



Islamic Panacea to Human Trafficking in Nigeria for National Development: An Empirical Study of Gumel Emirate, Jigawa State

Abubakar Danasabe, Yakubu Wambai, Babangida Shahada

School of Secondary Education (Arts and Social Sciences) Department of Islamic Studies Jigawa State College of Education PMB 1002 Gumel Jigawa State Nigeria

Received: 10.05.2026 | Accepted: 24.06.2026 | Published: 28.06.2026

*Corresponding Author: Abubakar Danasabe

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.20988190](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20988190)

Abstract

Original Research Article

Human trafficking has become a major social, economic, and moral problem in Nigeria, affecting national development and human security. Despite legal and institutional efforts by the Nigerian government, trafficking continues due to poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, weak moral values, and social inequality. This study empirically examines the Islamic panacea to human trafficking in Nigeria with special reference to Gumel Emirate, Jigawa State. The objectives of the study are to investigate the causes of human trafficking, examine Islamic perspectives on trafficking, assess the role of Islamic institutions in combating trafficking, and evaluate how Islamic principles contribute to national development.

The study adopted a mixed-method approach involving questionnaires and interviews. A sample of 150 respondents was selected from Islamic scholars, community leaders, youth groups, civil servants, and traders in Gumel Emirate using purposive and random sampling techniques. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Findings revealed that poverty, unemployment, ignorance, and moral decadence are major causes of trafficking. The study further revealed that Islamic teachings on justice, Zakat, moral discipline, prohibition of exploitation, and communal responsibility are effective mechanisms for reducing trafficking. The study recommends stronger collaboration between Islamic scholars, traditional rulers, government agencies, and civil society organizations in combating human trafficking.

Keywords: Islamic perspective, human trafficking, poverty alleviation, Zakat and social justice, national development.

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

Background to the Study

Human trafficking is one of the most dangerous forms of organized crime and modern slavery in the contemporary world. It involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons through coercion,

deception, or abuse of power for exploitation. Victims are often subjected to forced labor, prostitution, domestic servitude, child labor, and other forms of exploitation.

Nigeria has become a source, transit, and destination country for trafficked persons.



Human trafficking undermines human dignity, weakens social institutions, and hinders national development. Studies show that poverty, unemployment, insecurity, and lack of education are among the major drivers of trafficking in Nigeria.

Islam strongly condemns all forms of oppression and exploitation. The Qur'an emphasizes the dignity and sanctity of human life:

“Indeed, We have honored the children of Adam” (Qur'an 17:70). While explaining this Qur'anic verse the Prophet (SAW) said, Allah the exalted says:

“O My servants, I have forbidden oppression for Myself and have made it forbidden among you, so do not oppress one another.” (Sahih Muslim, Hadith: 2577)

Islamic teachings on justice, charity, moral discipline, and social welfare provide mechanisms for preventing exploitation and protecting vulnerable members of society. Gumel Emirate in Jigawa State is predominantly Muslim and possesses Islamic institutions capable of promoting anti-trafficking awareness and social protection.

Statement of the Problem

Human trafficking is a severe and persistent crime in Nigeria, undermining national security, economic productivity, and social cohesion. Despite national legislation and international conventions, Nigeria remains a source transit and destination country for trafficked persons with women and children being disproportionately affected. The Gumel Emirate in Jigawa State while perceived as a relatively stable traditional society is not immune to this scourge. Factors such as poverty, unemployment, lack of education and porous borders create vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit.

Current counter-trafficking strategies in Nigeria predominantly rely on secular legal and institutional frameworks, which often face

challenges in implementation, funding and cultural resonance at the grass roots level. There is a significant gap in leveraging indigenous value based systems, particularly Islamic principles which hold profound moral and social authority in communities like the Gumel Emirate. Islamic teachings offer a comprehensive ethical framework that emphatically prohibits exploitation (*Zulm*), upholds human dignity (*Karamah*), mandates the protection of the vulnerable, and promotes social justice.

In line with the above mention shortcomings of the secular system which was in operation in Nigeria regarding human trafficking this research ought to investigate the ineffectiveness of existing secular approaches in fully curbing the menace of human trafficking in the Gumel Emirate, due to a disconnect from the deeply rooted Islamic socio-ethical system that governs the lives of the populace. This disconnect results in a lack of community-owned culturally compelling prevention and rehabilitation mechanisms. Consequently, there is an urgent need to explore and systematize how Islamic principles as understood, practiced and enforced through traditional institutions like the Gumel Emirate can be harnessed as a potent, culturally congruent panacea to prevent human trafficking, protect victims and prosecute offenders, thereby contributing to sustainable national development.

Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to:

1. Examine the causes of human trafficking in Gumel Emirate.
2. Investigate Islamic perspectives on human trafficking.
3. Assess the role of Islamic institutions in combating trafficking.
4. Determine the relationship between Islamic teachings and reduction of trafficking.

5. Examine the contribution of Islamic values to national development.

Research Questions

- What are the major causes of human trafficking in Gumel Emirate?
- What does Islam say about human trafficking?
- What roles do Islamic institutions play in combating trafficking?
- How can Islamic principles reduce trafficking?
- What is the relationship between Islamic moral values and national development?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁:

There is no significant relationship between Islamic teachings and reduction of human trafficking in Gumel Emirate.

H₁₁:

There is a significant relationship between Islamic teachings and reduction of human trafficking in Gumel Emirate.

Significance of the Study

This study is important because it contributes to academic knowledge on religion and social development. It will help:

Policymakers

Islamic scholars

Traditional rulers

Anti-trafficking agencies

Researchers to understand how Islamic values can help combat trafficking and promote national development.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on Islamic panacea to human trafficking in Nigeria using Gumel Emirate,

Jigawa State, as a case study. It covers causes of trafficking, Islamic perspectives, community responses, and implications for development.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-method empirical research design involving quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Population of the Study

The population comprised:

Islamic scholars

Traditional leaders

Youths

Traders

Civil servants

Community members in Gumel Emirate

Sample Size

A sample of 150 respondents was selected.

Sampling Technique

The study used purposive and simple random sampling techniques.

Methods of Data Collection

Questionnaires

Oral interviews

Observation

Secondary sources

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using:

Frequency tables

Percentages

Descriptive statistics

Thematic analysis

Literature Review

Concept of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking refers to the illegal movement and exploitation of persons for economic gain. It is regarded as modern slavery.

According to Ogunlela (2023), trafficking in Nigeria has become a major challenge affecting human rights, security, and socio-economic development. It is further observed by Rahman, F (2020) in his book titled *Human rights and Islam* that the Islamic social welfare mechanisms such as the institution of Zakat (alms giving) and Waqf (endowment) mobilizes community resources for social support. Research suggests that:

- (a) These mechanisms can reduce poverty, a key driver of human trafficking.
- (b) Prohibition against unjust taking or selling of persons.
- (c) Obligations of Muslim rulers and communities to protect vulnerable people.
- (d) Emphasis on social welfare and community responsibility.

However, there is limited empirical work specifically focusing on Gumel Emirate on how Islamic institutions in Jigawa state respond to human trafficking, which is clear testimony of the uniqueness of this work.

Causes of Human Trafficking

Poverty: Poverty exposes individuals to exploitation and false promises of employment.

Unemployment: Lack of employment opportunities pushes youths into migration and trafficking networks.

Illiteracy: Ignorance and lack of education make people vulnerable to deception.

Weak Moral Values: Moral decadence contributes to greed and criminal behavior.

Insecurity and Porous Borders: North-West Nigeria faces trafficking challenges due to insecurity and border weaknesses.

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Islam prohibits all forms of exploitation and oppression. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

“Your servants/slaves are your brothers whom Allah has placed under your authority. So whoever has a brother under his authority should feed him from what he eats and clothe him from what he wears. Do not burden them with what overpowers them, and if you do burden them, then help them.” (Bukhari, Hadith: 2545 & Muslim, Hadith: 1661)

Islamic law protects:

Human dignity

Life

Property

Lineage

Freedom

Scholars argue that trafficking contradicts the objectives of Shariah (Maqasid al-Shariah).

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the Social Control Theory developed by Travis Hirschi. The theory explains that strong moral values, religion, and social institutions reduce criminal behavior. Islamic teachings strengthen social control through morality, family responsibility, and communal discipline.

Research Methodology

Area of Study: Gumel Emirate is located in Jigawa State, North-West Nigeria. The Emirate is predominantly Muslim with strong Islamic traditions.

Instrument for Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was used. Interviews were conducted with:

Islamic scholars
 Community leaders
 Youths

Validity and Reliability

Experts in Islamic Studies and Sociology validated the instrument. A pilot test was conducted to ensure reliability.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Male	98	65.3%
Female	52	34.7%
Total	150	100%
Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18–30	60	40%
31–40	45	30%
41–50	28	18.7%
51 and above	17	11.3%

Research Question One:

What are the causes of human trafficking?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty	55	36.7%
Unemployment	40	26.7%
Illiteracy	25	16.7%
Moral decadence	20	13.3%
Family instability	10	6.6%

Interpretation

The table shows that poverty and unemployment are the major causes of trafficking in Gumel Emirate.

These findings agree with previous studies that identified economic hardship and weak social

protection as major drivers of trafficking in Nigeria.

Research Question Two:

Can Islamic teachings help reduce trafficking?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	80	53.3%
Agree	50	33.3%
Disagree	12	8%
Strongly Disagree	8	5.4%

Interpretation

Most respondents agreed that Islamic teachings can reduce trafficking through moral discipline, charity, and social justice.

Findings from Interviews: Interview responses from Islamic scholars revealed that:

Islam prohibits exploitation of humans.

Zakat can reduce poverty and vulnerability.

Parents should provide proper Islamic upbringing.

Community leaders should monitor suspicious activities.

Religious sermons can create awareness against trafficking.

One respondent stated:

“When Islamic teachings are properly implemented, exploitation and trafficking will reduce because Islam values human dignity.”

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis:

There is a significant relationship between Islamic teachings and reduction of human trafficking.

Using chi-square analysis, the calculated value exceeded the critical value at 0.05 level of significance.

Decision

The null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Interpretation

This means Islamic teachings significantly

contribute to reducing human trafficking in Gumel Emirate.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary

The study examined Islamic panacea to human trafficking in Nigeria using Gumel Emirate as a case study. The study found that poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and moral decadence are major causes of trafficking. Findings also showed that Islamic principles such as Zakat, moral education, justice, and communal responsibility can significantly reduce trafficking and promote national development.

Conclusion

Human trafficking is a serious obstacle to national development in Nigeria. Islamic teachings provide effective moral, social, and economic mechanisms for combating trafficking. The implementation of Islamic ethical principles can strengthen social justice, reduce poverty, and protect vulnerable populations.

Recommendations

- Islamic scholars should intensify anti-trafficking awareness campaigns.
- Government should partner with religious institutions.
- Zakat committees should empower poor families and youths.
- Islamic schools should include trafficking awareness in their curriculum.
- Traditional rulers should collaborate with security agencies.

- Youth empowerment and vocational training programs should be expanded.
- Community surveillance mechanisms should be strengthened.

References

- Duru, E.J.C & Ogonnaya, U.M (2012) Combating Human Trafficking in Nigeria: An Evaluation of State Policies and Programmes *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(3), 161–171
- Hauwa, Z. A. (2026). An Examination of the Drivers of Human Trafficking in North-Western Nigeria: Institutional and Civil Society Perspectives. *University of Jos Journal of Political Science*, 3(1), 259–269.
- Odedokun, E. A. (2021). The Crime of Human Trafficking in Nigeria, *FUOYE Journal of Criminology and Security Studies*
- Ogunlela, Y. I. (2023). Human Trafficking in Nigeria: A Challenging National Menace. *Jalingo Journal of Social and Management Sciences*
- Nwokeoma, B. N. (2018). Perception of Demographic and Cultural Factors Associated with Human Trafficking in Nigeria. *African Population Studies*
- Alkali, U., Bukar, L., & Ansari, G. U (ND) Exploding the Role of Religious Institutions in Combating Child Trafficking in Nigeria. *Mimbar Hukum Journal*
- Khan M.M (1419 A.H), *The Translation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an in English* KSA King Fahd complex for printing of the Holy Qur'an
- Khan MM (ND) *Sahih Al-Bukhari Arabic-English*, Dar Al- Arabia Publishing & Distribution
- An-Naisabury M (1998) *Sahih Muslim*, Darul Afkarul Dawliyyah Riyadh Saudi Arabia
- United Nations Palermo Protocol on Human Trafficking
- Rahman, F. (2020). *Human Rights and Islam*. Routledge.