

THE MENACE OF KIDNAPPING AND IT'S IMPACT ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA: A REVIEW

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Abstract

The menace of kidnappings has recently become rampant in Nigeria to the extent that it poses a great challenge to Nigeria's development. Kidnapping has greatly undermined Nigeria's growth in the area of economic, political, social as well as her educational realms. The main objective of this paper is to examine the factors or causes of kidnapping in Nigeria and its impact on socio-economic development. To achieve this objective, the study adopted qualitative content analysis through the use of secondary sources of data obtained from internet sources, official documents, text books, Newspapers, journals, articles etc. The paper adopts the failed state theory as the framework of its analysis. Using this framework the paper argues that kidnapping breeds insecurity and constitutes an obstacle to development. Unfortunately, government and its agencies appear feeble in proving an effective antidote to this problem. The study reveals that many factors account for the kidnapping. These include poverty and unemployment, bad governance, corruption and fraud, political instability among other political and socio-economic challenges. The paper argues further that the kidnapping for ransom has assumed an industrial enterprise in Nigeria which makes it difficult for the security agencies to handle or tackle it. The paper concludes that the continuous kidnapping of persons including school children and the demand for ransom is an indication of government failure to address the menace of kidnappings in the country. The paper recommends among others that all stakeholders, government and the private sector, politicians and policy makers, military, police and other security agencies, vigilante and community watch groups must effectively and creatively come together to help reverse the current trend of kidnappings.

Keywords: Development, Kidnapping, Socio-economic development

Introduction

Kidnapping is a global phenomenon. Many countries in the world including United States of America, Mexico, Yemen, Syria, the Philippines, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and Nigeria have witnessed the highest rates of kidnapping for ransom cases. However, the rates of kidnapping in America and Mexico are attracting worldwide attention. According to Cyriax and Wilson (2005), the first crucial kidnapping incident reported for economic reasons was the one of 4-years-old Charlie Ross from Philadelphia in the United States of America. These authors have further described that the word "kidnap" comes from the English practice of seizing children in the seventeenth-century and transferring them as slaves to the tobacco farmsteads in the colonies of America. Hitherto, cases of kidnapping remains a serious challenge to the United States of America, the disappearance of children in the country is not unheard of either, and such is a

problem that the police and other agencies are working relentlessly to address. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, roughly 800,000 children are reported missing annually in the country. Mexico has its Kidnapping experience especially with its history of drug related violence and police corruption. According to the United States Department of State, Mexico suffered an estimated 105,685 kidnapping cases in 2012 and in 2013, the number increased tremendously to 131, 946 the highest number ever recorded (Ekechukwu and Osaat, 2021).

The current wave of kidnapping in Nigeria started on 25th February 2006 in the Niger Delta, the oil rich region when militants kidnapped expatriate oil workers to demand for ransom as a measure of agitation for resource control, unfortunately government and security agents did not check or stop the menace of kidnapping in the region. Later the menace of kidnapping spread to the Southeast region, especially the Aba axis, where criminals abduct people to demand for ransom. Unfortunately the security agents were not strong enough to curb the menace. As the evil of kidnapping spread to the Southwest region especially in the urban centers of Lagos and Ibadan, including Benin City of Edo State where criminals abduct people and demand fat ransom claim. Yet the security agents failed to clamp on kidnappers as the vice spread like wild-fire from the Niger Delta through South–East and South-West to the North-East and North-West region and all parts of Nigeria (Abati, 2009; Akpan, 2010; Ezinwa, 2019; Ibrahim and Ahmad, 2020; Tahir and Usman, 2021).

Many engage in kidnapping business for different purposes and missions; which include kidnapping for illicit intercourse, rape, selling of human parts for either ritual sacrifice or burial purposes of prominent chiefs and warriors, political revenge, slavery, ransom begging, marriage, murder or assassination, sale, unlawful activities among other purposes. Some kidnappers abduct children to sell them to childless parents and to private and secret orphanage homes. In some cases, the kidnapped children are sold to child traffickers abroad; some of them are used as child labor and prostitute to their dealers who used them to make ill-gotten money. Most kidnappers engage in this heinous crime solely for the sake of money; in this case, the victims are released after payment of the agreed ransom. In all, kidnapping can be grouped according to motives; political kidnapping, kidnapping for marriage, ritual kidnapping and monetary kidnapping (Samaha, 2011; Chibuzor, 2022).

Today in Nigeria, victims of this reprehensible crime are no longer predominantly foreigners or expatriates, they are now mostly Nigerians and sadly they include locals such as adult females and males, the poor and the rich, the aged, children, infants and even corpses (Ezinwa, 2015). Many female and male victims reported being raped by their abductors, and many others have been forcefully married off to fellow kidnappers. It is important to note that the ethnicity and religion of their victims are immaterial, kidnapping for ransom in Nigeria cuts across all groups and classes of people. The major interest of the kidnapper is the ransom to be paid, which the kidnappers usually demand in millions of Naira, and on certain occasions, they kill their victims even after payments of ransom. The kidnappers also trade in their victims exchange for money just as is done to slaves, usually they enslave their victims. Although this crime against humanity takes place in both rural and urban areas and is in fact perpetrated in virtually all parts of Nigeria, the most frightening and worrisome aspect of this deadly crime in Nigeria is not just the torture and humiliation that victims pass through at the hands of these criminals and the monetary extortion in the name of ransom that usually follow, but the evidently helpless response of security agencies to curbing the menace (Oseni, 2021).

Obijiofor (2019) aptly pointed out that “In Nigeria, kidnappers now determine where we can go to, when we can go to those places, and how we can reach our destinations, what the kidnapper have been able to communicate to the Nigerian citizenry is fear, danger, distress, panic and misgiving of lack of government effort to protect citizens as enshrined in the Nigeria’s constitution. The fear of kidnapping has affected the social and business relationships that exist between people in the society. In fact, even the greatest bonds, both familial and relational, is jeopardized by the fear of kidnapping. People no longer travel freely by road on motorways and train lines without nagging thought of the possibility of Kidnapping. Travelling by road is only for the poor who cannot afford to travel by air due to costly flight tickets. Flights are the only option for those who can afford them, even with much sacrifice. Some wealthy men who move about without fear or prejudices normally settle kidnappers from time to time. They know the gangs and their meeting points, and that is why they move about their businesses in the daytime. Those who are ignorant of this secret regularly fall victims of the kidnappers. This is the extent of intimidation and victimization by kidnappers in the country (Ekechukwu and Osaat, 2021).

The kidnapping statistics in Nigeria are sketchy and often do not capture the realities on the ground because most kidnap incidents go unreported or, when reported, are not adequately captured by security agencies. Yet, the data is as mind boggling as it is disturbing. From April 14, 2014 and February 26, 2021 more than one thousand students have been kidnapped from their schools, with the emergence of Boko Haram terrorist group in the Northeast and the armed bandits in the Northwest Nigeria. According to the media reports the breakdown of the number of students in the last few years indicates that 276 students were kidnapped from Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State in April, 2014; 113 students from Government Girls Secondary and Technical College, Dapchi, Yobe State, on February 19, 2018; 344 students from Government Science Secondary School, Kankara, Katsina state on December 11, 2020; 80 students from Islamiyya schools, Mahuta Town, Katsina state, on December 20, 2020; 27 students and 15 others from Government Science College, Kagara, Niger State on February 17, 2021; 317 students from Government Girls Secondary School, Jangebe, Zamfara State; 39 students from Federal College of Forestry Mechanization in February, 2021; 20 students and 3 non-academic staff of Greenfield University in Kaduna State in April, 2021 and the latest school kidnapping case occurred in Kebbi State, of which over 100 students and 8 teachers were kidnapped from Federal Government College Birnin Yauri in June 17, 2021 (Naylor and Jones, 2014; Benjamin, 2021).

Recently, according to a published report by SBM titled “The Economics of Nigeria’s Kidnap Industry”, about N653.7 million was paid as ransom in Nigeria between July 2021 and June 2022. More than 500 incidents were recorded, and 3,420 people were abducted across Nigeria, with 564 others killed in violence associated with kidnapping in one year. The report also detailed that N6.531 billion (\$9.9 million) was demanded in ransom in the period considered, but only N653.7 million (\$1.2 million) was paid as a ransom (at least N100 million each) by the Victims of the AK9 train attack of last March (Dakuku, 2022).

In most recent times, kidnapping is a lucrative for men and women of the underworld and criminals. In the process of kidnapping, breakdown of law and order is evident, as victims’ right to living and freedom is threatened, bullied, endangered, jeopardized and terrorized. The kidnappers are so bold that they have no regard for the law and are heavily into drugs and alcohol abuse. In most part of the country they make use of dangerous but sophisticated weapons to invade or raid communities and security outfits. Kidnappers do not operate in isolation; they have networks—groups with different modes of operation. Each group has a gang leader and specified operation within its jurisdiction, as assigned by their overall leader in the state. So a person could be

kidnapped by one group today and by tomorrow, another group would kidnap him again. This is why many victims have been kidnapped more than once or twice, though it depends on the information received about the victims before their kidnapping. If two or three groups receive the same information by their respective informants, the tendency that more than one group will kidnap the person becomes obvious (Ekechukwu and Osaat, 2021).

The network of those involved in the kidnapping industry is extensive, making it nearly impossible to track the perpetrators. Each group of kidnappers is divided into three (3) teams, namely the task force, the operation team and the guards. The business of the task force is to negotiate with the family of the victim on what should be the ransom; the people in this team are mainly the leaders of the gang. The work of the operation team is to kidnap the victims; the people in this group are well trained and fortified with sophisticated guns. During operation, they are willing to kill provided they succeed in their mission. The work of the guards is to keep watch on those already kidnapped. They receive instructions from their gang leaders either to release or to kill the victim, depending on the outcome of the negotiation. The parties in the negotiation includes, the banks that receive ransom, some security agencies including the police that compromised and charge a fee for tracking the kidnappers from victims' relatives, a state intelligence network that is abdicating its responsibility or bowing to the superior intelligence of the criminals, transportation networks, communities that hide the kidnappers and unemployed youths who work as informants. Their work is to monitor and give accurate information about the rich or businessmen in the street. They study their movements and report regularly to their gang. Some jobless men and women equally serve in this capacity. Sometimes they attend wedding to study who makes the highest donation of money during launching and other project donations (Obijiofor, 2019; Dakuku; 2021).

According to Ibrahim and Ahmad (2020) kidnapping thrives because kidnappers use too many ungoverned spaces and forests as operational bases for which security operatives appear helpless in tackling. It also thrives because kidnappers make extensive use of phones. Every transaction is through cell phones. During negotiations, numerous Sim cards are used and discarded. The idea behind this is to avoid tracking by network companies. Sometimes kidnappers hold their captives longer in order to demand more ransom from the relatives of the victims. During the process of negotiation, the victims are tortured severely and in the course of the excruciating pains, they desperately appeal to government or their relatives to respond or agree to the terms of their abductors. In most cases where the ransom is exorbitant, the family resort to selling their properties in order to pay for the release of their loved ones. In their networking transaction, negotiations are made at different strategic locations by those in taskforce team. In their smart nature, once an agreement is reached, they dribble the person coming to supply the money for a longer time and from one place to another, just to make sure that he or she is not accompanied by any other individual. Sometimes, the victims die before their release either because of illness or as a result of severe torture Ekechukwu and Osaat, 2021).

It is simply mysterious that with the ubiquitous nature of Nigerian police officers, a plethora of intelligence agencies, military establishments, with heavy budget on technology and arms, the kidnapping industry is still thriving in Nigeria with little or no consequences. Police who are primarily responsible for tackling this crime sometimes know the kingpins and their operational bases but it is a mystery that the police seem ineffective in tackling the crime and the criminals. An even more compounding mystery is the emergence of negotiators in the kidnapping enterprise known to the security agencies, yet they are allowed to walk around freely. The Sovereignty of the Nigerian state has never been as challenged as this criminal enterprise is doing. It is a mystery

that the entire apparatus of the Nigerian security system has not been mobilized to defend our sovereignty. Kidnapping has prevailed in spite of measures put in place by the government. The Nigeria police and other security agencies have failed to match the resistance of kidnappers and their masters (Dakuku, 2022).

It is against this backdrop that this paper interrogates the upsurge in incidence of kidnappings and its impact on socio-economic development in Nigeria. For the purpose of analytical progression, this paper is divided into five (5) sections apart from the introductory aspect. The first section deals with conceptual clarification and theoretical framework, while the second section traces the factors or causes of kidnapping in Nigeria. The third section discusses the impact of kidnapping on the socio-economic development of Nigeria, The fourth section evaluates the efforts made at curbing kidnapping in Nigeria and the fifth section offers the conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptual Clarification

Development

Development has been defined as the ability of a country to improve the social welfare of the people such as providing social amenities like quality education, portable water, infrastructural facilities and medical care to mention but a few. Development entails producing more and better food to eat, healthier and happier individuals, better living accommodation, improved transportation and communication system, quality education among the populace and generally more money floating around. Mohammed (2015) observed that development is a difficult word to define because of the multifarious contextual usage of the concept. But in its simplest form, development means improvement or to become more advanced, more mature, more complete organized and more transformed. There is simply no single definition of the concept but it was believed that it entails the process of social and economic development in a society. It is usually measured by so many indices among which are Gross Domestic Product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment, poverty and inequality. In some instances, economic growth is often considered to indicate the level of economic development. Development in any nation is not a sudden occurrence or event but a product of careful and strategic planning.

Kidnapping

It is not uncommon for scholars in Nigeria to interchangeably use the word kidnap with the word hostage. While kidnapping refers to a confinement without holding the legal authority to do so, hostage refers to a person or entity which is held by a captor as a security (Oseni, 2021). So many definitions have been given to kidnapping due to diverse views and opinions of scholars. Kidnapping is the act of forceful abduction, enslavement and seizure of a person by a criminal or criminals to demand for the person's release by payment of ransom from one's relations, friends and family members or government (Ezinwa, 2019). In other words, kidnapping referred to child stealing and women abduction by a criminal to demand for ransom/money from the parent or family members or government. In the process of child stealing and women abduction, the women folk, unfortunate victims are being raped, abused, defiled, maltreated and assaulted sexually by the kidnapper. According to Yusuf and Abdullahi (2020) kidnapping is defined as "the forcible seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person against his/her ". Kidnapping is the taking of a person against his or her will (or from the control of parent or guardian) from one place to another under circumstances in which the person taken does not have freedom of movement, will or decision through violence, force threat or intimidation (Fage and Alabi, 2017).

Likewise, Adegoke (2013) defined kidnapping as the “act of seizing and detaining or carrying away a person by unlawful force or by fraud and often with a demand for ransom. For an act to be deemed as kidnapping, it must involve coercive movement of a victim from one place to another. The detention or seizure of that-be it a child or an adult- is for a period of time, depending on the willingness of the relatives to respond positively to the negotiations. Samaha (2008) defined kidnapping as ‘taking and carrying away another person with the intent to deprive that person of personal liberty. Generally, kidnapping involves the abduction of an individual against his or her will, usually in furtherance of other criminal intentions. He further noted that kidnapping is of two categories: Simple and aggravated. The later is prevalent in Nigeria and is more dangerous because it involves both physical and psychological deprivations and suffering. It might actually be difficult for most Nigerians to say which of armed robbery and aggravated kidnapping is the most feared and dreaded crime in the country. Despite the malleability of the concept of kidnapping, this paper favors an operational definition that sees kidnapping as the crime of seizing and taking away a person by force, often with a demand for a ransom. The crime involves unlawfully seizing and carrying away a person by force or fraud or seizing and detaining a person against his or her will with intent of carrying that person away at a later time (Adegoke, 2019).

According to Dakuku (2022), kidnapping has three (3) broad categories-retail kidnapping, medium-scale kidnapping, and terrorist abduction. The first category is the type of kidnapping involving mothers, fathers, children, friends and other close family relations such as a wife arranging for the kidnap of her husband, friends arranging for the kidnap of their friend and housemaids planning for the kidnap of their master’s children. The question that many asked is; why would a father or mother kidnap her own daughter? What could have possibly inspired him or her to do such an abominable act? The answer remains that he or she intentionally committed the crime for an immediate financial reward involved. The second category of kidnapping is the medium-scale kidnapping which involves attacking vehicles on the road taking all the passengers, attacking villages and taking helpless victims hostage and attacking communities and terrorizing and occupying them. This class of kidnap- for- ransom has made popular the lexicon, bandits a lose term of criminals. The third category of kidnapping is a sophisticated terrorist organized crime and large scale business involving multiple actors often targeting high value individuals, and designed to draw the government attention. The 2014 mass abduction of 276 school girls in Chibok, North- East of the country woke up the nation to this new reality. Another example is the Abuja-Kaduna train attack (AK-9), for which most victims were held hostage for over six months. Terrorist abduction is a direct challenge to the Sovereignty of the Nigerian State. This dichotomous categorization of kidnapping in Nigeria showcases the dynamism and vibrancy of this nefarious enterprise seen across the length and breadth of Nigeria as a menace to our communities (Dakuku, 2022).

Socio-economic development

National development or socio-economic development is the process of growth and improvement in the social and economic structure of a country (Olusegun and Mabogunje, 1991) National development may be described as the continuous economic, political and technological improvement of a country culminating in improved standard of living of its citizens. For the purpose of this paper, socio-economic or national development has been defined as improvement in the general wellbeing of the individual, groups, family, community and society at large in terms of their social, political, economic and educational advancement (Adamu and Muhammed, 2021).

Theoretical Framework: Failed State Theory

There are a number of perspectives upon which the horrendous activities of kidnappers could be fully explained or appreciated. These include among others the Theory of Anomie and Social Structure, Conflict /Marxist Theory, Relative deprivation Theory and the Failed State Theory. This paper however, adopted the failed state theory in its attempt to offer new explanations to the ineffectiveness of security agencies and governmental institutions in the fight against kidnapping and insecurity in the country. According to Adibe (2010) a significant contribution to the theory of failed states and its attributes was made by Jack Goldstone (2008) in his paper titled "Pathways to state failure". The term "failed state" is often, used to describe a state perceived as having failed at some of the basic conditions and responsibilities of a sovereign government. Onyeakwelu (2014) defined a failed state as that which is unable to meet the needs and aspirations of its citizens or a state, which has failed to provide for its citizens such basic needs like adequate security, food, water, electricity, health care, good roads etc.; failed state is one that has shattered social and political structures.

The incidence of pervasive kidnapping in Nigeria is a symptom of a failing state. According to Adibe (2010) a failed state suffers from crumbling infrastructures, faltering utility supplies, educational and health facilities and deteriorating basic human development indicators such as infant mortality and literacy rates. According to him a failed state is characterized by a weakened ability to provide basic public service and prevent widespread corruption as people usually think of themselves first. He further argued that most of the countries in the developing world especially those involved in civil wars or protracted internal conflicts (such as Nigeria) belong to this unfortunate category of failing states. It is obvious that serious security problems such as kidnapping constitute a serious symptom of a failing state because it does not guarantee effective maintenance of law and order and especially confidence in political governance.

Similarly, Patrick (2007) identified the common characteristics of a failed state as when a central government is so weak or ineffective that it has little practical control over much of its territory, non-provision of public utilities or services, widespread corruption and criminality; refugees and involuntary movement of population and sharp economic decline. The premise of the failed state theory is that a state should have the monopoly of legitimate violence in its territory. State should have the ability and capability, military or otherwise to curtail vagaries of internal violence to protect its citizens. The thesis goes that the state emerge on the basis of thrust, protection of fundamental human right, ability to make collective decisions, ensure distributive justice contents, internal crises and animosity. According to Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) the state is supposed to have a pact with the citizens to promote a happy and virtues of life and if the state failed to fulfill the implied pact, the state cease to deserve citizen's obedience (Abdulrasheed, 2020).

Thurer (1999) also identified the following attributes or characteristics of a failed state; (a) loss of physical control of its territory or of the monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force (b) erosion of authority to make collective decision (c) inability to provide reasonable public services and (d) inability to interact with other states as full member of international community. He noted that failing states are invariably the product of collapse of the power structures providing political supports for law and order, a process generally triggered and accompanied by anarchic forms of internal violence. It is the collapse of state institutions especially the police and judiciary with resulting paralysis of governance, a breakdown of law and order and general banditry and chaos (Thurer, 1999 cited in Abdulrasheed, 2020).

The proponents of a failed state hold that a failed state is a country with government that has failed to provide greatest happiness to the greatest number of its citizens. It cannot or will not

deliver essential political goods (public services to its citizens (Gros, 2011; Abdurashheed, 2020). The failed state is usually not yet a nation state may hold a seat in the United Nations and function as a sovereign entity in regional and world politics but as far as most of its people are concerned, the state fails by its inability to perform state functions adequately. Thus, failed states are those political entities in international politics that supply deficient qualities and quantities of political goods and simultaneously, no longer exercise a monopoly of violence within their territories. They are states whose power grids have experienced frequent, sustained and massive breakdown, such that the state authorities are no longer able to project real power on a consistent basis (Joseph and Bassey, 2019).

Abdurashheed (2020) see lack of capacity and political will as one of the reasons for the failure of some states to fulfill the exigencies of statehood. Brown (2013) describes many states in the West African sub-region as obviously feeble, without strength to perform basic security and welfare responsibilities of statehood. A failed state is characterized by corruption, political disorderliness and crimes. While it is true, that there are weak or failed states everywhere in the world, Africa has their largest number. In fact, the entire continent is surrounded by weak nations but West African nations are more especially so which clearly reflects in their inability to project and actualize meaningful national development goals. According to Abdurashheed (2020), Nigeria is by all indices a failed state where politicians break the law with impunity, lawmakers and law enforcement agents become lawbreakers. It is a country where civil and public service rules are compromised, mass media reports are unsubstantiated and diluted, where corruption is the ultimate and the only game in town, where hard work is not rewarded and crime is not punishable and a state where nothing works, even when those ones that work in other countries are adopted in Nigeria.

Although critics have not seen any link between state failure and armed banditry, the theory is useful to this study because it has the capacity to explain the audacity of armed banditry, which contributed significantly to the worsening security and education system in the country and Northwest region in particular. It is relevant to this study to this study, because it helped to explain how the Nigerian state has failed to live up to expectations especially in its failure to make and implement drastic policies to curb armed banditry and terrorism in the country..

Factors or Causes of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Kidnapping is a heinous, complex and organized crime, and that is why both scholars and researchers have engaged in investigations or studies to know the various reasons and causes of kidnapping in Nigeria. Ekechukwu and Osaat (2021) noted that people commit crime of kidnapping for two broad reasons which are: political bargaining and economic gains. Apart from these two broad reasons, many have been kidnapped and abducted by criminals due to a number of factors that are greatly interlinked but are separated here for analytical purposes. These include poverty, unemployment, bad governance, corruption and fraud, greed for power and wealth by politicians, religion, lack of capital punishment, laxity in the prosecution of offenders, misplacement of our value system and quick money syndrome among others (Ibrahim and Ahmed, 2020).

However, kidnapping is rampant in Nigeria because government has failed to address the challenges of unemployment and poverty. Unemployment is the propeller that fans poverty which drives people to kidnapping and other crimes. Unemployed youths are forced to find ways to survive in the country's harsh economic condition. Many Nigerian youths are into kidnapping because they are trapped in an endless cycle of poverty which the government did not provide a lee-way space and room of enabling environment to survive. They have plans they cannot fulfill,

they have families they cannot assist. Many Nigerians have school fees and yearly rents they cannot afford to pay. They are desirous to buy basic cloths and shoes for family members. They have to pay the high cost of transportation every day. They have financial commitments that cannot be accomplished. These are the terrible and unpleasant economic harsh conditions that frighten and drive many people into kidnapping and other allied crimes in contemporary Nigeria (Ezinwa, 2019).

The continuous kidnappings of persons for ransom by the Boko Haram insurgents, terrorists, armed bandits, Fulani herdsman and the Niger Delta militants could lead to increase in the level of insecurity in Nigeria which can be attributed to a number of factors including weak security system and other governmental institutions. Governments and their security agents ranging from police, military personnel and special anti-robbery squad (SARS) have not achieved considerable results, and many security personnel have been killed by the kidnappers who are sophisticatedly equipped. Most often, the security agents meet kidnappers unprepared and considering the fact that the kinds of guns these security officers possess are inferior, they stand the risk of losing their lives. Yet it is within the jurisdiction of the government to make provision for the security of its citizenry. The government of today appears to have a mission different from the security of the people. Many have been raped, traumatized and killed without receiving any help from the government (Shuaibu, 2015).

Poverty

Considering the type of kidnapping recently experienced, it is obvious that abject poverty is one of the causes of kidnapping in Nigeria. According to Abati (2009), not a few people who have survived the ordeal of kidnapping, have reported that the kidnappers in our midst are mostly young, educated ones who complain about hunger and unemployment. Kidnapping has been viewed as a means of exit from the track of poverty for riches. This is because when an individual is kidnapped, a huge ransom is being demanded, and until that ransom is delivered to the kidnappers, the person kidnapped will never be released to his people. When the kidnappers secured the ransom, they suddenly turn rich compared to their former miserable poverty state (Shuaibu, 2015).

Unemployment

Closely related to poverty is unemployment which is a major cause of kidnapping. As the wise-adage goes, "An idle mind is the devil's workshop" Many unemployed youths in Nigeria are poverty stricken and usually find solace in criminal activities which of course include participation in kidnapping and armed banditry. Poverty which comes with unemployment and ignorance has been growing steadily due to increase in population without the corresponding growth of the economy for many years. It can therefore be argued that a good number of Nigerian youths who have taken to crimes such as kidnapping are poor and unemployed and this is most prevalent in the country where many school leavers including graduates of tertiary institutions roam the streets for years after graduation without finding jobs (Ugwuoke, 2011). Some jobless and hungry youths in Nigeria have taken it upon themselves that terrorism is the solution to their numerous problems, as exemplified through the Nigerian governments long period of exploitation of the Niger Delta people, which reflect on other agonized youths to use kidnapping as an alternate remedy to their problem. Odey (2000) also observed that the youth's exclusion triggered their obsession in heinous crimes as a means of survival.

Bad governance

One of the major causes of kidnapping in the country is bad governance or the failure of the successive administrations to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality in the distribution of resources among ethnic nationalities and also poses threats to national sovereignty and the security of the country. Bad governance characterized by corrupt bureaucrats and politicians which badly hindered development efforts by stealing aid contributions or misdirecting them into unproductive activities. Governments that are not accountable to their citizens and with inefficient bureaucracies and weak institutions are unwilling or unable to formulate and implement pro-growth and pro-poor policies (Tahir and Usman, 2021).

Corruption and Fraud

Corruption and Fraud are two associated factors that contribute enormously to economically motivated kidnapping in contemporary Nigeria. The Nigerian leaders' corrupt influences must have ignited vices such as kidnapping and armed banditry in the country. According to Transparency International, transparency perception index (2019), Nigeria is globally transitioning from 26 since 2015 to 2019 on the persistent corruption rank countries. Evidently, as reasoned by Adibe (2012) that the agitation of Niger Delta and other Nigerian youths generally might not have led to kidnapping if our national resources were shared wisely and equitably. As the business of kidnap booms in Nigeria, it team-up with corrupt police force, bankers, etc.

Political Instability

Political instability in Nigeria is also seen as one of the causes of kidnapping. Abdulkabir (2017) stated that "it is also a secret that politicians are the first set of people to be linked to kidnapping cases in the country in a situation where some of the so called politicians are seen as above the law employ kidnappers to kidnap their political opponents and some get killed". It is common for a politician to go round with his thugs who carry out this evil act, Abati (2009) also argued that some of the kidnapping were politically motivated where relatives of prominent politicians were abducted.

Politics of do or die affairs: Kidnapping makes Nigerian politics a do or die affair, as politicians can use their thugs as kidnappers to abduct their victims to settle politically motivated plans to frustrate opponents politicians who are threats to their plan to rig elections to secure power, for example, in 2010 governorship elections in Anambra state, the father of Professor Charles Soludo, the governorship aspirant of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), not until they collected ransom before Soludo's father was released. Politically, this evil act weakened Professor Soludo to secure power in Anambra state. Kidnapping is a sin that causes the death, the suffering and frustration of many families in Nigeria. It is terror, oppressive and grief to the good people of Nigeria. Kidnapping makes criminals to exploit the rich and affluent in the society. Kidnapping brutalized society and distorted values in the Niger Delta region and Sambisa forest- a dane of kidnappers in Northern region. Kidnapping is an evil alliance of criminals against hardworking people of Nigeria. It is an illegal business that brings shame and ill-gotten money that attracts curses to many families in Nigeria. Kidnappers always keep people frightened and fearful of the unknown to happen; as people sleep at night in their houses with one eye open. Kidnappers confront families, communities and government to achieve their goal forcefully (Ezinwa, 2019).

Political Assassinations

There is no gainsaying in the fact that lots of politicians in Nigeria are hungry for power and are indeed resolute to kill in order to acquire power by all means. The incidence of political assassinations in the country is transparent that most politicians turn evil, by kidnapping fellow Nigerians for ritual purposes and political assassinations to attain their goals. It is very surprising

and in fact unfortunate to observe that as election approaches children and individuals with abnormalities such as imbeciles and the psychologically ill people are the targeted subject for rituals (Ugwuoke, 2011) Parents and relatives are strictly warned about the whereabouts of individuals and to take precautions because of the ritual kidnappers who are often agents of politicians, this type of kidnapping usually occurred in Nigeria as a preparation for a political campaign for election (Dodo, 2010).

Religion

Religion in Nigeria is a threat to peaceful coexistence of the country. It is obvious that the two religions practiced in Nigeria are mutually opposed to each other and have never been in harmony due to issues of beliefs. Dodo (2010) noted that the Islamic religion has never been in agreement with the Christian religion. Each religious group is making frantic efforts to be on top, especially the Islamic religion. Both Christians and Muslims are kidnapped and killed by the Boko Haram insurgents. However, Boko Haram kidnappings are both political and religious, according to their ideology.

Weak security system

Weak security system is a major contributory factor to the level of kidnapping and insecurity in Nigeria. This could have possibly been caused by the inadequate funding of the police and other security agencies, lack of modern equipment both in weaponry and training, poor welfare of security personnel and inadequate personnel. This is in addition to poor attitudinal and behavioral disposition of security personnel. In many cases, security personnel assigned to deal with given security situation lack the expertise and equipment to handle the situation in a way to prevent it from occurring. Even when these exist some personnel get influenced by ethnic, religious, or communal sentiment and are easily prejudiced by their personal interest to serve their people rather than the nation (Achumba et al, 2013; Tahir and Usman, 2021). Recent studies have confirmed the militarization of electioneering process and the provision of arms and ammunitions to political foot soldiers by their godfathers in order to influence the results of elections. These weapons are not normally withdrawn from them and as such, they possess ready tools for kidnapping (Effiong, 2019).

Flamboyant and ostentatious lifestyle

Another possible factor or cause of kidnapping in Nigeria is the flamboyant and the ostentatious lifestyle of some people; in situations where one unnecessarily exposes his wealth for people to see. This is very rampant among the bourgeois class, who out of goodwill, exhibit their wealth to area boys who may in turn plan for their kidnapping. Careless talk has equally put many people into this precarious situation. Discussing about one's wealth and financial activities outside home can be dangerous because walls have ears. In 2014, a factory worker in Enugu was kidnapped in beer parlour not minding those who were listening to him. At night of the same day he was kidnapped (Ekechukwu and Osaat, 2021).

Exploitation and marginalization

Exploitation and marginalization also account in no small measure to the incidence of kidnapping in Nigeria. The long period of exploitation of the people in the Niger Delta by the Federal Government equally motivated the aggrieved youths in that part of the country to take to kidnapping as an alternative solution to their problem. Government's insensitivity to the yearnings and aspirations of youths has equally encouraged the later to take to crimes such as kidnapping as a means of survival. While lamenting the predicament of Nigerian youths, Ugwuoke

(2011) had observed that the present generation of youths in Nigeria is endowed with millions of promising sons and daughters who have been compelled by pervasive and unbearable social conditions to indulge and specialize in one form of criminal life or the other.

Poor state of Infrastructure

Similarly, the poor state of infrastructure in the country has ignited all sorts of criminalities and brigandage. These include the poor state of road, or lack of health and education facilities. In the absence of job opportunities for the youth, the standard of living in the country has dwindled (Ikpong, 2009). On the other hand, the improvement in communication has been attributed as one of the causes of kidnapping in Nigeria. The global system of mobile (GSM) communication provides the mechanism by which kidnappers reach out and negotiate with relations of the victims on ransom amount (Adegoke, 2019).

Porous borders

Another factor that encourages kidnapping in Nigeria is its long porous borders with neighboring countries, especially in Northern Nigeria. These unchecked porous borders allow kidnappers from another country to enter Nigeria to commit kidnapping for fat ransom claims. It is unfortunate to note that the huge expanse of land, ungoverned and undeveloped like Sambisa forest in Northeast Nigeria provide a breeding den and ground for kidnapping and Boko Haram insurgency and terrorism. More so, the porous borders in Northern Nigeria also encourage arm proliferation in the region that causes kidnapping business to thrive. It is important to note that some Nigerian politicians also import arms through the country's porous borders to give their thugs to enable them win election for them. After elections, some of the thugs that are not disarmed used them to kidnap opponents and enemies of their godfathers to forcefully collect ransom from them (Ezinwa, 2019).

Lame Judicial framework

One of the factors that encourages kidnapping in Nigeria is the lame judicial framework and its attendant ineptitude in providing justice for the victims of kidnapping. These have contributed to its perpetration in large scale (Ele, 2019). Amongst the factors that led to the proliferation of the activities of kidnappers include the absence of adequate laws that facilitate in the prosecution of kidnappers. Offenders are not prosecuted nor are they punished most of time. When criminal cases involving kidnappings are not adequately dealt with in the law courts, this tends to embolden other criminals to continue in their ways of criminal activities. It was however argued that the kidnapping problem is not for lack of laws but the enforcement of existing laws. For effective combat of kidnapping, the level of laxity in law implementation process to prosecute offenders should be addressed as urgently as possible (Ibrahim and Ahmad, 2020).

Lack of Severe punishment

The lack of severe punishment such as death penalty on kidnappers is one of the reasons for the increase in kidnapping. In this respect, capital punishment should be imposed on kidnappers who have been tried and subsequently convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction. Kidnappers see this unlawful crime as a business and therefore find it difficult to quit. This is because there is little risk of an action for kidnappers; hence the business thrives on (Dodo, 2010). Government and the security agencies should provide severe punishment and imprisonment to any kidnapper found guilty of the offence to discourage others from the crime. As an effective deterrent option, the National Assembly should as a matter of urgency enacts an enabling law that would necessitate capital punishment for kidnapping in Nigeria (Ezinwa, 2019).

Changing value system

According to Umez (2000), the changing value system in contemporary Nigeria as one that endorses and glorifies illegal and corrupt means as necessary and sufficient means to earn a living, it now re-shapes most Nigerians moral integrity, including the youths, is a whole reverse of the traditional system, which was basically predicated on good morals and hard work. Odey (2000) stated that “a society that is keen on condemning its youths for being dishonest and lazy, and for constituting a menace to the rest of the people such as kidnapping, armed robbery etc. should equally be keen on providing better economic, social and moral alternatives that will dissolve immoralities to be less attractive and thus drain their current drift to criminal life.

Get-rich-quick-syndrome

According to Dodo (2010), “one of the causes of kidnapping in Nigeria is the get rich-quick syndrome”. Most Nigerians are not willing to strive, and at the same time, survival of the fittest is the norm in contemporary Nigeria. Thus, you cannot harvest what you did not plant. Most Nigerian youths are people with big dreams through get rich quick syndrome without working for it; they decide to achieve those dreams upon kidnapping for ransom. Another factor that encourage kidnapping in Nigeria is drug abuse addicted victims. When youths take in drugs they become ‘high’ and courageous to kidnap the wealthy people for fat ransom claims from their relations and parents (Ele, 2019).

Envious contemporaries

Another factor is envious contemporaries: Some men do not feel happy when they see others progressing in life, especially their contemporaries. This is a major problem that is prevalent in the South Eastern part of Nigeria. Everybody is in form of competition with the other on who is succeeding the most. This leads people who are not doing well financially sometimes to ask themselves questions on why the other person should progress more than them, and to compare themselves with others. This category of people will then start feeling very bad on the progress of the other; this leads them to start making plans on how to bring down the other person. Sometimes this will lead them to plan to kidnap the innocent man to demand for ransom. Most times this usually leads to the death of the victim in the hands of the kidnappers (Ibrahim and Ahmad, 2020).

Impact of Kidnapping on Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria

Kidnapping as a national challenge has resulted in unquantifiable loss of lives and property and has also affected the security and socio-economic development of the country. It has led to the loss of tens of thousands of lives and huge sums or amounts of money lost to ransom takers. Many of the victims of the kidnapping have been injured, killed in the course of their abduction, custody or release. Kidnapping and its allied criminal vices has done irreclaimable and irrecoverable dent to Nigerian image and good name. Kidnapping threatens foreign investors and tourist who want to come and invest and do potential business in Nigeria. Bad news of kidnappings are abound in the country that scare away investors, hence the isolation and dissociation of Nigerians by potential business partners (Ezinwa, 2019).

Psychological Trauma: In all areas, the effects of kidnapping are devastating, no matter the type of kidnapping one encounters. Victims are humiliated and dehumanized irrespective of their age, position, socio-economic status, level of education and popularity. The traumatic experience that the victims of kidnapping undergo usually leaves an indelible mark on them that lasts a lifetime.

The psychological trauma alone can increase the blood pressure of the victim and this can lead to stroke. This can also lead to a negative psychological effect in children, and in most cases leads to depression, anxiety, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which unfortunately has a long lasting effect (Ibrahim and Ahmed, 2020). Generally, there are grievous effects of kidnapping on the victims, relatives, associations, community and society at large. The forceful removal of a person traumatizes the victim as well as his/her relatives and friends. In most cases, female victims are sexually abused as a result of kidnapping. This act exposes the person to the risk of counteracting sexually transmitted diseases. Many ladies get impregnated by the criminals. Any form of resistance or refusal could lead to the death of the victim. This issue of constant rape by kidnappers is an ugly experience female victim cannot forget easily. Some, after their release, conceal that information in order to avoid having a contemptible reputation before their husbands and relatives (Clark, 2004; Ekechukwu and Osaat, 2021).

Kidnapping makes children to be suspicious of strange adults within school premises: It is a sin that causes the death, suffering and frustration of many children and their parents. In Nigeria, kidnapping has continued to worsen in recent times because of the participation of the security agents who aid and abet the kidnapping operations. Some of the security agents are part of the kidnappings. Some may sell their guns to the kidnappers or they are directly involved; they are in the pay list of the kidnappers (Ezinwa, 2019). According to Schidle, 2009 cited in Adegoke (2013), the total amount of ransoms paid in Nigeria between 2006 and 2008 exceeded \$100 million. So, kidnapping is also accompanied with huge economic implications; the Nigerian government spent billions of Naira to release the victims of the Abuja-Kaduna Train attack. Money which should have been spent on the masses and development projects is now diverted to payment of ransom to criminals. Similarly, parents and relatives suffer financial distress seeking to borrow money to pay the ransom. Another economic implication of kidnapping is the injury the victims sustain during violent operations or while in detention. Many are hospitalized for adequate treatment after abduction and release. The treatment does not go without corresponding hospital bills. Medical records in government hospitals show the level and extent of harm inflicted on the kidnapped victims. Although there were many cases of kidnapping, only a few of these have resulted in fatality (Ekechukwu and Osaat, 2021).

Kidnapping creates fear, insecurity and general distrust: In a society where the incidence of kidnapping is high, there is usually an atmosphere of fear and a general lack of trust, this tends to limit people's lives and actions which translates to reduced economic activities. Everybody tends to be cautious in this kind of environment, and there is usually a form of curfew that exists in such areas. The rich and very wealthy, who can afford to surround themselves with security guards, armed to the teeth, because of fear of getting kidnapped (Ibrahim and Ahmed, 2020). It has made Nigeria to become an insecure country; the fear of insecurity is real. Everyone is a primary target, previously, kidnappers tended to go for the rich in the society. Today, the rich are no longer the main target or focus of kidnappers, ordinary people are targeted too. According to Ezinwa (2019) kidnapping and insecurity cut across the poor and the rich, men and women, boys and girls, lawmakers and judiciary officers, Nollywood, Kenywood actors and musicians, pastors and politicians, students representatives and labor leaders have become easy prey for rapacious abductors. The weakness of the state security infrastructure has not helped in curbing the activities of the kidnappers. It reduces the freedom of movement of the people in the affected areas. The social lives of the people has dramatically changed because many who consider themselves as potential victims now shun social gatherings or patronage of relaxation centers (Adegoke, 2011). Kidnappers are earning huge amount of money because of the failure of the government and security agents to provide safety for the citizens.

Effect on socio-economic development: Kidnapping as a national challenge has affected the socio-economic development of the country. The high rate of kidnappings in certain areas of the country has made such areas high risk zones for foreigners. This scares away foreign investors from investing in that region as can be seen in Northern part of Nigeria, where Boko Haram sect is operating. Many expatriate workers in a construction firm working on a project were kidnapped by the sect (Ibrahim and Ahmed, 2020). This has also scares away foreign investors from investing in the country especially in the Niger Delta. Some foreign multinational companies in the oil, construction and production sectors have closed shop and offices in the Niger Delta region and relocated to other countries abroad which has adverse effect on the economic development of the country (Adegoke, 2011). Kidnapping in Nigeria reduces the income from the oil as a source of revenue for Federal Government of Nigeria. As early as 2006, it was estimated that with the price of oil at \$58 per barrel, Nigeria lost about \$6 million a day due to the closure of the Shell Exploration Production Company (SNEPCO) facility (Emmanuel, 2006 cited in Adegoke, 2011). The Niger Delta region and Nigeria in general appear not to be investment friendly. Investors are afraid of establishing or setting up investments in volatile area where peace and orderliness continue to elude inhabitants. The country cannot therefore be a preferred destination for investment and the much talked about center for tourism development (Ezinwa, 2019).

Effect on Education: The effects of kidnapping on educational development in Nigeria are part of the insecurity issues in the country. Insecurity from kidnappings do manifest frequently in schools in Nigeria. Such security challenges on schools ranges from “suicide attacks, bombings, shooting at sight, abductions and hostage-takings for monetary ransom and so forth”. In the wake of Boko Haram and terrorists attacks on schools, many have fallen victims to the security challenges; very few have actually escaped death or injury during such attacks. In the prevailing circumstances, the safety and security of school administrators, teachers and students and entire community where the schools are located are no longer guaranteed; most especially in North-east and North-west geo-political zones where the activities of Boko Haram and armed bandits are much pronounced (Uzuegbu-Wilson et al., 2019).

The consequences of kidnapping on the Nigerian educational system can be seen in its lack of growth and development. For more than two decades now, it has been observed that educational institutions are the major targets of the kidnappers. The kidnappers see lecturers, proprietors, principals and some school teachers as wealthy men women in the society. Several incidents of kidnapping have been recorded among education personnel. Many university lecturers, school children/students, proprietors and principals have been kidnapped at one point or the other. Some paid huge ransoms through their noses were demanded for their freedom (Ekechukwu and Osaat, 2021).

Experience has shown that there is fear among teachers/lecturers, students and other staff in the schools attacked. Due to the bad experience of kidnapping, many lecturers and teachers have refused to come back to the teaching profession for fear of kidnappers. Some refused to accept transfer letters especially to those areas where cases of kidnapping are rampant. Some schools are deserted as parents are afraid of sending their children to those schools where kidnappers attacked at one time or the other. Some schools now experience a lack of qualified teachers to handle core subjects, the reason being that the ones cannot afford qualified to lose their lives in the hands of kidnappers (Naylor and Jones, 2014).

School abductions are dangerous condemnable and barbaric not only because it truncates a student’s right to education but could also lead to untimely death of innocent school children who committed no sin other than just trying to be educated. The effect of kidnappings on school

remains traumatic as the victims pass through excruciating pains. When students are kidnapped, they risk being traumatized for life, even after their rescue. It affects their interests in education and academic performances and destroys their life dreams. For instance, some of the kidnapped victims never get to return, some are married off prematurely, some exposed to child labor, while many others particularly the girls are often exposed to different forms of sexual abuses (Uzuegbu-Wilson et al, 2019).

The kidnapping of the school children came as a challenge not just to the federal and states government but to the non-governmental organizations and individuals. Governments spent huge sums of money to affect the release of the kidnapped school children, all to no avail as there was no trace of the kidnappers, let alone the girls. The money government spent to fight kidnapping could have been used to provide infrastructural development in the education sector. Parents of the kidnapped school girls on the other hand, suffer severe trauma and some die as a result of the shock emanating from the menace of kidnapping. In short, many states in Nigeria especially in the North have shut schools due to the rise in abductions in the last few years. The closure of schools could lead to the increase in the number of out- of- school children or derail the academic progress of pupils. If the current trends of kidnappings are allowed to continue, it would cause more severe damages not only to the future of our young people but to the country as a whole (Samson, 2021). However, according to Naylor and Jones (2014) school kidnappings/ abductions can impact on schools, children's education and learning through the following channels which include;

- i. It is traumatic and shows lack of value for their personality
- ii. Death and injury to teachers and students
- iii. Fear of sending children to school, and teachers fear of attending due to targeted attacks, threats of attacks or general insecurity reducing freedom of movement
- iv. Forced population displacement leading to interrupted education
- v. Kidnapping / abduction impacts of conflict which reduce access and learning
- vi. Reduction in returns to education
- vii. Reduced educational expenditure (public and private) due to overall reduction in resources
- viii. Reduced public capacity to deliver education
- ix. School closure due to targeted attacks, collateral damage and military use of school buildings
- x. Kidnapping activities constitute a serious setback to the country's educational development with potential impact on literacy level
- xi. Impact on the parents of these children who begin to have doubts if they are going to send their children to school especially the girl child.
- xii. As a result of the attacks on schools there is low enrolment of the girl-child in school which is further widening the educational and socio-economic gaps in Nigeria.
- xiii. Due to kidnappings and attacks on school there will be an increase in the number of out-of-school children.

Government Efforts Towards Curbing the Menace

Kidnapping is on the increase in Nigeria and it is prevalent across the six geopolitical zones. It aggravates the level of insecurity in the country. The most disturbing trends is in spite of the various government's strategies, measures and interventions to curb the menace of kidnappings, the horror seems ceaseless, and of course attempts, at mitigating the problem became more

cumbersome for states and federal governments, the communities affected and the country at large. Successive government administrations have never relented in their effort to fight and reduce kidnapping in Nigeria. In fighting the menace of kidnapping, Nigeria is not alone: both national and international bodies are coming together to see if the incidence can be reduced (Fage and Alabi, 2017).

This study found that poverty and unemployment are one of the most contributory factors in the increase of kidnapping in Nigeria. Shuaibu (2015) posited that poverty and unemployment have caused many Nigerians to accept kidnapping as a lucrative business. One can imagine a situation where most of the unemployed youths engage in business of kidnapping as an alternative means of survival. It is apparent that unemployed graduates are increasing day by day, and this portends grave danger to the society. According to Dakuku (2019) unless the governments address the issue of unemployment and poverty, their efforts at curbing kidnapping and insecurity would be in vain. The unemployed youths must be engaged; otherwise they will continue to be tools in the hands of corrupt politicians. Job creation and poverty alleviation programme set up by President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2004 should have settled the twin problem but the programme was abandoned along the way. There is no continuity in the execution and implementation of government policies and programmes in Nigeria. Government should therefore resuscitate and develop youth empowerment centers in all the local government areas where youths can acquire entrepreneurship skill and talents to reduce unemployment and poverty so that kidnapping can reduce drastically.

Looking at the increasing nature of kidnapping in Nigeria, one begins to wonder if the government is truly fighting kidnapping and other acts of terrorism in the country. Whatever the programme of government is, the fight against kidnapping has not yielded any tangible results (Onovo, 2009). If the Federal government comes strongly and partner with the state governments, they would be able to fight and defeat kidnapers in their hideout (Ezinwa, 2019). Kidnapping has prevailed in spite of the measures put in place by the governments. The Nigerian police anti-kidnapping squad introduced in the 2000s has endeavored to stem the menace but this has been to no avail, mainly due to lack of political will and operational challenges. Insecurity and kidnapping for ransom still strives in spite of huge budgetary allocation to defense and security, rising investment in intelligence gathering to get advance information to nip their activities in the bud and the formation of the various special task forces.

This study recognized that government has significantly played a major role in stemming the tide of kidnapping, it has been discharging its constitutional responsibilities over the menace of kidnapping, rediscover the socio-economic implications of the phenomenon and provide the panacea to stem the tide of kidnapping in Nigeria. Efforts to control the menace of kidnapping have failed because of the weak sanctioning and deterrence mechanisms. Kidnapping thrives in an environment that condones crime where colonial opportunism and impunity prevail over and above deterrence, kidnapping persist because the benefits derived from the crime far exceed the costs. So the obvious solution is to raise the costs by imposing harsher and severe penalties. The present penalty for kidnapping ranges from 14 to 20 years in prison, with the possibility for life imprisonment for extreme cases involving murder, stricter measures, such as life imprisonment or death penalty may not be completely out of place in dealing with the kidnapping menace. After all, the crime of kidnapping is a maximum threat that requires an equally maximum deterrence (Ekechukwu and Osaat, 2021).

Conclusion

It has been observed that kidnapping is not a new crime in the world, but the apparent problem of kidnapping in all parts of Nigeria is the benefits the perpetrators are driving from this criminal activity. The menace of kidnappings in Nigeria, especially for the purpose of collecting ransom has become a very serious problem and a cause for concern amongst the citizens of Nigeria. The six geo-political zones in Nigeria are faced with different versions of kidnapping. In the North East and North West kidnappings are done by Boko Haram insurgency, armed bandits and herdsmen attacks. In the Niger Delta region or the South-South and South-East, militants have adopted kidnapping as a strategy to abduct foreigners and to seek ransom to champion their violent movement. Politicians use youths as political thugs to kidnap opponents and their family members and make certain demands. It is obvious that criminal opportunists also commit kidnapping for ransom. The study reveals that there is a plethora of factors implicated as the causes of kidnapping in Nigeria. These factors include poverty and unemployment, militarization of the electoral process, poor infrastructure, political instability and the general improvement in communication among Nigerians, political instability, religion, laxity in the implementation process to prosecute the offenders, corruption and fraud, political influence, terrorism, lack of capital punishment by the government, the changing value system and quick-money syndrome among others are the contributory factors for the increase of kidnapping in Nigeria.

The kidnappings have serious implications not only on human security threat of the victims but also on the moral fabric of the Nigerian society. Kidnapping for ransom still strives despite persistent public outcries over their unbearable impact including killings, physical and psychological trauma, and socio-economic setback suffered huge sums of money as ransom, many of the victims did not survive to tell their stories. In the context of the present study, the menace negatively affects foreign investments, infrastructural development and security of lives and properties. This is more so the case when effective security frameworks are not put in place and structural conditions deny citizens the right to a descent standard of living. As a matter of fact, the incidences of kidnapping have greatly affected the image of the country both domestically and internationally especially in the area of the nation's quest to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and also an attempt to develop a viable tourism industry as visitors are regularly warned by their countries to be wary of coming to Nigeria.

Recommendations

The prevalence of kidnappings in Nigeria raises a fundamental question about government ability to govern effectively and to provide security and welfare to the citizens. The response of government to the insecurity and kidnapping for ransom is reactive and kinetic in approach. However, this study realized that nowhere in the world kinetic strategy or use of physical force alone has ever succeeded in eliminating an organized violent crime such as kidnapping. It has therefore become imperative for the states and federal government to review the existing intervention and strategies to curb the menace. This paper therefore recommends among others the adoption of following strategies to curb kidnapping in Nigeria:

- i. Comprehensive security approach which emphasized that all stake holders, religious and traditional rulers, government and the private sector, politicians and policy makers, military, police and other security agencies, vigilante and community watch groups must effectively and creatively come together to help reverse the current trend of kidnappings.
- ii. Adequate funding and the provision of equipment to the security agencies are essential. The police and other security agencies meant for counter-terrorism and anti-kidnapping should be adequately trained and equipped with sophisticated ammunition against kidnappers. The training should address how to identify victims and rescue them from

- kidnappers without being hurt .A situation where kidnappers and terrorists are better equipped than our security officials is unacceptable.
- iii. To tackle kidnapping for ransom will require a cocktail of laws, intelligence, surveillance, and joint-military-police operation. Recently, Nigeria's Senate passed a bill imposing jail terms of at least 15 years for anyone paying a ransom to free someone who has been kidnapped. The bill also made abducting an individual punishable by death in cases where the victims die.
 - iv. Successful solution to kidnapping include combining effective control of all porous Nigerian borders, especially in Northern Nigeria, while providing a reliable and unique identification number for each individual. To curb kidnapping in Nigeria, the security agents must ensure they mop off weapons and arms in the wrong hands of kidnappers. The police should arrest and prosecute kidnappers who are in possession of different weapons and drugs such as guns, knives, axes, cutlasses, bottles of codeine expectorants, Indian hemp, cocaine and crack, as well as sophisticated weapons used to kidnap people like AK47
 - v. Government should establish dedicated community policing, therefore creating a better relationship with the traditional and religious leaders, youths, neighborhood vigilante groups and other social organizations within communities in Nigeria. By so doing, it will aid in curbing the problem of kidnapping in Nigeria as trust is established between the community and with law enforcement being consistent and available when kidnapping incidents arise.
 - vi. Any government official, public office holder or politician set up relations with kidnappers. Such traitor suppose to be banned from vying and contesting any governmental position and it will be rest assured discourage others to part-take in the criminal act.
 - vii. The service providers have to re-check their policy of Sim Cards Registration to ensure that every line is registered before it started working, that will enable them to track in and out-going call by every customer in the Network, as well as their location using GPS network, in order to trace and intercede every call from kidnappers and track their location which is detectable by the network provider. After all, the perpetrators used phone-based operation for negotiation of ransom
 - viii. Security is everybody's business. Everyone must be involved in the protection of lives and properties. Kidnappers are human beings who live with people, interact with them, and buy things from them. It will become easy if everyone is keen to work together to eradicate them. In most cases, kidnappers hide to different villages and localities; there is need to engage the community leaders; especially the kings, chiefs and other traditional title holders in the fight against kidnapping. They can assist in fishing out kidnappers in their various communities. In addition, any complete/uncompleted house caught accommodating kidnap victims should be seized or destroyed for future occurrence and for better and safe society.
 - ix. Government officials must avoid corruption and flashy wealth display, and should provide the new policies that will economically sustain peoples demand and empower them. Another logical solution to kidnapping is curbing corruption within and among Nigerian law enforcement agencies and creating a better relationship between the locals and the Nigerian law enforcement agencies will aid in decreasing the incidence of kidnapping for ransom. If corruption within and among the few Nigerian law enforcement agencies are tackled, the problem of terrorism and kidnapping for ransom are a quarter of the way dealt with. This will in turn restore the confidence in Nigerians by feeding law

- enforcement the necessary information to tackle kidnapping for ransom. Police should be disciplined and discreet in handling reported cases.
- x. To fight the vice of kidnapping and allied criminal vices in Nigeria, parents should invest in the spiritual virtues of their family to build the moral character of their children, so that when they grow up they would not join gangs of kidnappers and allied criminals vice abhorred by the society. This will reduce kidnapping and sundry crimes in Nigeria. Furthermore, parents, villages and city dwellers should not be part and parcel of the crime. Parents should not collect money from their children that are kidnappers, to show that it is a vice society and family abhorred.
 - xi. There is a need to integrate local intelligence, community participation, and government security apparatus in the fight against kidnapping. A massive sensitization programme is needed to educate youths to eschew violence and kidnapping activities. Mass Media and Non-governmental organizations should also participate in the war against kidnapping in Nigeria. Their contributions can come through the creation of public awareness either in a form of seminars or orientation programmes on the need to shun kidnapping
 - xii. Religious organizations such as different churches and mosques should constantly preach against kidnapping in their various events and programmes. Members should be made to know the consequences of kidnapping as a crime. Mass education of the populace on the evils of kidnapping in our society should be vigorously pursued. Educational institutions should offer guidance and counseling on how to avoid being kidnapped or offer therapeutic lessons for primary and secondary victims of kidnappings.
 - xiii. To further reduce kidnapping in Nigeria, the leaders and people should be patriotic and advocate a new Nigeria build on justice, fairness, equality and to build bridges across tribes, religion and political affiliations such that our collective vision would evolved a more equalitarian nation, so that no ethnic group would feel marginalized to resume attacks, kidnapping, terrorism, militancy and bomb blast.
 - xiv. Social infrastructure such as good road network, good drinking water, stable power , free education etc., should be provided in all states of Nigeria. Another strategy to curb kidnapping in Nigeria is for the government to encourage youths participation in sports and talents hunt competition across the six-geopolitical zones of Nigeria; it would help reduce kidnapping in the country.
 - xv. Government at all levels must endeavor to reactivate the bursary and scholarship schemes in order to assist pupils and students at the various levels of educational institutions. Such financial assistance would obviously reduce the suffering of students and at the same time diminish their motivation to engage in crimes especially violent crimes such as kidnapping and armed robbery.

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