

**FACTORS INFLUENCING VIOLENT CRIME
AMONG YOUTHS IN KATSINA-ALA LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA, BENUE STATE, NIGERIA**

BENUE JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY
Volume 9 Issue 2
ISSN: ISSN: 0386
Department of Sociology
Benue State University, Makurdi
Pg: 108 - 127

Mary Erdo Uya
Abigail Kumaden Ibeenegh
Elizabeth Ashide Achir
Benue State University, Makurdi

Abstract

This study examines factors influencing violent crime among youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area, Benue State, Nigeria. It specifically looks at the nature and rate, types, causes and effects of violent crime among youth in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area. The study adopted the survey research method. The instrument of data collection was questionnaire and key informant interview. Data was analysed using qualitative and quantitative methods. The findings of the study showed that the rate of violent crimes among youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area was high and the major violent crimes committed by youth were kidnapping, armed robbery, militia and banditry, terrorism, rape and sexual assault, killings, man slaughter among others. The causes of violent crimes as shown by the study included political factors, unemployment, poverty, conflict, insecurity, and illiteracy which affect the development of the area. The study recommended among others that Government should grant amnesty to militia youths in the area and provide training in order to reduce the rate of violent crimes among youths in the area.

Key Words: Violent Crime, Youths, Influence, Insecurity, Effect

Introduction

Violent crime among youths is rampant in Nigeria. Its occurrence and persistence have ostensibly undermined and threatened social security in

Corresponding Author:
Mary Erdo Uya
Tel: 07030875276

the country. Violent crime is a crime in which an offender or perpetrator uses violence or force on a victim. Violent crimes include murder, assault, sexual assault, rape, kidnapping, armed-robbery, terrorism, homicide, manslaughter, and lynching among others. The overall violent crime rate globally reported by the World Population Review (WPR, 2021) is 47.70 per cent. The violent crime rates vary significantly among countries, states and type of violent crime. Among the violent crimes recorded by the police forces in 2019, assaults, sexual violence and drug-related crimes reached the highest number in the last decade, while robbery, burglary and thefts reached the lowest number. For instance, according to the Global Study on Homicide, 464,000 people were estimated to have been victims of intentional homicide in 2017; an average global homicide rate of 6.1 victims per 100,000 population was estimated in 2017; about 90 per cent of all homicides recorded worldwide were committed by male perpetrators; men make up almost 80 per cent of all homicide victims recorded worldwide (National Population Commission, 2019).

In Sub-Saharan Africa in the post-2000 years for instance, violent crime increased from 125 per 100,000 populations in 2003 to 300 per 100,000 populations in 2015. Increase in violent crime is susceptible to various channels. The channels include kidnapping, insurgency and militants' operations, which is mostly triggered by civil violence and conflict generated from ethnic hatred and marginalization (Badiora, 2017). Various instances of civil violence noted across the region in Mali, Nigeria, Congo, South Africa and South Sudan respectively. Civil conflict and violence spread through the region became a challenge, as the number of battled-related death in 2014 stood at 3,793 in Nigeria, 1,674 in South Sudan and 1,103 in Somalia (UNDP 2006).

In Nigeria, crime statistics including violent crimes on reported offences reflected that a total of 134,663 cases were reported in 2017. Offence against property has the highest number of cases reported with 68,579 of such cases reported. Offence against persons recorded 53,641 cases reported while offence against lawful authority recorded the least with 12,443 cases recorded respectively. Lagos State has the highest percentage share of total cases reported with 50,975 (37.9%) cases recorded. Abia and Delta State followed closely with 12,408 (9.2%) and 7,150 (5.3%) cases recorded respectively. Kogi and Bauchi States followed

closely with 282 (0.20%) and 386(0.30%) cases recorded respectively. Kebbi State has the lowest percentage share of total cases reported with 205 (0.2%) cases recorded (Badiora, 2017).

In Benue State North Central Nigeria, there exist the problem of violent crime especially among the youths which has been hampering the development of the state economy and overall socio-political development. According to Shamija (2018), the most common violent crimes committed among youths in Benue State include those relating to politics such as rigging, political violence, armed robbery, rape, assault, culpable homicide and assassination among others. Crime statistics from Nigeria Police Command in Benue State from 2010-2015 indicated that a total of 9 persons were arrested for kidnapping, 84 persons for breach of public peace. Inferring from the police statistics on crime in Benue State pointed a glaring picture that most crimes relating to violent are not speedily given prompt attention. These have serious consequences for democracy, economic development, social capital and associational life generally.

In an attempt to fight the increasing waves of violent crime in Nigeria, the federal government has enacted the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2011, strengthened the Ministry of Defense with huge allocation of fund to fight insecurity in the 2013 and 2014 budget. Despite these, it appears the level of violent crime in the country is still high, and a confirmation of this is the low ranking of Nigeria in the Global Peace Index and the declaration of Nigeria as a terrorist Nation by US (National Bureau of Statistics NBS 2009).

. Based on the foregoing, the study evaluates factors influencing crimes among youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area, Benue State

Statement of the Research Problem

In recent times, there has been high rate of violent crimes in Katsina-Ala LGA, Benue State such as killings, armed robbery, militia crime, perpetrated by some youths which resulted to the destruction of lives and property, displacement of people from their ancestral homes, humanitarian crisis such as IDPs, food crisis, and closure of markets as well as business which appear to affect the economic and social life of the people in the area. In Katsina Ala Local Government Area for instance, popular chieftain, Chief Atoza Ihindan (Vanguardnewspaper 14th/07/2015) and Dr. Terkula Suswam were assassinated by unknown gunmen believed to be youths also,

on the 12th May, 2021, there was a discovery of a shallow grave containing dead bodies of people who were allegedly killed and buried by some youths who confessed to committing the violent crime (Thisdaynews, 12/05/2021). Similarly, some youths invaded the Katsina-Ala Police station with sophisticated weapons at about 2am Sunday in Toyota cars and motorcycles to free some of their members who were captured and detained at the station. At the exchange of the gun shots with the police officers, at least 14 of them were killed. Also, there have been rape cases and in relation, the militia activities of Gana and his company has brought about insecurity and untold hardship to the people of the area and society at large.

Some studies have been conducted by other researchers about violent crimes. For instance, Natarajan, (2016), on Rapid assessment of “eve teasing” (sexual harassment) of young women during the commute to college in India; Natarajan et al (2015), examined situational prevention and public transport crimes; Shamija (2018), sociologically appraise social problem of political crime in Benue State among political actors, the cause and trend of violent crimes in Katsina State of Nigeria. None of these studies was conducted on factors influencing violent crimes among youth in Benue State and Katsina-Ala in particular. Therefore, there is gap of information about factors influencing violent crimes among youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area, Benue State. It is from this perspective that, this study intends to examine the factors influencing violent crimes among youths in Katsina-Ala LGA, Benue State.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the causes of violent crimes among youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area. In view of this, the study intends to:

- i. Examine the nature and rate of violent crimes among youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area.
- ii. Assess the common violent crimes among youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area.
- iii. Ascertain the causes of violent crimes among youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area.
- iv. Assess the effects of violent crimes among youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area.

Theoretical Framework

Relative Deprivation Theory (RDT)

This study adopts the Relative deprivation theory (RDT). Relative deprivation theory is associated with Garry Runciman (1966), Ted Gurr (1970) and American sociologist Robert K. Merton. The major premise of relative deprivation theory is that individuals measure their subjective evaluation of financial and political position or other measurement of social examination and compare with others. Relative deprivation is more critical when predicting individuals' conduct, compared with "objective" measures of hardship, such as, poverty and inequality. Scholars contend that individuals will encounter relative deprivation when they need X, or see that comparatively others have X, and feel qualified to have X (Davis 1959), and individuals must think it is attainable to get X (Runciman 1966), while people do not have an awareness of other's expectations for their inability to have X (Crosby 1976). RDT refers to the disenchantment people feel when they compare their positions to others and realise that others in the group possess something that they do not (Chen 2015). When this feeling persists, it may lead to frustration, stress and aggression, which may result to violence.

Gurr (1970) indicates that violent crime among youth is normal if the general practices and legislative issues that authorise vicious responses to violence are enormous. In any given society, deprived youth are usually pushed to the edges of society (Lea and Young 1984). While, in response to their social, monetary and political deprivations, greater numbers of youth have momentarily entered the world of violence and created criminal sub-cultures that consequently wreak destruction on the security of lives and property. Gurr (1970) maintained that the perception of deprivation, marginalisation, and persecution of the individuals in a given community may lead to frustration and anger. He argues that people rebel because they were frustrated and angered by the enormity of the socio-economic and structural inequalities, which are inextricably entrenched in the fabrics of societies. From the theory, it can be argued that the major actors of violent crime in Katsina-Ala local government and other disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Nigeria usually lack legitimate means of achieving their goals and therefore result to engaging in different kinds of violence in order to achieve them.

Literature Review

Violent crime among youth has reached unprecedented proportions in contemporary discourse on Nigeria's emerging democracy. Beginning from May 29, 1999 when the county re-commenced democratic rule, Nigeria has recorded very bizarre experiences in the domain of violent crime committed by young people. According to Yangeve (2012, 12) these acts of criminality embrace murder, religious uprising, party clashes, cult clashes, shooting, stabbing, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, including armed bank robbery, theft, burglary, rape, rioting especially against government policies, vandalism, ethnic militancy, hostage taking of prominent citizens and expatriate of oil workers, oil bunkering, arms insurgency and burning of worship centers as well as other sundry criminal tendencies. These criminal acts pose serious threats in all ramifications to human development. Anum (2007, 34) opined that ethnic and religious militancy has been particularly associated with the violent activities of youth in the past years. Corroborating this view, Mngutyo (2007, 24) notes that youth constitute the bulk of ethnic and religious militias in the society. For instance, the Odudua People's Congress (OPC) is believed to be a youth militant arm of NADACO/Afenifere, a pan Yoruba national political association meant to oppose the military junta and press for the realization of the Yoruba mandate. The Egbesu Boys of Africa, as they are called, represents the militant wing of Ijaw youth groups which have engaged in series of hostage-taking of oil workers, oil bunkering and cult clashes in the Niger Delta region (Yangeve 2007, 19).

Youth violence on campuses of tertiary institutions and beyond has increasingly become a worrisome scenario for members of the public. Nigeria, with over one hundred and fifty tertiary institutions, has witnessed unprecedented violent behaviors occasioned by students who are mostly of youthful age involvement in campus cultism (Gboyega 2005, 69). Peace on campuses has been shattered due to this development of the violent crime. Blood-shedding arising from either murder or manslaughter has become pervasive. Over 33 students' lives were lost between 1986-1996 while more than 7 members of the academic staff were also killed (Gboyega 2005, 73). Duru (2012, 19) confirmed the death of two students of Fidel Polytechnic, Gboko Benue State North-Central Nigeria in a cult related crisis that

engulfed the institution. According to his report, two suspected cultists who were all youths had at 8pm stormed the home of two students of the polytechnic and shot one of them whose name was given as Akawa on the neck, thus killing him instantly. Confirming, the Deputy Police Public Relations Officer for Benue State, ASP Ejike Alaribe noted that Akawa died before he could receive medical attention. The report added that when the news of his death filtered into the institution, students mobilized themselves and went after the assailants. "They caught up with the two suspects who were identified as being responsible for the shooting, macheted one of them to death. The police however arrived at the scene of the incidence before they meted out jungle justice on the other" (2012, 19).

Factors Influencing Violent Crime among Youths

The factors influencing violent crime among youths are legion, ranging from individual to societal factors. These factors continue to multiply every day, just as the sophistication of the means through which the perpetrators thrive as this condemnable act appears to be ever changing. However, this appears to be a general consensus as youths tend to resort to crime due to a number of reasons as discussed below:

Parenting Style

According to Ityavyar (2000, 49), during the 20th century the family institution underwent many changes and as a result the typical family was lost. He asserted that industrialization played a larger role in these family changes. Jobs moved away from the home, especially for men in the beginning. This allowed for more responsibility in the home for the mother, as she had to take on the mother and father roles. In addition to this, sometimes the mother also had a job outside of the home as well, thus leaving children with babysitters and daycare. The problem that was presented with this was that, with globalization and advances in telecommunication, new opportunities and ideas were being presented to the child, ideas that the parents may not support and conflict would arise between parents and child. As a result, a child has more opportunity and it is more likely that the child will deviate from the rules set forth by the parents, and this conflict can also lead to the engagement of deviant behaviours outside of the home as well.

Socio-Economic Influence

According to Zumve (2005), the socio-economic organization of the Nigerian society is the root cause of youth crime. He contended that the Nigerian socio-economic relations are characterized by high level stratification, competition and exploitation. He added that the Nigerian capitalist economy creates a situation which warrants wealth accumulation and control of resources by a few individuals to the detriment of the masses who are the majority continually exploited and relegated or discriminated on the basis of social class relations. Thus concludes that the frustrations and dilemma or predicaments created by the unfavourable capitalist economic conditions like inflation, labour retrenchment (unemployment), has been the driving force for youth's involvement in criminality. Yangeve (2007, 19) opined that the phenomenon of economic hardship in Nigeria has been instrumental in the causality of youth crime. He maintained that labour entrenchment and lack of adequate employment opportunities which has a bearing on the economy are indeed fundamental factors in the explanation of the incessant involvement of Nigerian youths in violent crime, as majority of the people who commit crime rather do it in search for survival (Yecho2007,s35).

Partisan Politics

The arrival of partisan politics especially in the 21st century in Nigeria is another cause of youth criminality. Yangeve (2007, 20) finds that the political thuggery popularly known as "militia" is mostly common among youths. The 2011 general elections saw a lot of violence and murder because of the prevalent thuggery. According to Zumve (2005), some of these political delinquents popularly known as "militias", are most times sponsored by the rich politicians to aid their violation of the due process of electioneering. At the end, the thugs are left with the fire arms and they continue to use them for other purposes in order to survive. In a similar vein, Ubwa (2003) blamed the self-centered attitude of our political leaders, which is imperious and has driven so many youths to engage in ignoble criminal activities. He notes that "most of the violent crimes being committed by Nigerian youths are propelled by the nonchalant attitude of our leaders to provide jobs for youths." He claims this has resulted in cyber-crimes, prostitution, hawking and rituals, to mention but a few.

Methodology

This study adopts cross sectional research design. The study was conducted in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area with an estimated population of 165,100 (Population Projection, 2019). A combination of cluster random sampling and simple random sampling techniques was used in this study. The size of the study was drawn using Taro Yamane formula and statistically determined to be 400.

In order to have a comprehensive data about the topic under study, data was collected using structured questionnaire and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). A total number of 400 copies of questionnaire were distributed and 20 key informants were interviewed. However, only 376 copies of questionnaire were completed and returned. The analysis was based on the 376 respondents and 20 Key Informants. Key Informant interviews were carried out in order to gain a deeper understanding of the subject under study. The data collected for this study was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The quantitative data was presented in frequency distribution tables. The responses were reported in counts and percentages.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The following findings were drawn from the study.

The Nature of Violent Crimes among Youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria

The cutoff point of the mean was 2.50 therefore, the mean value of 2.50 above indicated acceptance why 2.50 indicated rejection. It was revealed that respondents have been hearing of youth's violent crime in the area for long. This was confirmed by the mean scores or 4.22 and standard deviation of .873. Cases of violent crime committed by youth were becoming more worrisome and higher in recent times, mean=2.55; violent crime in the area were done by youth with the mean score=3.98 and standard deviation=.609; Violent crime among youth is on the daily basis, mean score=3.74 and standard deviation .830. Majority of the of the people were direct victims of violent crime by youth, mean=4.29 and standard deviation. Even those who were not directly affected still knew of people who were being affected by

the violent crimes with the mean score=3.98 and standard deviation=.609. Girl-children were more victims of youth violent crime with the mean score=4.22, standard deviation=.873. The findings are presented in the table below:

Table 1: The nature of violent crime among youth in Katsina -Ala Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria

S/N	Variable	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	X	STDV
1	I have been hearing of youth violent crime in my area for long now	25(6.7)	178 (43.5)	8(1.98)	59(14.57)	133 (32.84)	4.22	.873
2	Cases of violent crime committed by youth are becoming more worrisome and higher in recent times	162(40.5)	197(49.3)	3(0.75)	23(5.75)	15(3.75)	2.55	.849
3	Violent crimes in my area are done by youth	209(52.3)	113(33.25)	2(0.5)	45(11.25)	31(7.75)	3.98	.609
4	Violent crimes among youths is on daily basis	251(62.75)	109(27.25)	1(0.25)	21(5.25)	18(4.5)	3.74	.830
5	I am a direct victim of violent crime by youth	269(67.25)	114(28.5)	-	10(2.5)	3(0.75)	4.29	.751
6	I only know of people who are being affected by the violent crimes	178(44.5)	193(48.25)	3(0.75)	21(5.25)	5(1.25)	3.98	.609
7	Girl-children are more victims of youth violent crime	203(50.75)	158(39.5)	4(1)	27(6.75)	8(2)	4.22	.873

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The findings above were collaborated by some of the key informant interviews in the area. According to a 69 years old male Key informant in Tighir council ward, who stated that:

Iferngee ken kpen tar wase u Katsina-Ala ne hengen je g a n d e , m a n k a m b y a e v - k y a i o r s h i n agumaialuerenkwaugh ne ye. Kera je kpa, or umachengu a akaa la cii ken umana, kpaka I kighir, nahan cii kpa, ken a yange a Karen ken ijime ne yo, gande u kighir, agum-aiornum ken afer a erenato-kposokposo, huaniyoljegande (KII, 2021)

As translated in English

Violent crime has become an order of the day in Katsina-Ala especially in recent days. Youth have engaged themselves in violent crimes. Man himself is violent in nature but has been under control, but these days it is no longer controllable (KII, 2021)

From the above highlights, it showed that, violent crimes in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area were majorly perpetrated by the youth in the area. A similar finding was reported by another Key Informant, who was head teacher by occupation. An Iwyyar person from Tongov division reported that:

Katsina-Ala Local Government was a peaceful area whereby everyone wanted to take shelter. However, in recent times, violent crime especially among the youths has become an order of the day in the area. This is because the youths want to drive big cars and live large, so, they have devised a way of getting what they want. It is very painful, but we have to accept it and learn to live with it (KII, 2021).

Similarly, a female respondent in the Katsina-Ala Local Government Area, aged 41 years old, who was a business woman from Mbanyam, Kyurav Tiev1 and a farmer reported that:

Violent crime has become a calamity that has befallen Katsina-Ala Local Government Area, especially in recent days, the youth has turned our community upside down because of the violent crime (KII, 2021).

Based on the findings above it was concluded that respondents were aware of the violent crime in the area, they have been hearing of youth violent crime and that violent crimes committed by youths are becoming more worrisome and higher in recent times.

Types of Violent Crimes in Katsina-Ala

The findings on the study on the types of violent crimes carried among out youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area, Benue State showed that kidnapping was accepted with the mean score of 3.74, and standard deviation was .830; another violent crime in the area was armed robbery, the mean score was 4.22 and standard deviation was .873, militia and banditry had the mean scores was 2,45 and standard deviation was .845, terrorism has the means core of 4.39 and the standard deviation was .548, rape and sexual assault had the mean scores of 4.43 and standard deviation was .495; killings had the means scores of 3.78 and the standard deviation was 1.178 while man slaughter had the mean score of 3.81 and standard devotion was .979. The findings were presented in the table below:

Table 2: Types of Violent Crimes in Katsina -Ala

S/N	Variable	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	X	STDV
1	Kidnapping	251(62.75)	109(27.25)	1(0.25)	21(5.25)	18(4.5)	3.74	.830
2	Armed-robbery	162(40.5)	197(49.25)	3(0.75)	23(5.75)	15(3.75)	4.22	.873
3	Militia/banditry	209(52.25)	113(33.3)	2(0.5)	45(11.25)	31(7.75)	2.45	.849
4	Terrorism	162(40.5)	174(43.5)	11(2.75)	28(7)	25(6.25)	4.39	.548
5	Rape, sexual assault	210(52.5)	156(39)	-	21(5.25)	13(3.25)	4.43	.495
6	Killings	198(49.5)	174(43.5)	3(0.75)	18(4.5)	7(1.75)	3.73	1.178
7	Man slaughter	183(45.75)	162(40.5)	-	33(8.25)	22(5.5)	3.81	.979

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The findings above were corroborating findings above, some of the Informants interview reported as captured below. In the words of a 41 years old Security personnel in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area,

The common types of violent crime in our area include killings of innocent souls. The killings started gradually, but now it has gone out of hands. There are cases of kidnapping, in the area. Recently, people were kidnapped, killed and buried in Katsina-Ala Local

Government Area. About more than six people were buried under a shallow grave in Katsina-Ala (KII, 2021)

Another Key informant aged 45 years old had this to say

Youth violent crimes take different forms; there are cases of armed robbery. They collect people's items, money and cars and at times, kill them. Youths today have become so disrespectful. They do not have respect for the laws of the land, neither do they have regard for the life and property of the people (KII, 2021).

Based on the findings above, it was concluded that, the types of crimes in Katsina-ala Local Government Area included killings, armed robbery, kidnapping, political thuggery, marital, rape and sexual assault.

Causes of violent crime among youth in Katsina-Ala Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria

The findings showed that, the causes of violent crime among youth in Katsina-Ala Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria, included political factors, mean score=3.74 and standard deviation=.830; unemployment, mean score=3.98 and standard deviation=4.29 and standard deviation=.751; poverty, means scores was 3.98 and standard deviation was .609; conflict, mean score= 4.22 and standard deviation was .873; insecurity, mean score=3.74; illiteracy, mean score=4.22 and standard deviation was .830, weak legal system had the mean score of 3.74 and standard deviation was .830; and large families and decline in family values had the mean score of 4.29 and standard deviation .751. The findings were presented in the table below:

Table 3: The causes of violent crime among youth in Katsina Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria

S/N	Variable	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	X	STDV
1	Political factors	251(62.75)	109(27.25)	1(0.25)	21(5.25)	18(4.5)	3.74	.830
2	Violent crime is caused by unemployment	269(67.25)	114(28.5)	-	10(2.5)	3(0.75)	4.29	.751
3	Poverty and economic factors	178(44.5)	193(48.25)	3(0.75)	21(5.25)	5(1.25)	3.98	.609
4	Violent crime is caused by conflict	203(50.75)	158(39.5)	4(1)	27(6.75)	8(2)	4.22	.873
5	Violent crime is caused by insecurity	198(49.5)	174(43.5)	3(0.75)	18(4.5)	7(1.75)	3.74	.830
6	Violent crime is caused by illiteracy	183(45.75)	162(40.5)	-	33(8.25)	22(5.5)	4.22	.873
7	Violent crime is caused by weak legal policies/system	251(62.75)	109(27.25)	1(0.25)	21(5.25)	18(4.5)	3.74	.830
8	Large family and decline in family values	269(67.25)	114(28.5)	-	10(2.5)	3(0.75)	4.29	.751

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Another respondent reported that

The major cause of crises in the Tiv nation is rooted in politics. Youths of today have become a tool for politicians to be used as political thugs to harass and kill people, and engage in various kinds of violent crime (KII, 2021).

Another respondent reported that

Unemployment accounts for most of the violent crimes perpetrated by youths today. The accelerating level of armed robbery, rape and all facets of violence can largely be attributed to the incidence of unemployment. Some of them are those who have the potentials for gainful employment but have been denied such opportunity. (KII, 2021).

The above findings showed that youth violence has ever since, remained a significant feature of youths in Katsina Local Government Area, but the situation has been worsening in the recent days.

Effects of Violent crime among youth in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria

The Effects of Violent crime among youth in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. The findings showed that, it dent the image and retard development as confirmed by the Mean score of 4.39 and standard deviation was .548, it causes death to the victims and loss billions of economic resources, the mean score was 4.43, standard deviation was .495, it leads to denial of educational opportunities with the mean score of 3.73 and standard deviation was 1.178; It causes mental trauma, the mean scores was 4.39 and standard deviation was a .495, it causes sexually transmitted infections, the mean score was 3.73 and standard deviation was 1.178, it affects the behaviour of the victim with the mean score of 3.81 and standard deviation was .979 and finally, created general fear with the mean score of 4.39 and standard deviation .548. The findings were summarized in the table below:

Area of Benue State, Nigeria

Variable	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	X	STDV
1 It dent the image and retard development	162(40.5)	174(43.5)	11(2.75)	28(7)	25(6.25)	4.39	.548
2 It causes death to the victims and loss billions of economic resources	210(52.5)	156(39)	-	21(5.25)	13(3.25)	4.43	.495
3 It leads to denial of educational opportunities	198(49.5)	174(43.5)	3(0.75)	18(4.5)	7(1.75)	3.73	1.178
4 It causes mental trauma	183(45.75)	162(40.5)	-	33(8.25)	22(5.5)	4.39	.548
5 It results to physical harm	23(5.75)	26(6.5)	4(1)	235(58.75)	112(28)	4.43	.495
6 It causes sexually transmitted infections	23(5.75)	26(6.5)	4(1)	235(58.75)	112(28)	3.73	1.178
7 Affects the behaviour of the victim	162(40.5)	197(49.25)	3(0.75)	23(5.75)	15(3.75)	3.81	.979
8 It creates fear to the general public and scare away invertors	162(40.5)	174(43.5)	11(2.75)	28(7)	25(6.25)	4.39	.548

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Data in table 4 were further corroborated with the responses of some Key Informants, who insisted on the effects of violent crime among youth in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. One the Key Informant lamented over the effects of violent crime among youth in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria that

The attitudes have forced many people to flee and leave their ancestral land, it has also caused fear in the lives of many people in our area. The attitude of youths has made many people to stop going to their farm lands, which caused poverty and hunger among our people (KII, 2021)

Another Key informant lamented that

It has affected the business activities in our area, traders do not feel safe to come and buy from our indigenous people. As a result, our perishable crops are wasted and for the fact we are predominately farmers, when we take our goods and products to the markets, we do not have buyers, so, it becomes difficult for us (KII, 2021).

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study showed that violent crimes among youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area was high and the major violent crimes committed by youths were kidnapping, armed robbery, militia and banditry, terrorism, rape and sexual assault, killings, man slaughter among others, and majority of the people are direct victims of these crimes. The findings were in line with that of Ajaegbu (2012) who also notes that the rise in violent crime committed by youth is a sign of "gap" in the society. According to him, the society already has expectations for individuals and established means of achieving them; however, when the means are limited the youth are forced to achieve the goals through illegal means to fulfill societal expectations.

On the types of violent crimes that are committed by the youth, the findings showed that kidnapping, armed robbery, militia and banditry, terrorism, rape and sexual assault, killings, man slaughter were the types of

crime that were carried in the area. Kidnappings have become a very lucrative business as perceived by those who engage on it across the country. The unemployed youth are available for recruitment into various terrible gangs including political thuggery.

The causes of violent crimes among youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area included political factors, unemployment, poverty, conflict, insecurity, illiteracy, weak legal system and large family size. Ali (2013), noted that the causes of the increasing level of violent crime in Nigeria can arguably said to have been linked to failure of Nigeria leadership to deliver good governance and secure the welfare of the citizenry on the principles of freedom, equality, and justice. The ruling elites in Nigeria in both the military and democratic dispensation are dependent, parasitic, and very corrupt in nature, and mal-administration. Unemployment accounts for most of the social crimes perpetrated by youth in the Nigerian society today. Other factors such as lack of parental control and inadequate parental supervision arising from family instability has been adduced as a risk factor for violent crime.

On the effects of violent crimes among youths in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area, it was found that the act has painted a bad image of the local government, caused death, denial of educational opportunities and caused mental trauma to children. It also showed that violent crimes have caused physical harm, sexually transmitted infections, and created fear to the general public. Similar previous findings were made by other scholars. Emejulu (2014), examined the effect of rising youth unemployment and violent crime in Nigeria: implications for economic development. The study found that violent crimes were strongly related to high rate of youth unemployment in the country and that violent crime has negative implications for business expansion and economic development.

Conclusion

Youth violent crime has been an issue of concern in Katsina-Ala Local Government Local Government Area, Benue State. In view of the findings, the study concluded that, there was high rate of youth violent crime in the study Area. It showed that kidnapping, armed robbery, militia and banditry, terrorism, rape and sexual assault, killings, man slaughter were the types of crime were found in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area. The existence of

violent crime the area has resulted to killings, destruction of live and property, closure of commercial and educational facilities, physical and psychological harm and it dented the image of Katsina-Ala Local Government Area, Benue State.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should grant amnesty to militia youths in the area in order to reduce the rate of violent crime among you in the area.
2. Government should ensure the provision of employment opportunities to the youth in the area so that the rate of unemployment will be reduced and youth will be gainfully employed.
3. There is need for the provision of quality and skills education so that, after graduation the youth will have necessary skills to be self-employed.
4. Provision of more security in the area in order to strengthen the level of security in the area and reduce youth violent crime in the area.
5. Families should also give proper socialization to their children in order to ensure that they are well adjusted in conformity with the norms of the society and shun violent crime.
6. Politicians should stop providing arms to the youth to use them as thugs.

References

- Ajaegbu, O.O. (2012). Rising youth unemployment and violent crimes in Nigeria. *America Journal of Social Issues and Humanities*, 2(5), 315-321
- Ali, M. (2013). You-Ms' unemployment and crime control: An analysis of Nigeria experience. *European Scientific Journal* 10(2): 301-12.<http://eujournal.org/index.php/esy/article/view/2596>
- Angeve, A. (2012). "Criminal victimization and the reporting of crimes in Makurdi metropolis: towards incorporating the victim in the analysis of crime phenomenon." Unpublished M.Sc. Dissertation. Nigeria: Benue State University
- Anum, O.J. (2007). "Settler phenomenon and communal land dispute in postcolonial Nigeria." Unpublished Bachelor's thesis. Nigeria: Benue State University

- Badiora, A. I. (2017). Civil unrest, insurgences and the challenges of community displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa: a silhouette of selected states in Nigeria. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, 12(2), 302–318
- Chen, X. (2015). *Status concern and relative deprivation in China: measures, empirical evidence, and economic and policy implications*. Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA) Discussion Paper No. 9519 November 2015. Accessed from <http://ftp.iza.org/dp9519.pdf> on the 16th of July, 2016
- Crosby, F. (1976). A model of egoistic relative deprivation. *Psychological Review*, 83, 85-113
- Davis, J.A. (1959). A formal interpretation of the theory of relative deprivation. *Sociometry*, chop 22, 280-296
- Duru, P. (2012). "Two students of Fidel polytechnic killed in cult violence." *Vanguard*, 30 June, p.19
- Emejulu, G. (2014). Rising Youth unemployment and Violent Crime in Nigeria: for Economic Development. *An Unpublished Ph.D Similar Paper, Development of business Administration, faculty of Management Sciences Anambra State University Igbariam Campus*
- Gurr, T.R. (1970). *Why men rebel?* Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Gboyega, I. (2005). "Cultism and violent behaviours in tertiary institutions in Nigeria." *Nigeria Journal of Educational Research*, 17(1), 66-79
- Ityavyar, D.A. (2000). "The contribution of Nigerian youths to nation building." Paper presented at the Nasarawa State Youth Festival on youth and national development organized by the Nasarawa State Ministry of Youth, Sports and social development, Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria at Lafia Township Stadium, Lafia Nasarawa State, October 31-November 1, 2000
- Lea, J. & Young, J. (1984). *What is to be done about law and order?* Harmondsworth: Penguin. London Evening Standard
- Mnguty, J.I. (2007). "Youth crime and national development." Unpublished Bachelor's thesis. Nigeria: Benue State University
- Merton, R.K. (1956). *Social theory and social structure*. New York: Free Press
- National Population Commission (20019). *Priority Tables Volume 1*, Abuja: National population Commission

- Natarajan, M. (2016). Rapid assessment of "eve teasing" (sexual harassment) of young women during the commute to college in India. *Crime Science* 5 (1) University of New York
- Natarajan M. Schmuhl, M., Sudulo S., and Mandala, M. (2017). Sexual victimization of college students in public transport environments: A whole journey approach. *Crime prevention and community study*, 19, 168-182
- National Bureau of Statistics (2009). *Social Statistics in Nigeria*, Abuja: The NBS publication. Retrieved from www.Nigerianstat.com.ng
- Police uncover Mass Grave in Benue, Aresst Two suspects" <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/05/12>
- Report of the United Nations office on violent crime and criminal justice statistics (2019). <http://www.unodc.org/unpde/en/data.and-analysis/statistics/crime/cts-data-collection.html>
- Shaminja, T. (2018). Sociological appraisal of political crimes among political actors in Benue State. *Asian Journal of Agricultural Extension, Economic and Sociology*, 28 (4):1-7
- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2016). *Human Development Report: Human Development for Everyone*, 36
- Ubwa, H.A. (2003). "Victims of crime and strategies of crime control in Nigeria." *Nigerian Sociological Review, Journal of the Nigerian Sociological Society*, 1(1), 93-102
- UNDP, (UN Development Programme). (2006). *Youth and violent conflict: Society and development in crisis*" New York UNDP
- Yecho, J.I. (2007). "Introduction to criminology." Unpublished Lecture Notes. Nigeria: Department of Sociology, Benue State University
- Zumve, S.I. (2005). "Youth crime in contemporary Nigeria: a social structure analysis in the social analyst." *Journal of Nigerian Sociology and Anthropology Students Association*, 4(1), 23-28
- "World Population Review and UN projection" Our World in Data. Retrieved/November 2021
- "14 arrested over assassination of Benue PDP chieftain chief Atozalhindan in Katsina Ala Local Government Area of Benue State" <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/07/14>