in pre-colonial traditional Yoruba society relied mostly on trekking and, sometimes, caravans, to move
262 their "wares" from hinterlands to slave depots, European traders during this time relied mainly on ships to
263 transport their "goods" from Yoruba coastal areas to Western metropolitan centers.

264 Trafficking in human parts for ritual purposes is a phenomenon common in the pre-colonial days but still
265 predominant today. Human organs, of both male and female, trafficked by ritualists and traditionalists, include
266 human head, eye, sex organs hearts etc. In Yorubaland, when a traditional ruler dies, important organs of his
267 body, especially the heart, is removed and preserved for eating by the incoming traditional ruler, without which
268 the incoming traditional ruler is not yet Oba. The words je Oba (become king) literally means eat king (je in
269 Yoruba language means eat while Oba means king). Some communities in Yorubaland who did this (removed
270 vital organs of the deceased Oba for preservation and intake of the in coming Oba recently, were Egbado and
271 Remo 41 . This is still prominent in some other Yoruba communities today. Attempt by the wife of the former
272 Alake of Egbaland, Olori Bimpe Lipedé, to prevent removal of her husband"s organs, by smuggling the corpse
273 out of the palace, was met with stiff resistance from the traditionalist who forced her to return the body to the
274 palace.

275 Kings, in those days and today, to please some deities, use human beings or parts as sacrifice for pre or post
276 installation of a new king. Today the use of human parts by traditional rulers is not only for ritual purposes
277 but for money making. On the 06/10/06, a traditional ruler in Delta state hunted for dealing in human parts
278 absconded from the throne when he was about to be apprehended. However, instead, his queen was arrested
279 and kept in police custody pending the apprehension of the fugitive and criminal traditional ruler. Ritualists on
280 the other hand use some of these human parts for money and other purposes. It is disgusting and disturbing to
281 note that modern day politicians and government officials, to demand for loyalties of their political subordinates,
282 engage in oath taking that involve sucking of human blood. In the act of blood oath include the Governors
283 Dr. Chris Nwabueze Ngige (of Anambra state); Chief Theodore Orji (of Abia state) and Gbenga Daniel (of
284 Ogun state). Their various legislators and commissioners are not left out of this blood oath taking drama ??3 .

285 Trafficking in blood is today a lucrative business not just among the traditional rulers, traditionalists, ritualists,
286 politicians and government officials but also in both private and public hospitals where young boys and girls,
287 masquerading as blood donors, go to sell blood at the price of three thousand five hundred naira (N3, 500.00)
288 for four pints.

289 The international dimension of this horrible, terrible and primitive aspect of trafficking is what is giving the
290 entire globe serious concern. What in the past, as Jide Osuntokin puts it, "One used to think organ snatching
291 was the primitive preserve of shamans and Babalawos and Juju priests; apparently, the western world has taken it
292 to another level" ??4 . They engaged in it for two purposes using two different strategies (Charity organizations
293 and sports): organ transplant and rituals. For organ transplantation, continents and countries notorious for
294 these are Americas (United States of America, Canada and Philippines) Western Europe (France); Asia (India,
295 Bangladesh, Malaysia and China). In these places, human organs such as hearts, kidneys, eyes (corneal) are sold
296 and said to be fetching traffickers millions of dollars ??5 . As recently as November 2007, French kidnappers
297 nearly succeeded in trafficking one hundred and three (103) children from Chad to Paris for harvesting of their
298 organs for sale. The clients of these traffickers are rich but sick Arabs, Canadians and Americans 46 . In
299 Philippines, according to Osuntokun, "the government wants to pass legislation to regulate the trade and not to
300 prohibit it because it is now part of life".

301 As for ritual purposes, the notorious country for this is China. Here some people according to Igbokwe, believe
302 raping a child brings good luck. Some others also believe it will cure them of HIV/AIDS. There, China, a former
303 lawmaker and millionaire, having been told by fortune-teller that having sex with virgins would enhance health,
304 had to rape not less than twenty young girls before he was caught, found guilty and sentenced to death. In the
305 same country, two teachers were sentenced to death for forcing about 23 young girls into process their first-borns,
306 be it male or female, is pawned to the point of death should they betray the oath of loyalty they had taken 42 .
307 This is an age-old tradition that gathered higher momentum in the current fourth republic. To date, especially
308 in the present fourth republic, state governors who have been caught in this ??1 TheNews of October 2, 2006. P
309 11. ??2 Pallondium, (2009) "The oaths of Ogun" in The Nation of July 5, P 56. ??3 Odufowakan D, Owolabi K
310 and Abiodun K. (2009) "How Daniel runs his oath shrine: By Ogun Speaker, others", "Nudity mess: Gov begs,
311 faces expulsion from PDP" and "Echoes of Okija shrine" in National Life of July 4. P.5. ??4 Osuntokun J. (
312 ??007) "International trade in human organs" in The Nation of November. P50. ??5 Osuntokun, Op cit. See
313 also, Adenle T. (??007) "It's 1884, again, and Africa is up for the picking!" in The Nation of November 18. P.11
314 ??6 Ibid.

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317 Year prostitution ??7 . Recently; a Stockholm newspaper accused Israeli troops of "harvesting the organs of
318 Palestinians they killed". Recently as well, an American Jew was suspected of illicit organ trafficking ??8 . The
319 important message to be noted here is crosscontinental connectivity of Africa, Middle East and Europe in women
320 and child trafficking not only in the pre-colonial but also during the post-colonial period.

321 Today, the deceptive strategies being used by Europeans, as earlier mentioned, are charity organizations, NGOs
322 and sport academies. As for charity organizations" strategy, children ranging from three to ten years old from
323 beleaguered nations such as Darfur in the western Sudan, Chard Republic and Liberia, who are "orphans with
324 no relations and therefore were going to be adopted by families in Europe. The so called foster parents who had
325 paid thousands of dollars for a child thus wait at the airport to seize the children on arrival from the departed
326 nations 49 . Trafficking children under charity organizations was initially a genuine one before it became abused.
327 In the colonial period when it was a custom and tradition to throw away twin babies and left to die, Mary Slessor
328 came to the rescue by taking these "babies to her home and nursed them to life". "She adopted so many that
329 sometime in 1888 when she was on holidays; she took some of the twins to Scotland. On her arrival, the white
330 people were surprised to see her with such number of little black children. There, in Scotland, the Mission took
331 over as they trained and educated the children. In later years while some returned, others remained in Scotland
332 to savor the beauty of new life and civilization" 50 . As for sport academies, the entire west African countries
333 are saturated with sport academies purported to train and recruit young children to Europe to play for such
334 clubs as AC Milan or Paris St-German but in reality, on getting to the "promise land" they find themselves
335 "selling fake handbags on the street and, as economic conditions bite harder, they trade-off any of their needed
336 organs. "Last year Sepp Blatter, President of FIFA, foot-ball"s world governing body, accused Europe"s richest
337 clubs of "despicable" behavior and engaging in "social and economic rape" as they scour the developing world for
338 talent" 51 . Today, combating the menace of women and child trafficking in Yoruba land and, indeed, the entire
339 country, has resolved into a three-pronged offensive; level there are the efforts of the United Nations. First, on
340 October 4, 2006, it specifically called on the Federal Government of Nigeria to speedily arrest, investigate and
341 prosecute traffickers in human beings in Nigeria ??2 . In addition, it ordered the eradication not just of women
342 and children trafficking but human trafficking in general through some of its (the UNs) agencies, such as the
343 International Labor Organization (ILO) and the United Nations High Commission For Refugees (UNHCR). As a
344 commitment to putting an end to Child Labor in Nigeria, the Federal government has "ratified the two core ILO
345 Conventions on the Elimination of Child Labor". These are; Conventions 138 on Minimum Age of Employment
346 and 182 on the Elimination of the Worst Forms Child Labor. This was informed by the discovery that Nigeria "is

347 a sending and a receiving country just as she is a transit country". The United Nations Children Fund Nigerian
348 office had discovered some private transit camps for trafficking children located in Akwa Ibom, Cross Rivers and
349 Ondo States 53 . The implication of this is that "children are sent out of Nigeria to work in other countries,
350 while children citizens of her neighbors [Benin Republic, Niger, Chad and Cameroon] are also brought to work
351 in Nigeria. In other words, as a transit point, children are moved in and out of Nigeria to other countries" ??4 .

352 The European Union is also lending support but arrangement toward concrete steps was expected to be
353 finalized in September 20-22 when "immigration would be one of the main topics" 55 . Meanwhile, Libya that
354 shares Mediterranean border with Italy and through which most immigrants from Africa cross to Europe, had
355 requested from the EU "helicopters, off-road vehicles, night vision equipment and speed boats" 56 . Supporting
356 the efforts of the UN is the United States of America's Department of State Trafficking in Persons which issues
357 an annual report urging national governments of mostly third world countries "to increase prosecutions and
358 convictions of trafficking in persons" 57 . For the efforts of the Nigerian government to successfully do this
359 over the years, the United States of America "has just elevated Nigeria to Tier 1 status in the fight against
360 trafficking in persons, having met the minimum standards for the third world countries "to increase prosecutions
361 and convictions of trafficking in persons" 57 . For the efforts of the Nigerian government to successfully do this
362 over the years, the United States of America "has just elevated Nigeria to Tier 1 status in the fight against
363 trafficking in persons, having met the minimum standards for the international, regional and national. At the
364 international 47 Igbokwe C. (??008) "Raping young girls for rituals" in Sunday Punch of January 27. P17.
365 ??8 Foreign (2009) "Netanyahu calls for condemnation of organ story" in The Nation of August 24. P. 37. ??9
366 A Year elimination of severe forms of trafficking" 58 . There also exist sub-regional organizations such as the
367 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African
368 States (ECCAS), who have signed bilateral and multilateral agreements to combat the trafficking in persons in
369 West Africa 59 .

370 The kingdom of Saudi Arabia has joined in this effort of finding solution to the phenomenon of human
371 trafficking although she limits herself to trafficking in children beggars. The kingdom has established Anti-
372 Beggary Department in Makkah, where those child beggars caught are detained but properly treated in terms of
373 feeding, clothing and other forms of care. The manager of the Department, Mansour Al-Hazmi, suggested that,
374 to curb incidence of beggary, "If people have money to give in charity they should make it a point of giving it to
375 registered organizations rather than beggars" 60 .

376 At the national level and, in Nigeria in particular, at the prompting of the United Nations and the US
377 government, the Public Affairs Section of the US embassy, inaugurates a national task force on human trafficking
378 and regularly organizes a forum for stakeholders: government agencies and NGOs on what to do to combat human
379 trafficking ??1 . In response to these efforts, on 19 November in (2004), the high court in Benin City, Edo State,
380 handed down the first conviction under the 2003 anti-traffic law. The convict, Mrs. Sarah Okoya, was sentenced
381 to a three-year jail term "for trafficking six girls to and deceiving them into prostitution in Cotonou, Republic
382 of Benin, enroute Spain. This year as well, 28/09/06, a 35 year old commercial motorcycle rider and father of
383 five children, Mr. Constance Omoruyi, was sentenced to two years imprisonment and a fine of one hundred and
384 fifty thousand naira (#150, 000.00) for organizing foreign to this is the Child's Right Act passed by the National
385 Assembly in 2003. To date, no less than nine (9) States Legislatures have equally passed the bill.

386 Non-governmental organizations are not left out of the effort to solve the problems of child forced labor,
387 trafficking and orphanage. For instance, Italian volunteers medics, nurses and other skilled volunteers such as
388 electricians and builders etc. in collaboration with Catholic Diocese of Orlu in Anambra State have opened up
389 dialogue with government leaders, parents and children on the importance of educating children instead of forcing
390 them to work. In Oyo state as well, there is the existence of Galilee Foundation with focus on a set of three
391 projects: caring for orphans and vulnerable children, widows and aged women 65 . In Lagos state is another
392 international charity organization known as Hope Worldwide. Its own project focuses on beggars and children.
393 For the beggars, periodically, the organization distributes raw food to them on the streets of Lagos, and for
394 the children, "some homes" were adopted where "volunteers met and have monthly breakfast with children in
395 these centers" 66 . Edo state is not left out of effort to stamp out women and child trafficking, being the state
396 accountable for 99 percent of girls often repatriated from foreign countries 67 . A nongovernmental organization,
397 Idia Renaissance, set up by the wife of the former Governor of the state, Eki Igbinedion, had, to date, "handled
398 over 350 cases of trafficked victims" 68 (TheNews, 2006:66).

399 The efforts of these governmental and nongovernmental organizations resulted in "withdrawing and rehabili-
400 tating of 3,000 children in Child Labor in the period between 2000 to 2002" alone. Between year 2002 and
401 year 2006 additional 200 trafficked children had been "undergoing counseling and rehabilitation" ??9 (Saturday
402 Vanguard, 2006:16). In 2003 Federal government facilitated repatriation of not less than 1,800 travel for two
403 young girls 62 . Added to this was the rescuing of 35 victims of trafficking, opening of 27 investigations and arrest
404 of 40 suspected traffickers 63 . In Ogun state as well, two persons were last December convicted for contravening
405 the law in human trafficking. In all, according to Mr. Godwin Morka, the head of Lagos Zonal office of the
406 National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other Related Matters (NAPTIP), "no fewer than
407 700 had been arrested and eight prosecuted for offenses relating to human trafficking and child labor across the
408 country 64 . Related migrants from the kingdom of Morocco. Significant improvements are also been made in
409 tracking and bringing to justice of traffickers in human trafficking. In year 2004, 42 cases of human trafficking

410 were reported while 27 suspects were interrogated. In 2006 alone, 8 human traffickers were jailed, beside 18 other
411 cases pending in court 70 Year and blood for sales to sick business barons. It also examined anti-social behaviours
412 such as beggary prevalent among youth and elders of both sexes. Also explored is the fact that trafficking in
413 women and children could be legal or illegal depending on the circumstances in which they were trafficked. In the
414 precolonial Yoruba land, women and children trafficked into slavery, serfdom, semi-serfdom constituted illegal
415 trafficking. Attempt at comparing trafficking in pre and postcolonial Yoruba land also engaged our attention.
416 Equally explored in the paper are the various moves or attempts being made to stem the tide of human trafficking
417 generally and women and child trafficking specifically?

418 Of importance to note however is that trafficking in women and children in the pre and post-colonial days has
419 its unintended benefits. In the pre-colonial days one of the most important unintended benefits of trafficking in
420 women and children through slave trade was the spread of western education among the Yorubas. Samuel Ajayi
421 Crowther aptly demonstrated this in the way he singularly translated the Bible into Yoruba, "and, thereafter,
422 working with others to achieve similar feat for the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria" 71 . In the post-colonial women
423 and child trafficking on the other hand, the United Nations" "State of the Population Report 2006" states that
424 "female migrants are more likely to remit larger amounts to their families back home than males, and that such
425 remittances are becoming an increasingly vital source of empowerment to the recipients. Such women also make
426 vital contributions to the countries that host them as well, through the cost-effective and efficient provisions of
427 vital services" 72 . But the hazards involved in this venture of trafficking far outweigh the benefits derivable from
428 it.

429 The paper thus concludes that women and children trafficking in Yoruba land is as old as Yoruba society and
430 what led to these criminal acts of trafficking human beings or parts (e.g. organs such as the hearts, kidneys eyes
431 etc.) was a combination of economic and financial hardships on one hand, and social and political problems on
432 the other. Amazingly, those who engaged in women and children trafficking were elites that did not

433 11 Global



Figure 1:

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³Trafficking in Women and Children in Yoruba land: The Pre-Colonial, Colonial and Post Colonial Situations Compared

⁴Osinubi T.O and Amaghionyeodiwe L.A, Women in Development: The Case of Bodija Market in Ibadan, South Western Nigeria" in the Journal of Development Alternatives and Area Studies, Vol. 24. No. 1&2, USA: San Antonio TX 78232. 6 Falola T, (1984) The Political Economy of A Pre-Colonial African State: Ibadan, 1830-1900, Ife: University of Ife Press.

⁵Ibid.8 Ibid. P 30.9 Ibid P 54.10 Ibid P 55.11 Ibid P 55.12 Karin Barber, (1991) I Could Speak Until Tomorrow: Oriki, Women and The Past in A Yoruba Town, Great Britain: Edinburgh University



Figure 2: VolumeYear



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Figure 3: 3 4commercial



Figure 4: VolumeYear



Figure 5:

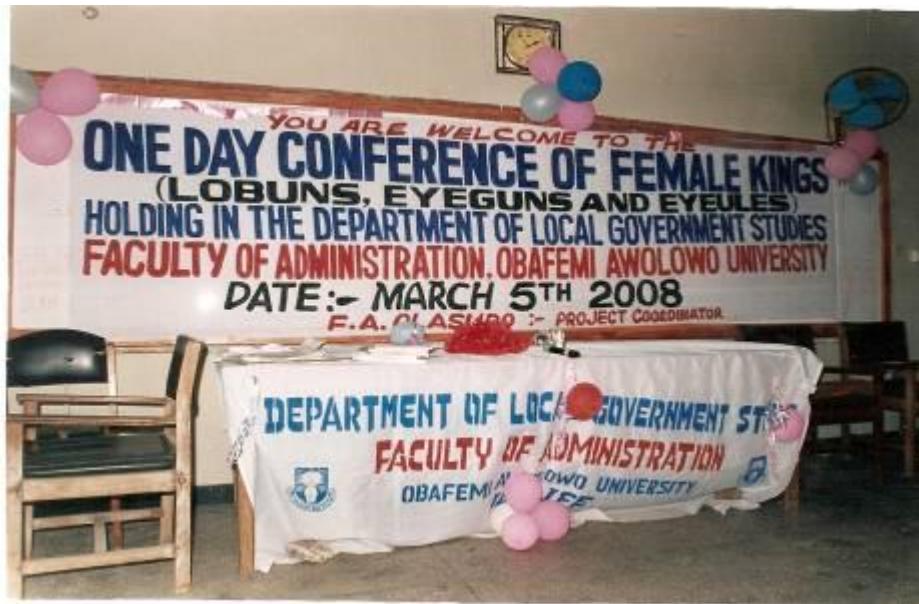


Figure 6: 32



Figure 7: .



Figure 8:



Figure 9:



Figure 10:



Figure 11:



Figure 12:



Figure 13:

Role of Women in Traditional Yoruba Society: A Review" in Ogunremi And Adediran, Culture And Society in Yorubaland, Ibadan: Rex Charles Publication. P153. Daramola O. and Jeje A. (1967) Awon Asa Ati Orisa Ile Yoruba, Ibadan: Onibon-Oje Press. P154.

24 TheNews of May 17,2004, P.11

25 Erelu Ode-Remo, (2009) "

[Note: P 1. See also Adeoye A. and Agbro Jr. ()

Figure 14:

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[Note: 37 Mazrui, *Op cit.* P. 1.38 Atanda J.A, (1985) "Atanda *Op cit.* P93. Mazrui, *Op cit.* P2.]

Figure 15:

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Journal of
Global
50 Cover Story, (2009) "Battle for Mary Slessor's grave" in The Nation of
July 12. P. 14.

[Note: 51Observer, (2008) "The scandal of Africa's trafficked players" as culled from The Observer by The Nation newspaper of January 8. P. B 7.5254 Ibid.55 The Guardian of August 13, 2006. P.26. 56 The Guardian of August 22, 2006. P 10.57 Ibid.]

Figure 16:

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- 435 Above is the banner of one day conference held at the Department of Local Government Studies for the female
436 kings in the south western part of Nigeria.
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452 *in modern day Nigeria, it would be seen that elites are the one behind it as well. Those caught and punished*
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