

AN APPRAISAL ON CRIME AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA: WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria has witnessed a high crime rate, ranging from insurgency, suicide bombers, armed robbery, kidnapping, political thuggery and, and banditry, to mention a few. These problems have resulted in severe security challenges in the country, which have also negatively impacted its growth and development quest. This paper pointed out some significant issues leading to insecurity in Nigeria and considers unemployment among the youth as the major problem; poverty and family problems are other supporting factors. The paper also proffers solutions that provide security agents with adequate and modern gadgets to prevent and control crime in society. Poverty reduction programs and job opportunities were recommended to be provided for the youth; good leadership based on transparency and accountability be ensured.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of security worldwide, peace, and development is at the center stage of local, national, and international discourse. States, especially developing ones, are always in search of security (Barry, 1983). In Nigeria, many contemporary social problems have emerged against society's norms, morals, and ethics and make life very uncomfortable. Such issues include deviant behavior toward our struggle to control available resources wrongly and violently, suicide bombing, armed robbery, kidnapping, and political thuggery: militancy and other social vices (George, 2013). Crime is often perceived to be threatening society's fabric or as a symptom of a social order breakdown. Crime and deviance are dysfunctional as they threaten society's stability and are, therefore, social problems that require a concerted effort towards finding a lasting solution to them. They undermine the social fabric by eroding the sense of safety and security (Onoge, 1988).

In Nigeria, crime and deviance are multidimensional and can undermine its corporate existence and sustainable development efforts. Nigeria's corporate existence and development can be hampered by many factors, an escalating and uncontrolled crime problem (Tanimu, 2006). Security and crime have been deeply rooted in this country's political history, particularly in recent times, which has emerged as a critical concept in Nigeria's struggle for good governance, sustainability, and development (Wose, 2014).

The Nigerian Nation's development into a new multicultural society in which the populace will be free at least economically was our Nationalists' vision who fought for independence from the colonialist. With the struggle came political freedom; Nigerians acquired the sole right to control their affairs. Nigerians were no more under the political and economic ruling of her imperial tutelage. The hopes were high for the attainment of economic greatness, given



the vast population and its diversity. Nigeria was also blessed with abundant export crops, minerals, and human resources, to mention a few (Ayanda & Alapaha, 201.1).

However, it seems that the Nationalist's hope will be dashed away considering various criminal activities the country is witnessing. These acts include; armed robbery, insurgency, suicide, bombers, armed robbery, kidnapping, political thuggery, militancy, etc. Based on the above backdrop, this paper is designed to examine the concepts of crime as it affects Nigeria's security situation. To do this, the article is divided into four parts. Part one is the introduction, and part two is clarification on the concept of crime; Part three discusses the impacts of corruption on Nigeria's security situation. Part four, possible ways forward where suggested.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Crime is like other concepts in social sciences that have no generally accepted definition. According to Hiraide (2013), crime is an illegal act that is punishable by law. If a person commits a crime and is detected, he could be arrested, charged, and prosecuted. If a criminal is found guilty, he will receive a sentence such as a community order, fine, or imprisonment. Some illegal acts are not necessarily seen as a crime. For example, parking a car on double yellow lines or using a mobile phone while driving, even though these activities are against the law.

The Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (2009) defined crime as an "offense, which goes beyond the personal and public sphere, breaking prohibitory rules or laws, to which legitimate punishments or sanctions are attached and which requires the intervention of a public authority... for crime to be known as such, it must come to the notice of and be processed through, an administrative system or enforcement agency. It must be reported and recorded by the police (or another investigator); it may then become part of criminal statistics; may or may not be investigated, and may or may not result in a court case."

Dambazau (1994) views crime as an act or omission against public interest and which is prescribed by law enacted by the legislature in the Overall parts of the society, and to which prescribed punishment is attached in the event of a violation. It involves four primary principles: public wrong, moral wrong, law, and punishment for the criminal. Crime is also seen as a violation of the rules agreed to be respected by all society members. The rest members of the society mete sanction upon those guilty of the offense. For the same reason, the legal system views crime as a public and moral wrong (Adebayo. 2013).

Security: Security refers to safety from harm, attack, or damage. The term has different dimensions. In psychology, public safety defers and military matters and information access. In finance, security is a document representing an investment (Salihu, 1997). Security is viewed as a condition that exists due to creating procedures for protecting persons, information, and property against aggressive persons and actions (Akin, 2008). In the same manner, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro (2013) see security as the presence of circumstances within which individuals in a society can go about their usual daily events without any intimidations to their lives properties. This concurred with Ogunleye, Adewale, and Ogunde's (2011) definition, who says security refers to the availability of all processes designed to protect and safeguard the public and the resources

of individuals, groups, businesses, and the country against disruption or violence occurrence. To sum it up, The Merriam-webster free online Dictionary gave six dimensions of security as follows; Freedom from risk or danger and safety, freedom from doubt, anxiety or fear, confidence, Something that gives or assures safety, A group or department of private guards., Measures adopted by a government to prevent espionage, sabotage, or attack, Measure adopted as by business or homeowner to explain a crime such as a burglary or assault, Measure adapted to give escape: security in the prisons is very light, Something deposited or given as assurance of the fulfillment of an obligation, or a pledge, One which undertakes to fulfill the responsibility of another: a surety and A document indicating ownership or creditor ship: a stock certificate or bond.

Security is essential for all humans, regardless of being of one's status in society. This explains why the Department for International Development, DFID (2000), pointed out that lack of security affects poor and rich people's welfare. It can also cause injury and death, reduce family income, and generate a climate of fear. Crime has a similar meaning to deviance. This assertion was buttressed by Giddens (2013), who asserts that crime exists within the category of behavior that sociologists call deviance as non-conformity to a given set of norms that are accepted by a significant number of people in a community or society. Crime is a non-conformist behavior that breaks the law. Once there is a Consistency break in the established rules, then insecurity will be the order of the day. The next section presents the types of deviant behavior in society.

TYPES OF CRIME

Sociologists have categorized crime and deviance into various types. Among them is Hagan (1994), who identified deviance and crime along three dimensions. The first dimension is the *severity of the social response*. At one extreme, homicide and other severe forms of deviance result in the most severe adverse reactions, such as life imprisonment or capital punishment. At the other end of the spectrum, slight deviations from a norm, such as wearing a nose ring, will cause some people to do little more than mild express disapproval.

The second dimension of deviance and crime is the *perceived harmfulness* of the deviant or criminal act. Some unnatural acts, such as rape, are generally seen as very harmful, whereas others, such as tattooing, are commonly regarded as being of little consequence. Note that actual harmfulness is not the only issue here. *Perceived harmfulness* is. Coca-Cola got its name because, in the early part of the 20th century, it contained a derivative of cocaine. Now cocaine is an illegal drug because people's perceptions of its harmfulness changed (Denno, 1994).

The third characteristic of deviance is the *degree of general agreement* about whether an act should be considered deviant. For example, people disagree about whether smoking marijuana should be regarded as a crime, mainly because it may have therapeutic value in treating cancer pain. In contrast, virtually everyone agrees that murder is seriously deviant. However, note that even the social definition of murder varies over time and across cultures and societies. Whether we classify a miner's death as an accident or murder depends on the kind of worker-safety legislation in existence. Some organizations have more stringent worker-safety rules than others, and deaths considered accidental in some societies are classified as criminal offenses in

others. So we see that even when it comes to consensus crimes, social definitions are variable (Olufayo, 2014).

IMPACT OF CRIME ON SECURITY SITUATION IN NIGERIA

As mentioned earlier in this paper, Nigeria is characterized by social problems, including criminality, socio-economic issues, and the nation's security question. Thousands of people are wallowing in poverty: Corruption is a national tag of both old and young people. Bomb blast, kidnapping, banditry, and killings have become a way of life. Our media sources are every day providing us with the heartbreaking news that leaves Nigerians in reflective moods if they are ever concerned. If it is not a bombing blast, it is kidnapping or a father raping a 3year old daughter; if it is not looting of banks, it is unknown gun-men eliminating innocent Nigerians. The widespread and systematic murder and persecution by Boko Haram militant have become unbearable for the citizens, and according to HuFnan Rights Watch (2012), has amounted to crimes against humanity. Undoubtedly, the government attempted to end the Boko-haram insurgence within the society; we hope these measures will be fruitful. A par from Boko-haram we also have the Niger-delta militants, who are still terrorizing our oil- zones. Government security forces were also said to be engaged in numerous abuses, including extrajudicial killings, as pointed out by Human Rights Watch (2012). So, even those supposed to bring order into society are causing harm (Olufayo, 2014).

According to Ayanda and Alapata (2011), the, Nigpxian'cities are favorable areas for criminal activities because it provides the privacy needed for personal crime and environment for a specialized and organized crime. Hence, theft, fraudulence, arson, forgery, and other criminal activities have become a means of survival. In recent times, he went further to revealed-that a training school for armed robbers`was discovered at the Ajegunle area, Lagos State. The school teaches strategies and plans for launching 'attacks and escaping with loots. The age requirement for the school ranged from eighteen to twenty-eight years. It was also revealed that the school conduct interview for the recruit and serves as an avenue where the bandits prepare programs on which area to raid and plan how to operate different kinds of firearms and ammunition. He maintained that although the suspects were nabbed during their morning training session where they were working modalities on several houses to be attacked, this signals danger to our country (Nigeria).

All the above security challenges were stated to have resulted from youth unemployment, poverty, and family problems. Take unemployment for instance, as rightly pointed out by Adebayo (2013) that unemployment causes frustration, dejection, desperation, and dependency on family members and friends who also have their problems to contend with this precarious situation has left the youths in a vicious cycle of poverty that daily erodes their confidence and bright future. He explained that the frustration and desperation that daily torments of the unemployed create a fertile ground for crime to thrive. These have resulted in notable adverse social, economic, and political developments in Nigeria. He further explains that crime as a result of unemployment has adverse effects on the economy. It increases the cost of doing business for the



private sector and policy implementation in public service. Resources that would have otherwise been invested in improving output fund education, health, and other welfare programs are diverted to crime control and prevention (Olufayo, 2014).

Poverty is another excellent factor that leads people to be involved in deviant and criminal acts. Poverty is the lack of access to basic needs/goods; it can lack access to productive resources, including education, working skills, and civil right to participate in the decision concerning socio-economic conditions. This problem was caused by over-population, inadequate education, Global distribution of resources, etc. Poverty has resulted in getting involved in many deviant and criminal acts in Nigeria. As pointed out by Baba (2009) that extended hunger and lack of employment may lead to depression, which may sometimes contribute to criminal behavior-.

Family problem; most families in Nigeria today have neglected their role as the first point of socialization. The teachings a child received from his parents usually create long-lasting corrective measures to curtail juvenile delinquency. The family does this by controlling what is being produced in our home videos, recreational centers, and cinema houses. Some families have not been performing this role; in some instances, deviant and criminal children are the products of broken homes due to divorce and marriage separation (Adebayo, 2013).

CONCLUSION

The paper examined crime and security challenges in Nigeria, suggesting a possible way forward. It posits that the security is faced with different kinds of social problems ranging from insurgency, suicide bombing kidnapping, armed robbery, militancy, political thuggery, which were believed to have negatively impacted the country's security situation and dash the country's hope in its quest for national development. This paper, therefore, suggests the following as a way forward.

In a matter of urgency, the government does it possible to prevent criminal acts by providing security agents with adequate and latest weapons, welfare, and right working environment be provided to security personnel, employment opportunities be provided for the youths, poverty eradication programs be initiated. The government should also give more power to agencies in charge of crime and give them a free hand to carry out their functions without interference. The government should empower rural people to produce more food to provide adequate and affordable food for Nigerians. The family institution that is regarded as the agent of socialization must effectively monitor all people within the family, particularly the youth. On the part of leaders, their effective leadership should be based on transparency, dedication, and accountability.

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