

Identifying Major Causes, Effects and Approaches to Curbing Crimes in South-Western Nigeria

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Abstract:

The thrust of this study was to identify the major causes and effects of crimes in South-Western Nigeria. It was discovered that the once peaceful region of the country is gradually becoming the crime capital, losing lives and properties worth millions on yearly basis to the recurrent cases of crimes. Data were generated from both primary and secondary sources and tested with Pearson Product Moments Correlation Coefficient at 0.01 level of significance, through the use of SPSS. Findings revealed that there is a positive correlation between unresponsive government and increase crimes in South-Western Nigeria which has led to business shutdown, poor economic development among others. The study concludes that if adequate measures to curb these crimes are not urgently taken, more lives will be lost, businesses will continue to foldup, investors will withdraw their investments, poverty and hunger will take over and life will become more unbearable for the common man. Some of the recommendations of this study includes; youth empowerment, job creation, resource control, meeting of students' demands and the strengthening of the Nigerian educational systems at all levels, as well as provisions for good ranching systems and laws to protect both herdsmen and farmers within the region.

Keywords: Crime, Kidnapping, Resource control, Religion, South-West, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

The disastrous impact of crimes in South-Western Nigeria is perplexing to both Nigerians and the international community at large (Ngwama, 2014). The once peaceful region of the country is gradually becoming the crime capital of the territory. The malady that was often heard of in other parts of the country has found itself domesticated in the South-West. Today, citizens and foreigners live in perpetual fear even as they go about their day-to-day business. Nowhere is safe both in rural and urban areas. It appears that there is no risk-free zone in the

region anymore, as worship centres (Churches and Mosques), playgrounds, markets, schools, highways, shopping centres, etc. are all susceptible to the menace. Many families, friends and loved ones are finding it difficult to recover from the trauma which insecurity has caused them (Davidson, 2010).

Unfortunately, thousands of lives and properties worth millions of Naira have been lost, families have been separated, homes have been broken, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) have been spread due to the inhumane activities of rapists, life is gradually becoming unbearable in this part of the world as businesses are folding up and hunger is biting deep in the stomach of unemployed youths and the ever-growing population of the region. Amidst these, successive governments (both at Federal and State levels) remain insensitive to the dreaded issue of insecurity and have failed to efficaciously discharge their constitutional responsibility of providing for the security needs of the entire citizenry. Sadly, Nigeria continues to rank low in the Global Peace Index (GPI, 2012) even as huge resources have been channeled to national security (Ewetan, 2013; Ewaten&Urhie, 2014).

From statistics, CLEEN (2012) posits that different patterns and types of crimes exist in different parts of the country. For instance, while the North is troubled by Islamic sect bombings, the South-East records the highest number of kidnapping. Whereas, in the South-South and South-West; robbery, rape, fraud, cultism, land dispute, etc takes the order of the day. It is against this background that this study seeks to identify the major causes and effects of crimes in South-Western Nigeria. It will also make suggestions on how to reduce crime in the region.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to identify major crimes, their effects and to critically examine the strategies needed to curb them in Western Nigeria. Specifically, the study will;

- i. Identify common crimes in South-Western Nigeria
- ii. Examine the major causes and effects of crimes in South-Western Nigeria
- iii. Highlight the effects of unresponsiveness of successive governments on high crime rates in South-Western

1.2 Hypotheses

1. There is no positive correlation between punishable contraventions and South-Western Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between unemployment, grazing colonies, political parties support, resource control and crimes in South-Western Nigeria

3. There is no significant relationship between unresponsive government and increase crimes in South-Western Nigeria

2. CRIME IN SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA

Like many other concepts in social sciences, crime is yet to enjoy a universally accepted meaning. Notably, what constitutes crime in country 'A' may not be regarded as crime in country 'B'. This gives more credits to Tappan (1947) definition of crime as "intentional violation of criminal law, committed without defense or excuse, and penalized by the state as a felony or misdemeanor" (cited in Henry and Lanier, 2001). This happens to be a narrow definition of crime as it lays emphases on state defined harms, but it buttresses the fact that what is crime in one country may not be regarded as crime in another country. However, the definition points to the violation of a nationally accepted rule drafted to guard human conducts in the society. For instance, Nigeria is yet to join other countries of the World, like the United States of America, Brazil, Canada, Portugal, Spain, Finland, Denmark, Netherlands, etc in adopting same-sex marriages. Hence, while same-sex marriage remains a crime in Nigeria, it has the backing of the law in the United States of America and others earlier mentioned. Departing from this definition, and broadening it, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2015) considered crime as "a punishable contravention of the bench mark of behaviour as enacted by constituted authorities". From these definitions, crimes are moral, social, procedural, conventional as well as legal wrong which is committed by an individual without excuses and is punishable by the state, be it regarded as misdemeanor, felony, etc. In the words of Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, as cited in the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (2015) as "offence which goes beyond the personal and into the public sphere, breaking prohibitory rules or laws, to which legitimate punishments or sanctions are attached, and which requires the intervention of a public authority". Crimes are proceedings that are contrary to existing laws, as codified in a country's legal system. Just as there are different types of crimes, there are diverse punishments for criminal actions. These punishments are usually captured in a country's constitution or other written legal documents. In most cases, the punishment may include fines, imprisonment, death or a combination of two of these. There are many types of crimes, these includes, but not limited to crime against persons, crime against property, crime against society/morality, white collar crime, public order crime and juvenile delinquencies which is a wrong doing by person(s) below the legal age of maturity.

From table 1 below, it has been revealed that criminal cases are increasing in South Western Nigeria. The once peaceful region is now becoming criminal capital. It has been discovered that kidnapping, cultism, land dispute, rape, oil-bunkery, vandalism, robbery, grazing dispute, militancy, chief selection, religion, politics, boundary dispute and strike are taking new and more aggressive dimensions within the region. Some of the identified causes of these crimes are unemployment, agitation for resource control, ban on bunkery, land ownership, grazing colonies, chieftaincy title, hijab wearing in public schools, religion, poor amenities, political parties support and sales of single plot of land to multiple buyers. Further, weapons like guns, cutlass, iron, broken bottles, axes, stones, arrows, daggers, pump action, sticks, belts and whips are used to destroy lives and properties, rape women, cause injuries and panic, shutdown businesses, create internally displaced persons, molest, cause academic backwardness and fast-track the spread of STDs. However, efforts have been made by Armed Forces, Baale, elders, Joint Task Force, Civil Defence, Police, pastors, imams, school securities, etc to curb these crimes at varying points. The people suggested youth empowerment, jobs creation, harsh penalty, ranching, sensitization, true federalism and political education as means to curtail or possibly eliminate crimes in South Western region of Nigeria.

Table 1: Summary of crimes and their effects in selected parts of South-Western Nigeria

		LAGOS	OGUN	ONDO	OSUN	OYO	EKITI
1	Types of crime/ conflict	1. Kidnapping 2. Cultism 3. Land dispute 4. Oil bunkery 5. Vandalism	1. Burglary 2. Rape 3. Kidnapping 4. Oil bunkery 5. Robbery 6. Attack on government properties	1. Land dispute 2. Grazing dispute 3. Kabiosi (Chief) selection	1. Religious violence 2. Political violence 3. Boundary dispute 4. Tribal/communal crises	1. Niger-Delta Militants 2. Students protests 3. Obaship (Chieftaincy) 4. Strike 5. Cultism 6. Inter-tribal crises	1. Inter-tribal crises 2. Boundary dispute 3. Students unrest 4. Chieftaincy title crises 5. Grazing dispute
2	Reasons/ Causes	1. Sales of a single plot of land to multiple buyers 2. Ban on bunkery 3. Unemployment	1. Ban on bunkery 2. Resource control 3. Unemployment 4. Quick livelihood	1. Land ownership 2. Grazing colonies 3. Chieftaincy	1. Religious dispute 2. Hijab wearing in Public Schools 3. Political parties support	1. Islamizing the State 2. Poor amenities 3. Resource control 4. Chieftaincy title 5. Stream ownership	1. Land ownership 2. Poor amenities 3. Grazing colonies 4. Chieftaincy title
3	Weapons used	1. Guns 2. Bombs 3. Cutlass 4. Iron 5. Broken bottles 6. Axe 7. Stones	1. Guns 2. Machetes 3. Planks 4. Axe 5. Stones	1. Arrows 2. Stones 3. Charms 4. Daggers 5. Pump action 6. Guns	1. Guns 2. Cutlass 3. Stones	1. Guns 2. Bombs 3. Sticks 4. Belts 5. Whips 6. Cutlass 7. Stones	1. Cutlass 2. Axes 3. Broken bottles
4	Effects	1. Destruction of lives and properties	1. Panic 2. Business shutdown 3. Destruction of	1. Destruction of crops and farmlands	1. Ritual killings 2. Injuries 3. Loss of spouse/	1. IDPs 2. Killings 3. Injuries	1. Killings 2. Injuries 3. IDPs

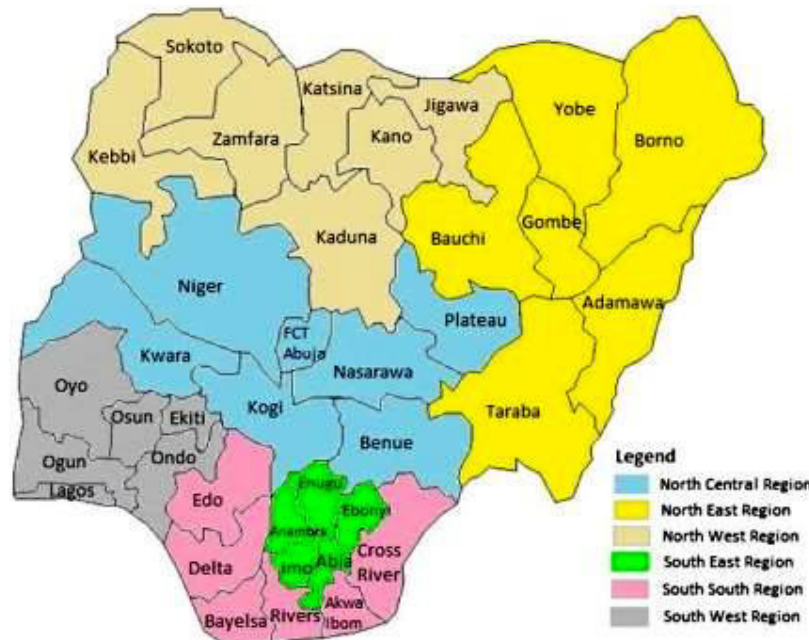
		2. Injuries 3. Rape	government properties 4. Spread of STDs	2. IDPs 3. Panic 4. Loss of spouse/ parents	parents	4. Molestation	4. Academic backwardness
5	Efforts to curb	1. Armed Forces troops 2. Baale 3. Elders	1. Baale of AkokaEbute 2. Army 3. Joint Taskforce	1. Town Hall Meetings 2. Chiefs/Elders	1. Pastors/Imams 2. Litigation 3. Political leaders 4. Establishment of curfews from 6PM	1. Civil Defense 2. FRSC 3. Police 4. School securities 5. Dialogue	1. Dialogue 2. Meetings with student
6	Suggested solution	1. Empowerment 2. Security 3. Jobs creation 4. Penalty 5. Youths re-orientation	1. Building of Military Barracks in the region 2. Jobs creation 3. True Federalism 4. Education 5. Sound health facilities	1. Ranching 2. Stakeholders meetings 3. Sensitization	1. Neutrality of public schools on dress code 2. punishment 3. No extremism 4. Make public offices less attractive	1. Meet students' demands 2. Jobs creation 3. Political education 4. Privatization of public schools	1. Sensitization 2. Ranching 3. Meet students' demands

Source: Authors' compilation (2018).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study made use of survey design. This study was conducted in the six (6) South Western States of Nigeria. The states are: Ekiti, Lagos, Osun, Ondo, Oyo and Ogun. Further, priority was given to major conflict zones of the aforementioned States. These zones include Ado, Ikorudu, Irewole, EzeOdo, Oluyole, and Ijebu East respectively. Using the random sampling technique, a total of Two Thousand, Six Hundred and Forty-Nine (2,649) samples were collected from six (6) states which constitute the Western part of Nigeria. However, based on population size and other factors surrounding these states, the sample was not distributed equally. Lagos had the highest sample size of 743, followed by Ogun with 530, Ondo had 387, Osun had 315, Oyo had 291 while Ekiti had the lowest sample of 283. Both primary and secondary data were collected and analyzed in this study. The descriptive statistics as well as the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation were utilized. For effectiveness and ease of understanding, the findings of the research are attached at the end of data analysis and presentation.

Fig. 1: Map of Nigeria showing South-Western States



Source: Olawale (2019).

3.1 Descriptive statistics for demographic data

From the descriptive statistics for demographic data in this study, the age distribution was as follows: 18-25 years were 511 (19.3%); 26-35 years were 813 (30.7%); 36-45 years were 815 (30.8%); 46 years and above were 510 (19.3%). Gender was as follows: male 1425 (53.7%); female 1224 (46.2%). Educational qualification was as follows: SSCE610 (23.0%); ND/NCE 611 (23.1%); B.Sc/HND 915 (34.5%); Masters Degree and above 513 (19.4%).

Table 2: Sum, Mean and Standard Deviation descriptive statistics for demographic data

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Age	2649	6622	2.50	1.011	-1.091	.095
Gender	2649	3873	1.46	.499	-1.978	.095
Marital Status	2649	5907	2.23	.932	-.693	.095
Educational Qualification	2649	6629	2.50	1.048	-1.189	.095
Valid N (listwise)	2649					

Source: Field work (2017)

4.0 FINDINGS/RESULTS

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for general questions

		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Q1	Kidnapping, oil bunkery and cultism constitute major crimes in Western Nigeria?	2.62	1.420	2649
Q2	Crimes and conflicts in Western Nigeria can be eradicated through adequate government policies and programmes to tackle poverty and unemployment?	2.58	1.422	2649
Q3	Western Nigeria has often been known for relative peace as compared to other regions of the Country	2.70	1.296	2649
Q4	Factors like agitation for resource control, religious fanaticism, bad governance and unemployment have led to increased crime and conflicts in Western Nigeria	2.46	1.278	2649
Q5	Does crime and conflicts cause economic stagnation in Western Nigeria?	2.66	1.388	2649
Q6	The incessant destruction of lives and properties has resulted in businesses shut down in Western Nigeria.	2.61	1.416	2649

Source: Field work (2017)

Table 4: Correlations

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Q1	Pearson Correlation	1	.608**	.755**	.164**	.268**	.022
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.268
	N	2649	2649	2649	2649	2649	2649
Q2	Pearson Correlation	.608**	1	.330**	.235**	-.071**	.398**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	2649	2649	2649	2649	2649	2649
Q3	Pearson Correlation	.755**	.330**	1	-.330**	.413**	-.168**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	2649	2649	2649	2649	2649	2649
Q4	Pearson Correlation	.164**	.235**	-.330**	1	-.124**	.394**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	2649	2649	2649	2649	2649	2649
Q5	Pearson Correlation	.268**	-.071**	.413**	-.124**	1	-.261**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	2649	2649	2649	2649	2649	2649
Q6	Pearson Correlation	.022	.398**	-.168**	.394**	-.261**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.268	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	2649	2649	2649	2649	2649	2649

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field work (2017)

4.1 Discussion

As regards the existence of crimes in Western Nigeria, the table 3 above reveals that the mean scores of crimes and Western Nigeria are 2.62 and 2.58 respectively, while their standard deviation stood at 1.420 and 1.422. Also, the relationship between the two variables produced a positive correlation co-efficient of .608 which shows a positive correlation between the two variables. The two-tailed tested correlation coefficient was .000 which is also significant at 0.01 level. Going by this, therefore, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. This shows clearly that crimes exist in South-Western Nigeria. Hence, the government has failed in its constitutional responsible of providing for the security needs of the people. This lends credence to the works of Duke & Etim (2018); Duke & Agbaji (2017) who posited that it

is the responsibility of government to provide for the security needs of its citizens and people doing business within the territorial boundary it govern, and any government that is incapable of providing security has failed. Hence, Nigerian government should take the issue of insecurity across the nation more serious than it is doing recently. When crimes are investigated, the people found guilty should be allowed to face the full wrath of the law, irrespective of their political, ethnic or religious affiliations. The concept of 'negotiation' with criminals can only fuel more crimes and never will it reduce crimes because when some criminals are granted their demands by either the government or other non-governmental bodies without making efforts to bring the perpetrators to book, deterrence is misplaced and more crimes are bound to be committed by same group and others with the intentions of maintaining the status quo or perhaps improving on it, to the detriment of innocent citizens who are supposed to be protected and defended by the security agencies of the country (Abumbe, Peter, Etim&Akah, 2018). Unlike other developed economies like USA, Russia, China, etc., Nigeria is yet to acquire the needed technologies and human resources to fight against crime, even after negotiating with a particular sect.

On the effects of unresponsive government on increased crime rate in Western Nigeria, the mean scores of unresponsive government and crimes are 2.70 and 2.64 respectively, while their standard stood at 1.296 and 1.278. Also, the relationship between the two variables produced a positive correlation co-efficient of .330 which shows a positive correlation between the two variables. The two-tailed tested correlation coefficient was .000 which is also significant at 0.01 level. Going by this, therefore, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. Previous studies by Duke and Etim showed the need for a more responsive government. They posited that the encouragement of social programmes can give the fight against crime a good start. According to them, programmes and activities that promote social contacts should be organized from time to time across states in the West and beyond. For example, the National Youth Service Corps has played a vital role in integrating a high level of mutual respect and togetherness among youths in Nigeria. Such programmes should be promoted and expanded and other related programmes should be introduced, especially for the uneducated (Duke &Etim, 2018). Football and other sports can go a long way in instilling the spirit of unity among communities and promote mutual respect. There should be sensitization of citizens on the benefits of peaceful co-existence and respect for others within the neighbourhood, irrespective of their tribe, language and religious affiliation (Duke, Ogbinyi&Etim, 2017). Religious leaders should be engaged in the fight against crimes and

conflicts in western Nigeria. They should preach the doctrine of unity to their teaming youths and encourage peaceful co-existence and love for fellow men (Duke, David &Etim, 2016)

On crimes and underdevelopment in Western Nigeria, the mean scores of crimes and underdevelopment are 2.66 and 2.61 respectively, while their standard stood at 1.388 and 1.416. Also, the relationship between the two variables produced a positive correlation coefficient of .261. The two-tailed tested correlation coefficient was .000 which is also significant at 0.01 level. Going by this, therefore, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. Crimes lead to underdevelopment and underdevelopment gives rise to crime. Hence, Nigerian government should look into the issue of oil monomania, as it seriously affects the growth and development of the nation as other revenue sectors like agriculture are left to suffer. This has generated a high level of poverty and hunger in the country and has contributed largely to crimes and conflict in South-Western Nigeria and many other parts of the country. Food is an essential need of the human and lack of adequate and nutritious food would lead to insecurity both physically and health-wise. The less privileged will definitely suffer more in the absence of adequate agricultural policies and food security (Etim, Odey& Duke, 2017; Etim, Duke &Ogbinyi, 2017).

Lastly, the agitation for resource control has been recurrent in many parts of the country. It's high time the Federal Government of Nigeria looked critically into the issues and proffers a lasting solution (Ekuri&Etim, 2017). This is because most of the crimes detected in the South-West were tied to resources and findings reveals that some of the criminals perceived injustice in the distribution process of this resources, hence, adopts a more violent approach to tapping and gaining their share of the resources. This is not healthy for a developing nation and the economy of Nigeria, because a judicious use of all the resources found in the country will drive development.

5. CONCLUSION

The thrust of this study was to identify the major causes and effects of crimes in South-Western Nigeria. It was discovered that the once peaceful region of the country has gradually become the crime capital, losing lives and properties worth millions on yearly basis to the recurrent cases of crimes. It was perplexing how successive governments have failed these areas in the discharge of their constitutional responsibility of providing for the security needs of the masses. This study concludes that if adequate measures to curb these crimes are not urgently taken, more lives will be lost, businesses will continue to foldup, investors will

withdraw their investments, poverty and hunger will take over and life will become more unbearable for the common man.

5.1 Recommendations

The recommendations in this study were drawn from the suggestions of affected persons in crime prone areas in South-Western Nigeria through their responses in the questionnaire administered. According to them, the following must be given adequate and urgent attention by the government, relevant stakeholders as well as international bodies that are interested in helping the region out of this menace; youth empowerment that is not politicized, job creation, youths re-orientation, resource control, building of more military barracks and check points in the region, elimination of extremism through sensitization programmes, meeting of students' demands and the strengthening of the Nigerian educational systems at all levels. Others include; political education, provision of ultra-modern health care facilities, public offices should be made less-attractive, and finally, there should be good ranching systems and laws to protect both herdsmen and farmers in the region.

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