

An Investigation of Security and Crime Management in Developing Society: The Implications for Nigeria Democratic Set-Up

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Abstract

Crime is a universally phenomenon that is threatening the security of various countries in varying degrees. The causes of criminal activities also vary from one nation to another. In Nigeria, political and business crime rate is on the increase almost on a daily basis, and it is difficult to point figures at the direction of the twin evils that left the country prostrate economically, politically, and socially. The objectives of this paper are to examine the various criminal activities in Nigeria and identify what can be done to minimize its spread in order to safeguard Nigerian Democracy from total collapse. The paper concludes that since crime has become endemic in Nigeria System such that there is hardly anything that could be done without gratification. Government and decision makers must therefore genuinely as matter of policy shift its thinking about crime and punishment and turn its focus to crime prevention, addressing the root causes of crime such as lack of employment which rampant among the youth, and devoting our resources to community building, education, and workforce development that provides jobs at a living wage because the future of Nigeria and our democracy depends on them. It must also direct its policy-programme toward maintaining social and economic

development in the rural areas and enhance effective management of the urban areas. This will be achieved if government empowers the rural dwellers to produce more food because stomach security is crucial to national security. This will not only protect our ways of life and our democratic dispensation, but also for other developing society to emulate.

Keywords: Crime, Democratic dispensation, Policy-Shift, Policy-Programme, and National Security.

Introduction

Crime is a universal phenomenon and differs only in degree among the various nations of the world. The Nigerian crime – problem is multidimensional and is capable of undermining its corporate existence as well as efforts towards sustainable development. The Nigeria corporate existence can be undermined by a number of factors among which is an escalating and uncontrolled crime problem Tanimu (2006). Security and crime have been deeply rooted in the political history of this country, particularly in recent time, which has emerged as a key concept in Nigeria's struggle for good governance, sustainable democracy and development.

The emergence of the Nigerian Nation into a modern cosmopolitan society in which the citizenry will be free at least economically was the dream of our Nationalists who wrestled sovereignty from the colonialist. With the struggle, came political independence on 1st October 1960, for the Nigerian state and its constituent ethnic Nationalities. With independence, Nigerians acquired the sole right to control their affairs. Nigerians were no more at the political and economic ruling of her imperial majesty. The hopes were high for the attainment of economic greatness given the enormous population and its diversity, the Nationalists had vision.

Before long after independence, it seemed the heavens were opened up for Nigeria with abundant export crops, crude oil was discovered in commercial quantity in various shores of the nation, this was named "The Black Gold". The land was overflowing with riches from oil as if to alleviate the effect of the human and material plunder (act of robbery) visited on Nigeria and the entire Africa by the European colonialists and the other vandal hordes (destroyer). Nigeria looked like a virgin island and truly as at then Virgin Island it was; untapped! The advent of a seemingly buoyant and prosperous post independent Nigeria ushered in an equally growing public sector to compliment the efforts of those established by the colonialists. This developing public sector was meant to cater for the badly needed utilities and infrastructure as urbanization took the center stage as at that time. Ministries and Extra- ministerial Departments were established to support government at the centre and in the states to achieve the objectives of governance.

Be that as it may, it is no exaggeration to say that the worst enemies of our society in present times are fraud, corruption and other criminal activities in all their aspects. Mismanagement and tribalism might have put Nigerians in their present predicament, but it cannot be doubted that fraud, corruption and other criminal activities in the public sector is playing an even greater role in this regard.

It is an obvious correct assertion that more money is stolen in or through the public sector by means of fraud with the pen rather than with physical extortion of money or other vices that is, straightforward theft or robbery. The turn which corruption has taken in the public sector even among our so- called leaders, calls for incessant prayers. Take for example, just of recent in the year 2007, it was reported of senator Iyabo-Obasanjo Bello, of being involved in a contract scam worth the sum of Three Billion, Five Hundred Thousand Naira (₦3.5 Billion), (The Nations Dec 29,2007.pg

13). Also the alleged renovation and furnishing contract scam of the speaker for the House of Representatives and her Deputy, Senator Patricia Etteh and Alhaji Babangida Nguroje, put at the whopping sum of ₦628 Million (The Nations Dec 29, 2007).

Furthermore, the alleged money laundering by the Bayelsa State governor Chief Alameisigha is another issue that boils in the stomach of the Nigeria economy. This phenomenon of crime has permeated the basic structure of the Nigerian society, it has become prominent, and it has resulted in distorted orientation and other pervasive tendencies fill or excessive in our system. Criminal activities have made mockery of Nigeria and its people. Consequently, the rich Nigeria has become a beggar Nation.

Looking at the pathetic scenario above, one would be tempted to believe that there was no effort on the part of the government who are the custodian of these public sector institutions to check criminal activities. In Nigeria today, most of the public sectors are crime and corruption ridden, Nigerians and non-Nigerians are increasingly finding it difficult to transmit genuine business with our public sector because of the extortionate tendencies of the operators of the system (Agbaye 2000). This is one of the major reasons why crime has become endemic in our system such that there is hardly anything that could be done both officially and unofficially without gratification. Crime has seriously comprised the administrative competence, tendering procedure, costing techniques and probity of the entire government of our public life.

THE CONCEPT OF CRIME AND SECURITY

Odekunle (1981) posted that property and property – related crimes have consistently dominated Nigeria’s crime scene. He maintained that in the light of the worsening crime situation, and the ineffectiveness of the crime control apparatuses, Nigeria can be deemed to have a crime problem. The management of crime is essentially aimed at the efficient and effective engagement of such core issues that drive and shape it. According to Saliu (1997) security is a concept in its traditional conception which means absence of physical threats. Security was essentially predicted in military rationalisations. Hence forth, military capability of a state, measured in term of its combat readiness, sophistication of weapons in its arsenal, number of military personnel, etc were considered as pivotal to the security of a state. It is therefore, seen to be primarily concerned with the “preservation of independence and sovereignty of nation – state” Omede (2005).

The development in societies with particular references to westernization has not helped matters; instead, it has been destructive to the social and cultural values of the society. Reasons for the increase in crime in Nigeria include urbanization which is spreading more widely and rapidly than improvement in the social and economic condition.

Crime is a huge threat to public safety. It causes great personal suffering, vast material damage, and place enormous burden on the urban social net work. Globally, every five years, 60% of city inhabitants have been victims of one type of crime or another while over half of these crimes have involved personal crime (arson, fraudulence, cheating, 419 syndrome, forgery, etc)

It has been noted that Nigerian cities are conducive areas for criminal activities because it provides the anonymity needed for personal crime as well as environment for a specialized and organized underworld. Theft, fraudulence, arson, forgery and other criminal activities become a means of survival.

In recent time Nigeria has become worried and disturbed by the menace of crime. A report revealed a “training school” for armed robbers at Ajegunle area of Lagos. The said training school according to that report includes planning strategies of cooperation, launching an attack and escaping with loots. Their ages range between eighteen and twenty – eight years. The ‘training school’ also conduct interview for the recruit. It was also revealed that the training school was where the bandits prepare programmes on which area to raid and plan how to operate different types of fire arms and ammunition. Suspects were nabbed during their morning training session where they were working out modalities on a number of houses to be raided for the week. (Daily Sketch 1990). The above scenario signifies serious danger in our cities.

SECURITY, VIOLENCE AND NIGERIAN DEMOCRACY

Without mincing words the violence perpetrated in some part of countries in recent time constitutes public order crimes. Security is very importance for all human being regardless of one’s status in the country. This will not be guarantee if the security sector is greedy and corrupt.

More also, poverty reduction and development of democracy in this country will be better enhancing when the security of the citizen is guaranteed. It has been noted that the cost of crime and its control is equivalent to 5% GDP in the developed world, the figure rises to about 14% in developing nation (ICPC 1999).

Lack of security affects the welfare of poor and rich people. It can cause injury and death, reduce family income and generate a climate of fear (DFID 2000).

The demand for weapons is often symptomatic of the underdevelopment of society. Poverty, economic stagnation or declines, unequal access to rights and resources, the absence of effective welfare infrastructure, the collapse of law, exposure of crime; all generate instability and vulnerability to conflict (DFID 2000).

Weapon possession and misuse may begin as a symptom of underdevelopment, but can quickly become an impediment to development, security and democracy. Where governments are unable to control small arms and to provide credible guarantees of security, then post – conflict reconstruction and political, social and economic development are rapidly undermined (DFID 2000). The following are the various types of violence threatened state security and democracy (Fayeye 2001).

- A. Direct Violence – including deliberate injury to the integrity of human life. The act involves homicide, murder, and massacre.
- B. Brutal Acts Against the civil Society – This is inform of torture; rape and maltreatment.
- C. Restriction and Physical Constraints – This usually reduce the population, e.g Kidnapping, Imprisonment forced Labour.
- D. Indirect Violence – Such as non – assistance to human beings (citizen – the elderly, children, etc) in danger.
- E. Mediated Violence – Such as dangerous medication of the nature and social environment of the opposing ethnic group.
- F. Repressive Violence – deprivation of the fundamental rights, derail of participation in political activities due to threat of attack and lack of protection of property.

Before the issue of crime and its impact on security in a democratic society can be addressed, the first step must be to establish a better understanding of crime and preventative solutions. It has been argued that the levels of crime in the community can be reduced by the construction of social capital

(Paxton, 2002), increases in informal social control (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997), and the creation of forms of community justice (Clear and Karp, 1999) and community policing (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1993). Social capital is created when relations among people change in ways that can facilitate collective action (Coleman, 1988). The immediate security issues should be treated as a specialised mission that requires specialised capabilities and training to support democracy rather than stretching policing and the military to fill this gap. In democratic situations, safety and security are major concerns. Increased levels of crime, violence and disorder associated with democratic environments may exceed the ability of the police to maintain order, particularly if the police are expected to reform in-line with human rights, democratic values and citizen safety. Wiatrowski, Nathan, and Pritchard (2008).

METHODOLOGY

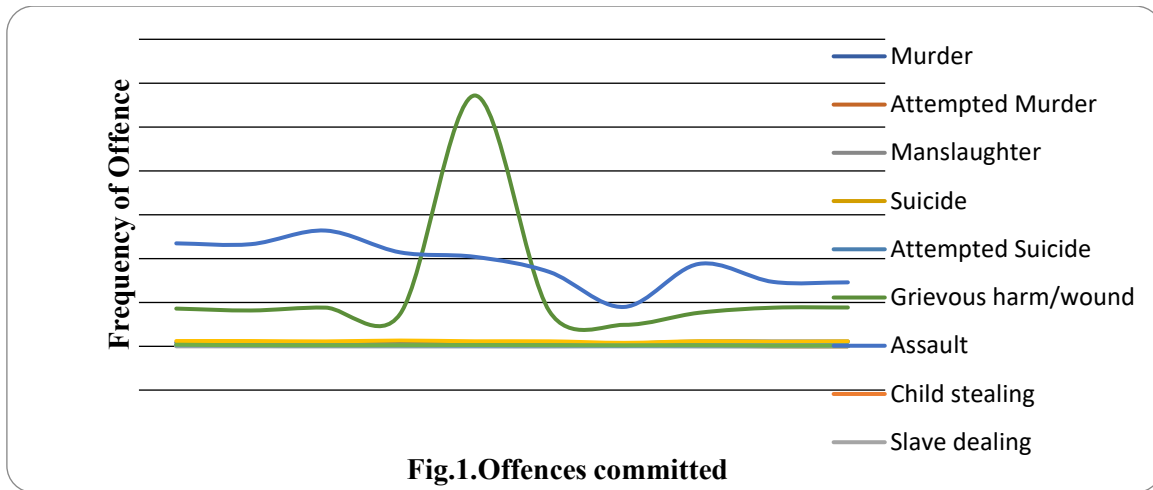
The methodology for this investigation was based on secondary data which was collected from The Nigeria Police Command, Zone Eleven, Osun State, Nigeria as contained in table 1 below. The selection of the sample was based on convenient sample technique. The data was analysed with Line graph to shows the degree of various offences.

FINDING AND RESULTS

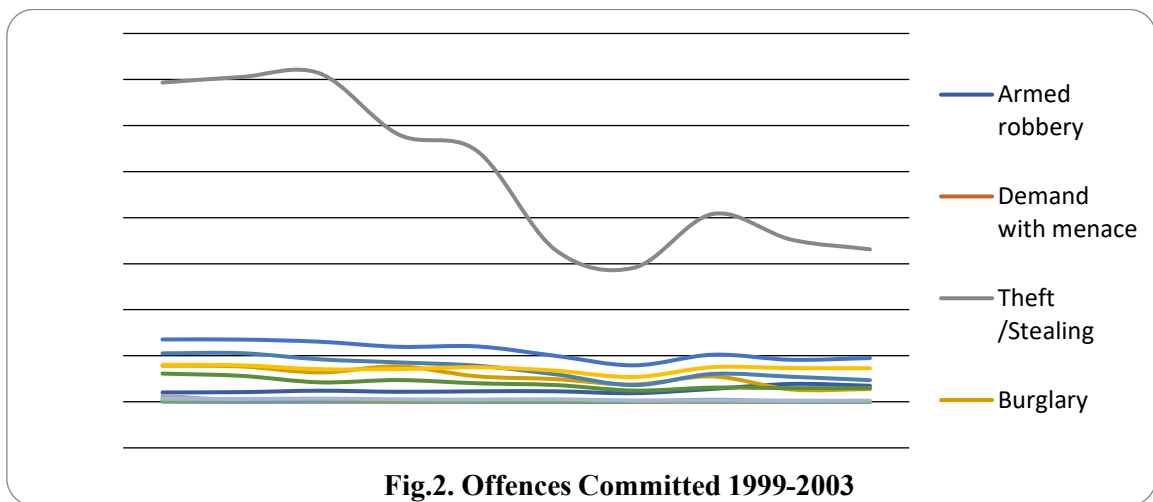
Table 1: Summary of Reported Crime Cases in Nigeria 1994-2003.

Source: The Nigeria Police Command, Zone Eleven, Osun State, Nigeria.

Offence	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Murder	1629	1585	1561	1730	1670	1645	1255	2120	2117	2136
Attempted Murder	259	321	307	250	248	220	76	253	267	233
Manslaughter	20	25	21	18	27	14	101	14	13	6
Suicide	200	229	238	272	313	323	146	241	152	191
Attempted Suicide	291	120	77	58	43	30	41	27	29	38
Grievous harm/wound	17167	16300	17605	14720	114362	15931	9756	15241	17580	17666
Assault	46924	46543	52747	42815	40764	33881	17909	37531	29329	29125
Child stealing	131	175	146	303	107	147	101	116	55	39
Slave dealing	33	16	7	17	11	21	11	45	17	18
Rape/Indecent	2364	2364	2198	2585	2249	2241	1529	2284	2084	2253
Kidnapping	461	415	373	377	282	342	243	349	337	410
Aberration Offence	685	462	419	435	516	456	376	434	277	306
Armed robbery	2044	2109	2419	2181	2286	2291	1877	2809	3889	3497
Demand with menace	777	243	88	128	112	63	133	122	88	80
Theft /Stealing	69341	70542	71338	58095	54506	32974	29127	40796	35231	33124
Burglary	7858	7690	6390	7706	5548	4928	3768	5523	2683	2769
House breaking	10532	10568	9237	8562	7847	5979	3636	6059	5448	4706
Store breaking	6137	5646	4235	4729	4036	3643	2446	3089	2973	2990
False Pretext Cheating	13546	13524	13057	11950	12037	9996	7927	10234	9134	9508
Coining Offence	100	8	10	14	14	7	4	32	6	16
Gambling	1308	319	250	203	158	264	189	263	228	148
Breach of Public peace	8052	7926	7097	7100	7519	6765	5395	7532	7324	7298
Perjury	61	22	153	97	20	12	16	455	17	50
Bribery & Corruption	224	390	579	100	138	75	48	57	43	36
Escape from lawful custody	672	629	712	543	484	552	294	312	229	272
Total	190816	188171	91264	164988	255297	22800	86404	135938	119550	116915



Source: Authors' field survey 2011.



Source: Source: Authors' field survey 2011.

Table 1 above shows that some of the crime cases vary significantly from year to year in the country. The table was converted into charts for easier understanding of most series of offences committed in the study area within ten years (1994-2003). This shows that a lot is still have to been done by the decision makers in the country on the way to reduce the various criminal activities as shown in the above table in order to guarantee the security of the citizenry in the country. A country where the security of the citizen is not guarantee the future of democracy in that country is at stake.

Within the last two decades of the 20th Century in Nigeria, crime rate was at its peak, crime and fraud became 'officially' endorsed as a way of life, those at the helm of affairs became deeply engrossed in the vices. The result today is that nearly every aspect of our life has gone rotten and stinks. The causes of criminal activities also vary from one nation to another. In Nigeria, political and business crime rate are on the increase almost on a daily basis, and it is difficult to point figures at the direction of the twin evils that left the country prostrate economically, politically, and socially. Crime in this paper means the corrosive influence in the social and interactive basis of life which itself is unethical for harmonious coexistence of individual as both social entities and corporate agents in the society. In a political and market economy like Nigeria, there is no distinction between political crime and business crime because they are two sides of the same coin, and more often the latter betrays the former.

The crime problems in Nigeria can be described as a political one. This paper is of the opinion that the issue of crime in a nation is a manifestation of the lack of political will on the part of the sovereign and the failure of the government to maintain law and order. Hence, business crime is a symptom of the failure to grapple with political crime, which raises questions on the moral uprightness of the country to exist or on the political will of the leadership to pilot the affairs of the state. It must be noted that where there is no political crime is where the country operates under a high moral law and upholds, protects and enforces the rules of law on itself and its citizenry. Dukor (2006) argued that where there is rule of law and justice, the state machinery works for the benefit of all and there will be no graft, inflation of contracts, embezzlement, and diversion of monies in banks, industries and forgeries. Henceforth, understanding political crime is the only logical way of tackling the menace of business crime.

According to Soeze, (2006) crime arises because of the changes in African values. Before colonialism, people were respected based on good characters. Recently, people are highly respected because of the money they have, the houses they own and their big cars, not for their good characteristics. People of good character but not back up with money are no longer respected as before. As a result of this many people preferred to be rich in order to command respect from the society through criminal means. In general, criminals commit crimes for all kinds of reasons or motives. Their continued involvement in criminal activities is probably due to their belief that they will be able to get away without being suspected, apprehended or even identified.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the major impediments of growth and democratic development particular in the developing countries is crime perpetration. Crime in our society is so rampant that no day is passed that one will not read in our dailies some reported cases of crime which is becoming part of our way of life. This is therefore threatening the security of the nation and that of individual.

The effective and efficient anti-corruption crusade should be established by the current administration and empowering of journalists to play a dominant role in investigating and reporting criminal activities at minimum cost.

The way of life of Nigerians is crucial for a progressive development. There are myriads of crime problems that can hinder both economic development and Nigerian democracy if it is not adequately checked.

Democracy and security in Nigeria are threatened by the spare of criminal activities. It is incumbent on the people at the various helms of affairs to ensure that the criminal activities is reduced and adequately managed to safeguard the Nigerian democracy.

Government intervention in the provision of infrastructure and other basic amenities that would make life more meaningful should be encouraged. These infrastructures should be evenly distributed in order to reduce people agitation. Government must also make it as matter of policy to shift its thinking about crime and punishment and turn its focus to crime prevention, addressing the root causes of crime such as lack of employment which rampant among the youth, and devoting our resources to community building, education, and workforce development that provides jobs at a living wage because the future of Nigeria and our democracy depends on them.

More also, criminal activities in this country will be better managed if the social institutions teach what they are supposed to teach and preach. Academic institutions must also function as agencies of positive socialization rather than exposing and polluting the mind of the youth. A lot of time is being wasted in teaching foreign values which are counter – productive to the youth. The family

institution, which is the first agent of socialization, has also contributed to the high rate of crime particularly among the youth. This institution must also play its role by monitoring all the people in the family particularly the youth. The entire society must shun all values that encourage criminal activities.

Government should give more power to some the agencies in charge of crime and give them free hand to operate with little or no interference. It should strictly and adversely implement and stick to measures/policies like that of the Independent Corrupt Practice Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and also National Agency for Food Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), crime will be ostracized and culprits will be brought to book and punish accordingly.

Another policy recommendation is that there should be radical and ethical re orientation of our leaders. Nigerian leaders should be made to know that leadership is about service to the people and not for selfish interest. Finally, a hungry man is an angry man. This best describes the role of adequate and affordable food for Nigerians. This will be achieved if government empowers the rural dwellers to produce more food because stomach security is crucial to national security.

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