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**ANALYSIS OF KIDNAPPING AS A SOCIETAL PROBLEM: IMPLICATION FOR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN KADUNA STATE.**

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**ABSTRACT**

Kidnapping has become a menace in our contemporary society and education system in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Kaduna State has been seen as one of the horrible state in the North-West Geopolitical location because of wide spread injustice, violence, banditry, cattle herdsmen, terrorism and insecurity. This paper notes that the rate of kidnapping in Kaduna State has been increasing of such that more than 200 innocent souls including the Bethel Baptist High School, Damishi Chikun Local Government, Students of Federal College of forestry Mando were kidnapped between 2020-2021. While some of these victims were rescued after paying huge amount of money as ransom, some of them were able to escape after being tortured or raped and others were incarcerated to die of hunger. This paper notes that as a result of injustice and corruption, kidnapping has now become the most lucrative job that can change an individual from pennilessness to riches in a twinkle of an eye. The paper concludes that the blight of kidnapping in Kaduna state continues to aggravates due t the gravity of corruption and unemployment that rendered many skillful graduate to become jobless. The paper also recommended that the government should provides job for the unemployed youths and Nigerian criminal justice system should expedite action in the prosecution of any person accused of kidnapping for justice delayed is justice denied. This will go a long way towards discouraging offenders from relapsing into kidnapping and also deter potential Kidnappers.

**Key Words;** *Banditry, Blight of Kidnapping, Abduction, Violence, Terrorism, Cattle herdsmen, Ransom, Unemployment, Insecurity.*

## Introduction

Nigeria as a country has witnessed unprecedented agitations in the forms of kidnapping and abduction, armed robberies, bombing, and carnages of all forms and magnitude in the past decade and a half. Meanwhile, available data on the level and dimensions of insecurity in Nigeria reveals an increase over time which constitutes serious threat to lives and properties; hinders business activities and discourages local and foreign investors, all of which stifle and retard Nigeria's socio-economic growth and development.

Kidnapping has grown over the years as a thriving industry involving every level of the society and motivated by unlimited reasons. However, it has been difficult and problematic to define the phenomenon of Kidnapping because the word is difficult to define and could only be attempted in relation to a country's legal and moral perspectives as well as the availability of various forms of Kidnapping such as hostage-taking and hijacking (Okoye, 2016)

Kidnapping takes innumerable forms but the growing pervasiveness of kidnapping crimes and growing brutality has made the issue an important one for the international community (Jesse, 2016). Always traumatic to the immediate victims, their families, friends and colleagues, kidnapping has grown into a criminal industry in some parts of the world increasingly used by terrorist organizations to gain influence, funding and slave. Kidnapping occurs when a person is abducted and taken from one place to another against their will or a situation in which a person is confined to a controlled space without the confinement being from a legal authority. Consequently, when the transportation or confinement of the person is done for an unlawful purpose, such as for ransom or for the purpose of committing another crime, the act becomes criminal. Uzorma and Nwanegbo, (2014) is of his opinion that, contrary to the accretion of Mohammed (2008) who traces the concept of kidnapping to 'have originated around 1682, Turner (1998) argues that the menace of kidnapping originated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in England where children were kidnapped and sold as slaves or agricultural workers to colonial farmers. Odoh (2010) confirms that the current wave of kidnapping in Nigeria began with the abduction of expatriate oil workers by the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND), a youth group in late 2005 as a means of alerting the world of the many years of injustice, exploitation, marginalization and underdevelopment of the Niger-Delta region. Despite the fact that kidnapping is as old as human history, yet its widespread today is quite alarming and calls for proactive solution in order to make Nigeria a safe place to live. Kidnapping has now become a generic word both in public and private discuss going by its prevalence in the country. It is fast becoming a

lucrative alternative to armed robbery. However, kidnapping is now a lucrative venture with some jobless youths manning the business. No one is safe anymore because every day, tens of Nigerians are kidnapped for various reasons ranging from economic, political and personal grievances.

### **Concept of Kidnapping**

Kidnapping refers to a criminal offence which involves abduction of a person against his/her freedom and subjugates him/her to the threat of murder or assassination and requesting for ransom before his release, it is a criminal and traumatic behaviour orchestrated by gangs with the mindset of abducting human beings for ransom. Abraham (2010) defines kidnapping as an act of seizing, taking away and keeping a person in custody either by force or fraud. However, it includes snatching and seizing of a person in order to collect a ransom in return or settle some scores of disagreement among people. Goldberg (2000) argues that kidnapping is a criminal act involving seizure, confinement, abduction, subjection, forcefulness, acts of threat, acts of terror and servitude. Dode (2007) sees kidnapping as a process of forcefully abducting a person or group of persons perceived to be the reasons behind the injustice suffered by another group. It is "a lowcost, high-yield terror tactics" (Dode. 2007). This was the initial case in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Thomas and Ma (2009) define kidnapping as robbery of the highest rank.

According to them, it is an organized and systematic robbery which is not as deadly as arm robbery, but more profitable than the former. The profitability has encouraged those that indulge in it to carry on with the act although there is a law prohibiting it. In criminal law, kidnapping is defined as taking away of a person by force, threat, or deceit with intent to cause him/her to be detained against his or her will. Furthermore, Asuquo (2009 cited in Inyang & Abraham, 2013)

Views kidnapping as an act of an angry man who wants to take any person of value hostage, and who could be rescued by loved ones. In most cases, victims are often released after payment of ransom.

Also, Ogabido (2009) states that "kidnapping" means to abduct, capture, carry off remove or steal away a person(s). Ngwama (2014) defines kidnapping as false imprisonment in the sense that it involves the illegal confinement of individuals against his or her own will by another individual in such a way as to violate the confined individual's right to be free from the restraint of movement. According to Uzorma & Nwanegbo-Ben (2014), kidnapping is the act of seizing and detaining or carrying away a person by unlawful force or by fraud, and often with

a demand for ransom. According to Turner (2008), the phenomenon began in the Niger Delta region as a freedom fight by militants protesting the degradation of their environment by oil industry activities. According to Demola (2011), it soon turned into a money making avenue through kidnapping of expatriate oil workers for huge ransoms. Since then, kidnapping has become a daily occurrence and it has spread throughout the South-South states of Edo, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross Rivers, Akwa Ibom and the South-East States of Abia, Imo and Anambra. The South-West has not been left out. Many Youths have taken to the business of kidnapping with some godfathers working behind the scene. People no longer sleep with their two eyes closed. However, Ottuh & Aituf (2014) posit that kidnapping is the wholesale taking away or transportation of a person against the person's will usually to confine the person in false imprisonment without legal authority.

Ugwulebo (2011) citing Uzorma, and Nwanegbo-Ben,(2014) on the phenomenology of hostage taking and kidnapping, notes that "kidnapping as an organized crime, is better noticed when a victim's relations are bringing the ransom." Osumah and Aghedo (2011) argue that kidnapping is "an engagement for economic survival, securing political and business advantage over rivals and co-competitors"

Thom-Otuya (2010) opines that kidnapping and hostage taking in Nigeria, started in the Niger Delta region in 1999, while kidnap for ransom became prevalent as from 2005. Today, it is spreading like wild fire into the neighboring South East, South West and Abuja. Meanwhile, Okoye et al. (2016) confirm that, kidnapping as a criminal behaviour represents a typical rational crime. It has increased in breath and sophistication in Nigeria since its advent in early 2007. In the same vein, Olaiya (2017) confirms that, the menace of kidnapping in this country is a threat to sustainable Nigeria and national security. Hence, this evil starts almost 6 years ago, particularly during President Jonathan's regime.

He stressed further the major cause for the incessant kidnapping in Nigeria is abound with the unexpected change of administration that harshly affected the muggers in the Niger delta that assigned by the former president with billions of Naira to watch over the petroleum rivulet. The soldier took over immediately after the swear-in of President Buhari who rejected the idea such that, it unusual to assign gangster of ruffians to look after Petroleum creek which is one of Nigeria source of income. Consequently, these hooligans turned against government and destroyed the entire petroleum ocean to the zero level with ammunition bought with Nigeria money. As a result of block of money in all ramifications these

muggers turned to kidnapper and mostly following the creek to carry out perilous activities.

South-East and South-South Nigeria have become known as the kidnappers' playgrounds of Nigeria (Ngwama, 2014). In the view of Emanemua and Akintolu, E (2016), kidnapping has recently become a profitable venture among youths in Nigeria. According to him, this criminal practice was first instigated in the form of hostage taking in the Niger-Delta region of the country in calling the attention of the government to the marginalization of the region. This has seemingly become a variant of armed robbery with a high level of expertise in abducting people for ransom illegally. Otu N (2013) confirms that the high rate of kidnapping in Nigeria is the byproduct of world publicity of advance fee fraud (419). For the last two decades, 419 was very lucrative and there was no need for kidnapping for ransom. Nnamani (2015) points out that, it appears that the use of cheque-books and the introduction of a cashless society have made the armed bandits to change from armed robbery to another "lucrative" alternative (kidnapping).

Furthermore, Emanemua and Akintolu (2016) authenticate the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to have states that, the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the government. Unfortunately, this primary purpose has become more and more challenging with the ascendancy of several insecurity threats such as: militancy, armed robbery, ritual killing, insurgency, hostage taking and kidnapping among others.

### **Types of Kidnapping:**

The taxonomy of kidnapping will be derived largely from the diverse root causes or sources of motivation that propels youths who perpetuate these violent crimes in society. To specifically pin-point the types of kidnapping, the end which is determined from the onset of kidnapping exercise would be clarified; as the crime is not an incidental one rather a planned one and as such with criminal intent.

**Kidnapping for Marriage Purposes:** Marriage by abduction, force marriage, marriage by capture, bride kidnapping or by whatever name it goes; is an act of forcefully taking a girl or woman to wife without fulfilling the marital rites and requirements of her people especially their native laws and customs. It is a situation where a man that has an intention to marry a girl or woman faces some manner of challenges ranging from issues of social class, poverty, sickness, disease among others and chose to capture the bride even without her consent. The practice has an overriding sex crime aimed at impregnating the girl or woman to ensure she remains in the forcefully acquired relationship so that if

they return to the bride's family they will have no reservations on the continuity of the union.

This practice of bride kidnapping is a clear negation of the Igbo core value and it obliterates the customary law of the people of Kaduna state as marriage is viewed as an agreement that proceeds from the mutual consent of both spouse and receives that approval of their parents. Although, cases abound where couples may connive and elope from their parents or guardians owing to the challenges that threatens their union. Yet, the emphasis of Kidnapping for marriage purpose or bride kidnapping is the unwillingness or lack or absence of consent by the girl or woman.

**Kidnapping for Ritual Purpose:** Ritual kidnapping is a relatively old practice in the African context. Human sacrifices are by no means new in the annals of traditional sacred practices especially for the cleansing of lands from curses that comes along with it situations of drought, famine and barrenness. It entails the forceful abduction of women, young men and children especially for the purpose of using them to placate, appease or ritually cleanse a community or put to end sufferings of a people or person. Ugwuoke (2010:197) has it that "in traditional Nigerian societies, individuals were mostly, kidnapped for ritual purposes of sacrifice either to appease the gods or for the burial of a prominent chief or warrior"

Ritual kidnapping is a tool employed to get the required human agents needed for ritual purposes. Some of these kidnapping were carried out at the middle of the night while others under the broad day light. For the achievement of fame several occult groups, secret societies may demand a number of life that must be provided for the specific ritual. These lives are not just sought out for, rather specific human age, sex and on other case the level of human purity is taken into cognizance. Here, people of pure nature or virgins are demanded and on other occasions, vital human parts as eyes, tongue, breast, male penis or female virginal. According to Abati (2009) Nigerians have always talked about how human parts are for money-making rituals or to acquire spiritual power or the social menace of child theft that will lead our minds to "Clifford Orji" and the sale of human parts. And that ritual kidnapping is linked to metaphysic.

The end purpose for ritual kidnapping has been viewed on most cases as a means to material wealth and physical protection from danger and human detractors. In contemporary times, one can view these means of kidnapping as an important step in becoming wealthy in the society were desperate politicians will have to meet whatever requirement for them to be rich. No wonder Ugwuoke (2010:197) was explicit when he avowed that "kidnapping for ritual purpose may also have

some social, monetary or economic objectives". By promoting a culture of death and materialism people have sought for money through the life of innocent human agents.

**Kidnapping as a Political Tool:** Some kidnapping owe their incentive and prime motivating factor on political end. By political end it implies the struggle to power and state resource attainable through competition and strategic opposition.

Kidnapping could be politically motivated as some politicians would employ the services of some abductors to intimidate or eliminate their opponents while others who are not good at politicking and lacks the political skill of bargaining or bullying the voters, they result to kidnapping and political killings (Nyam, 2010). Ogbonna corroborated this view when he decried that "kidnapping now is used as a weapon of political intimidation" (Ibekwe, 2010) to political opponents. Highly placed government figure and politicians often mingle with criminals, providing them with the required protection and boldness to commit violent crimes in the society.

There is a political undercurrent in the kidnapping in Kaduna state as a cartel is highly involved and responsible for some of the cases of abduction (Ezea, 2010). In Kaduna state, kidnapping have been used partly as a political tool to gain attention and at least some form of policy concession (amnesty grant pay). Ihenacho corroborated this view that as a tool, kidnapping is used by fundamentalist group as a means for currying financial incentives and achieving political ambitions (Omonobi, 2010). Ihenacho further cautioned that kidnapping and hostage taking may become the preferred tactic of political terrorists.

**Kidnapping for Economic Reasons:** Ransom kidnapping is a broad term for all abductions that owe their motivation from the amassment of wealth or money redistribution. Although, an overlap exist between political and economic kidnapping, kidnapping for economic reasons has its emphasis on cash generation for the meeting of needs and satisfaction of material pleasures. Ransom collection is the fulcrum of kidnapping for economic reasons as a major source of livelihood. This is widely practiced in Kaduna state as some criminal minded youths use kidnapping to eke a living as it seems to be on the fast lane (Nyam, 2010).

Unemployment and under-employment are bane to insecurity in the society as the need to satisfy hunger of the flesh as controlled by the wants of the belly, is a chief propelling factor that attracts the jobless to this trade with its high incentive. The poor, who are often unemployed and hungry, seek opportunities to abduct the relatives of politicians, well to do business men, government workers and whoever look capable of generating the desired ransom after a bargain. Although,

these ransoms are construed as punishment to the perceived rich, its purpose has become commercial and borders on criminality (Ijediogor, 2010).

Kidnapping is a rational crime and it is thriving because those who engage in it see it as a lucrative business with immense reward and less hazards (The News, 2010). The economic attractiveness of kidnapping as a criminal rebellion has sustained the vices since the returns when balanced against the chance of being caught along the process is very slim and this has really propelled many to pursue the trade with all seriousness. As Adeyemi (2010) has it that, the face of the failure of the security system, kidnapping has grown into a full blown commercial venture and it is no longer a protest act against perceived social and economic injustice. Kidnapping is a big business, motivated by profit and not principle. Economic kidnapping is a fast growing criminal industry.

**Kidnapping as a New Trend of Criminal Behavior:** The current spate of kidnapping in Kaduna state can also be viewed as a new trend of criminal behavior. As youths for no just cause move into the activities to make and grab the spoils it avails. The mentality that a kidnapper is a gainer any day because of the attraction to it is too juicy and compelling for any money-grubbing scoundrel (Amzat, 2010). Amzat gave a precise light on the this new form of criminal behavior that, kidnappers are not driven by any cause, rather they are in business for the love of cash, lots of it; and kidnapping is a cool money-spinner, which is un-taxed.

As a new crime habit, greed and the desire for ostentatious living (Umukoro, 2010) characterize kidnapping amongst youth who cannot subject themselves to the confines of a regular office and the slow returns inherent in most genuine and regular paid jobs. Instances abound were the supposed freedom fighter or militant as popularly called still fall back to violent crimes. Reformed militants were part of the criminal population that is posing daunting challenge to the security operatives as post-amnesty identity cards were found with some criminals (Godwin, 2010).

This return to kidnapping and armed robbery is a pointer to two basic consideration; the failure and unethical ground for the amnesty grant to the Niger Deltan youths which was replicated by the Kaduna state government and the share fact that greed was the motivating ideology behind the fast and easy money enjoyed by kidnappers. For the former a whole range of ethical-moral considerations has questioned the salience of amnesty to youths whose first call was and still is resource control and development of the area that produces the much needed resources that keeps the Nigerian nation afloat. Despite the grant, people still continue in the crime as the group that clamored for government's



support and attention are not sincere rather they simply used that as an excuse for the deviant behavior.

### **Causes of Kidnapping**

Ohakhire (2010) clarified that kidnapping is associated with quest for ransom, revenge and ritual. That is the dictum of kidnapping '3rs' of kidnapping. Other researchers have also campaigned for the following reasons to be responsible for Kidnapping:

**Challenge of Poverty:** Poverty is a global phenomenon which is a recurring problem in Nigeria. It is evident from personal observation, scholarly works, newspaper, radio and television that despite its abundant resources and oil wealth, Nigeria is ravaged by poverty. The situation has worsened since the late 1990's to the extent that the country is considered one of the twenty poorest countries in the world; over seventy percent of the population is classified as poor with about thirty five percent living in abject poverty (Rural Poverty Portal, 2008). Kinoti (1994) in Olulowo (2017) posited that poverty is directly related to crime. He contends that if people do not have enough to eat, they steal to survive. When people become desperate for food and other necessities they will steal and even kill to get what they need. The 2004 Human Development Indicators put Nigeria as number 151 out of 177 countries. Poverty in Nigeria is generally believed to be prime cause of kidnapping in the country.

**Challenge of Unemployment:** Lack of employment opportunities for the youths in different parts of Nigeria is one major cause of prevalence of kidnapping. Inyang (2009) associated kidnapping to the endemic rate of youth joblessness. He corroborated this fact by citing the widely acknowledged adage, which says that "an idle man is the devil's workshop" to present the situation of unemployment in Nigeria. Linus (2015) noted that there are uncountable able-bodied men and women in Nigeria roaming the streets in search of non existing job. Out of frustration together with mounting responsibilities to tackle many idle young persons have ventured into criminal activities of which kidnapping are not an exemption. A graduate who is unable to secure a job is psychologically bereft of other means of survival. Such. The existence of vast reservoir of unemployed youths and underground republic in the country. It is called the republic of hoodlums, a reservoir of almost limitless supply of hungry, angry, willing and able fighters for murky causes. It is from this army that the various ethnic militias and kidnapers are drawing their cadre (Amuta, 2001).

**Proliferation of Arms and Military Uniforms:** Inyang (2009) in Ilechukwu Leonard Chidi, Uchem and AsogwaUche (2015) believed that the purchase of

large number of arms as a result of political patronage of miscreant who were dumped after elections may indirectly encourage and enhance kidnapping. He equated today's kidnapping situation to the bane of arm robbery in the early eighties where many young-able bodied men who fought during the Nigerian civil war were discharged and sent home with nothing. Meanwhile since the schools they left behind were destroyed and there were no jobs to engage them and keep them busy. Many of them consequently took to armed robbery, since as ex-soldiers they were armed with weapons, having acquired the skill and guns during the war. The story is almost the same today as politicians employ most idle youths as political thugs and later dumped them after elections. Therefore, the youths (thugs) who have been abandoned by their master after winning elections are now busy kidnapping innocent person and relative of those persons they surged to be wealthy (Inyang and Ubong, 2013).

**Corruption and Poor Governance:** The economic failure is attributed to wearing down of the state's institutional and administrative capacities, corruption pandemic, inconsistency in economic policy, external shocks, poor state of the rule of law and military dictatorship, rising ethnic nationality conflicts and the state's inability to implement its policies and decisions due to corruption and refraction of such policies through prism of ethnic and sectional interest provoked some other sections to criminality especially that of kidnapping (Arewa, 2013). This is called the breakdown of institutional infrastructures (Fukuyama, 2004). The foundations of institutional framework in Nigeria are very insecure and have motivated a weakening of state governance and democratic accountability, thus, paralyzing the existing formal and legitimate rules nested in the hierarchy of social order (Achumba, *et al*, 2013). The state of insecurity in Nigeria is a function of government failure. This manifests in the incapacity of government to deliver public goods to its citizens (Igbuzor, 2011). This lack of basic necessities by the Nigerian people has created a growing army of frustrated people who resort to violence at the slightest provocation or opportunity. Even though, Nigeria is full of resources to meet the needs of her people, the well-established culture of corruption in public service has brought about the drought of basic necessities.

### **Loss of the Patriarchal Authority by Nigerian State**

Nigeria has lost the patriarchal moral authority which is necessary in the socialization process, the same way, a father who ought to constitute the central and dominant figure in a family unit loses authority as a result of his failure to discharge his obligations as the central and dominant figure to Meet for the needs

of members of his household (Arewa, 2013). Patriarchal authority emanates from consistency in the discharge of those obligations. Where the obligations are habitually discharged in the breach, the patriarch loses its grip and progressively becomes unable to rein in the behaviour of the citizenry. Extreme poverty in the country as a result of Job lost has made some parents to relinquished some of their duties as bread winners of the house Hence, poverty has turned many young adults into bread-winners in their different families. In order to have their needs and that of their family members met, some girls to engage in premarital sex and boys do engage in other heinous crimes such as kidnapping, drug peddling, arm robbery and ritual killings to get money but little or no attention is paid to the source of the money; even when parents become aware of the source, their sense of judgment is beclouded by the shame of their inability to play their primary role in providing for their homes. They simply rationalize that, after all, the needs are met. The popular slogan among young adults today is 'use what you have to get what you want' (Olulowo, 2017).

### **The Use of Hard Drug**

The increase of kidnapping is connected to high use and trafficking of hard drugs (Okoli, 2009). The use of hard drugs no doubt leads to violent crimes such as kidnapping and armed robbery within the country. Several drug sale joints are emerging everyday where criminal activities are planned, perfected and executed. Some streets in the state have been turned into no-go areas for law abiding residents as unscrupulous miscreants have turned them into ghettos and hideouts for their hard drugs operation. After taking the drugs, the takers became high, fearless, bold and inhuman and they can perpetrate kidnapping under this state of mind without qualms of conscience.

### **Solutions to Kidnapping as a Societal Problem in Nigeria**

There are solutions that may help to reduce the rate of kidnapping, thus:

- i. Training strong anti-kidnapping agents
- ii. Monitoring the activities of the police
- iii. Serious punishment for offenders
- iv. Job creation

### **Training Anti-Kidnapping Agents**

Any country that wants to fight kidnapping successfully must hire and train capable agents to combat the issue. When law enforcement agencies are actively involved, the incidence of this crime can be reduced.

### **Monitoring the Police**

Reports show that the police are involved in some kidnappings. Notable examples have occurred in Nigeria. Eliminating the criminals within the ranks of law enforcement is key.

### **Serious Punishments for Offenders**

Mild punishment does nothing to deter criminals. When the government treats kidnappers harshly, fewer abductions will occur.

### **Job Creation**

Generating jobs for citizens, especially for the youth can have a huge impact in the fight against crime. When people are gainfully employed, they do not need to commit crimes.

### **Incidences of Kidnapping as a Contemporary Societal problem in Nigeria**

The incidence of kidnapping as contextually used in this paper aligns itself with the rate, extent, frequency, dimension, pattern and ever-growing trend of this dastardly act that is ravaging Nigeria. The incidence of kidnapping have taken an alarming dimension since 2006, and the situation seems to be exacerbated in present-day Nigeria Hence, it stands to reason that every citizen in the country is a potential victim of kidnapping, or perhaps stands the risk of falling prey to the eagled-eyed kidnappers. To say that contemporary Nigeria is enmeshed in kidnapping and the excesses of kidnappers are unbridled in recent times is not an erroneous conclusion or assumption or exaggeration. This is the actual situation of the problem in Nigeria, given the daily observances. Scholarly reports and investigative reportage of media pundits have been recently documented on the incidence of kidnapping in the country. For instance, Onwuta, (2012) reports that 1, 500 persons were said to have been kidnapped in Nigeria in 2009. This was against 512 person in 2008 and 353 in 2007. The South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria appears to be currently the headquarters of kidnappers in the country For the past three years, major high profile kidnapping operations were spearheaded by a kidnap kingpin, Mr Obioma Nwankwo (AKA Osisikankwu), who voluntarily resigned from active armed robbery and took up the kidnapping vocation. Reaffirming this claim Onwuta, (2012) avers that "Osisikankwu and his gang carried out their kidnapping activities with impunity and sometimes tortured and even murdered the unfortunate ones when the ransom they demanded for was not fast coming". Indeed, Osisikankwu and his boys almost held the entire Abia State and its environs to a standstill throughout his

kidnapping saga in the South East region of Nigeria. This villainous gentle-looking outlaw met his Waterloo when he kidnapped 15 school children in Aba, Abia State.

A comprehensive and informative diary containing the incidences of kidnapping in contemporary Nigeria shows that on 27 January, 2007, Hon Ego Cordelia, the Anambra State Commissioner for Women Affairs and her son were abducted by hoodlums at Nsugbe in Anambra State with N50 million ransom demanded by the kidnappers. On the same day, month and year, Pius Ogbuawa, a business tycoon in Anambra State was kidnapped and a ransom of N20 million was demanded.

On 26 April, 2008, His Royal Highness (HRH), Patrick Mbamalu Okeke a 73-year-old traditional ruler of Abagana in Nilkoka Local Government Area of Anambra State was kidnapped. On 8 June, 2008, in Bernn City, Bob Izua, the Managing Director of Bob Izua Motors was kidnapped and later released after a ransom of N5 million was paid. On 25 August, 2008, Kelechi Nwankpa, the Chairman of Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State, was kidnapped together with his driver who was shot dead at the scene of the incident; the Chairman was released three days after the government paid a huge ransom of N10 million. On 15 November, 2008, Joseph Dimobi, a member of the Anambra State House of Assembly, representing Aniocha II Federal Constituency, was kidnapped and a ransom of N30 million was demanded for his release. On 21 November, 2008, Eberechi Dick, the traditional ruler of Mgboko Ngwa Autonomous Community - and the Chairman of Obingwa Traditional Ruler Council was kidnapped. He was kidnapped in his Amaise Village in Abia State and was released seven days when a ransom of N10 million was paid (Ishaya, 2010). Still on the incidence of kidnapping in contemporary Nigeria, the above source further reports that unknown gunmen kidnapped Pete Edochie, a movie star in Onitsha, a commercial town in Anambra State, on 16 August, 2009 and 20 August, 2009, Grace Mamah, the wife of Ifesinachi Transport Chief Executive Officer, was abducted by two unknown gunmen at Nsukka the same day a veteran Nigerian actor, Nkem Owob (AKA Osuofia) was kidnapped along Enugu Port Harcourt expressway and the kidnappers demanded a ransom of N15 million from his family. In September 2009, Waje Yayok, Secretary to the Kaduna State Government (SSG) was kidnapped in his country home. The kidnappers asked for N40 million as ransom for his release, and this was the first high-profile kidnapping in Kaduna State. On 28 October, 2009, Simon Soludo, the father of former Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Prof Chukwuma Soludo, who was at that time the Governorship candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), was accosted and later

kidnapped at his home in Isuofia community. The kidnappers demanded for a ransom of N5 billion to cover “political expenses” arising from the PDP primaries before Prof Soludo’s father will be released. Finally, Anyasi Agwu, the Chairman of Enyimba Football Club, was also kidnapped on this fateful day.

The latest rating of Nigeria as the fourth most notorious kidnapping nation in the world speaks volumes about the alarming rate of this crime in the country. Similarly Nyem (2010)

Taire (2011), and Au (2014) state that the scourge of kidnapping for ransom is sweeping across

Nigeria like a wildfire without any indication of ever quenching it. Kidnapping has surely become a thorn in the flesh of government and society at large. Nobody seems to be safe at the moment and statistics of kidnapping in Nigeria are by every standard intimidating. Between 2008 and 2010, the country recorded over 887 kidnap cases. In his reportage, Au (2014) states that 16 Ebonyi traders were kidnapped by local Sea Pirates along Okono/Iboroya Creek of Mbo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. To the researcher, the latest high profile kidnapping even though it has terrorism undertone, the researcher observed, occurred on 14 April, 2014 where over

200 Chibok school girls were kidnapped by the ‘Boko Haram’ Islamic extremists in Borno State

of Nigeria, and these children are yet to be released as at the time of this study. Be that as it may, statistics of kidnapping and Kidnappers in Nigeria should be accepted with skepticism. More than 200 innocent souls including the Bethel Baptist High School, Damishi Chikun Local Government, Students of Federal College of forestry Mando were kidnapped between 2020-2021. It should be taken with the proverbial pinch of salt. This is because the figures may be misleading since the visible part of the crime known, reported, investigated, and charged to courts is just a tip of the iceberg. This shortcoming constitutes a popular dark figure in kidnapping statistics. The

issue here is that kidnap victim’s family may not like to disclose the incident to formal agents of social control, particularly the police owing to threats of death imposed on victims and their families by kidnappers, or perceived gross misconducts, mistrust and inadequacies in the police subsystem. This is because people’s attitude of mind towards the police in Nigeria is highly discouraging, strained and estranged.

A typical Nigerian perceives the police as corrupted, unfriendly, extortionist, trigger-happy, incompetent and accomplice. Based on this, it is of little or no importance for people to call upon the police when any of their relatives is

kidnapped. Rather, relatives of kidnap victims may resolve to rescue their sons and daughters through the payment of ransom and other ritual sacrifices that may be attached to the act.

### **Implication of Kidnapping as a Societal Problem for Education System in Nigeria**

The findings indicates that colossal rate of youth unemployment, abject poverty, corruption, moral decadence, indiscipline, inflation, poor standard of living, high cost of living, inadequate security personnel, poor motivation of law enforcement agency, and loss of societal value and 2et rich quick syndrome among others. The mentality of “man must survive” and “quick money syndrome” has brought many of these misfits, into group of kidnappers; targeting both students and teachers who they perceive to be a member of a family of high financial prospect in the country, Nigeria. Therefore, this paper was in congruence with former President Goodluck Jonathan’s position (Wakili, 2013)

*I agree totally that until we create jobs; until Nigerians can wake up and find food to until Nigerians sick can walk to the hospital and get freatment; the economic indices may not mean much to us.*

*Ogabido (2009) in Inyang JD, and Abraham UE (2013) that: “the issue of poverty and unemployment of youths as well as social injustice and ‘unfair distribution of the nations’ resources are potent causes of kidnapping in Nigeria. These factors have caused the youths to engage in kidnapping and criminal activities as a way of getting their share of nation wealth”.*

Inadequate security personnel have exposed the weakness and lapses of Nigeria police, Civil defense, due to their inability to curtail criminality in the schools and the country water ways. This menace has scared away potential investors, tourists, manufacturing companies, and business developer, educationist to boycott. The parents and students of secondary schools in Nigeria are living with perpetual fear of kidnappers. Many parents have withdrawn their wards from schooling due to insecurity of life and property parading government schools. Therefore, the Nigerian government needs to make frantic effort to create employment opportunities for graduate, instill discipline, tackle corruption, subsidy’s the state economy, establish wealth creation centres for artisans to reduce poverty and inflation gap, re-equip and motivate law enforcement agencies so as to curb the prevalence of student kidnapping and security

challenges bedeviled Nigeria because “an idle man is the devil’s workshop”. Also, in response to the security challenges, Nigerian government was also reported to have spent more than three billion naira in two years on security alone (Soyombo. 2009). Because, large sum of money spent on ransom could affects the country economy drastically as it could have been use for meaningful economic development.

As a result of rampant kidnapping of student, broad-day and night travel has become a high risk venture and many school administrators, parents, teachers and student have been forced out of their newly completed schools or houses by kidnapper and inflict them with psychosomatic disorder because nobody know who will be next victims. Commercial motorcyclists have been banned from operation between 6.00am-6.30pm due to the fear of their involvement in kidnapping activities.

### **Conclusion**

The rate at which innocent lives are being muddled through the menace of kidnapping and abduction in Nigeria is worrisome because the impact of kidnapping is becoming excruciating in Nigerians to the extent that everyone is sleeping with one eye open. This scenario has intimidated both national and international investors to establish in Nigeria which incur unbearable economic recession.

Therefore, its discovered that the pestilence of kidnapping in Nigeria especially in the current administration is like insidious cankerworm to the extent that no one in Nigeria irrespective of their age and political influence discerns who will be the next victim. In the light of above scrutiny, the study finds that, unemployment, poverty, ritual and spiritual proclivity, political parochialism, insecurity and prevalence of alcoholic consumption are chief factors responsible for the widespread of kidnapping in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Keeping with the review of this paper, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. There is need to review the current strategy of dealing with the issue of kidnapping and hostage taking in Nigeria. In particular, there is the need to explore the extant laws and the extent to which they are being enforced with a view to establishing their efficacy.



2. Government at all levels should make policies that will attract both local and foreign investors which will create employment opportunities for the youths especially the vulnerable ones.
3. There is need to sensitize and engage members of the public by the security agencies in tackling the issue of kidnapping and hostage taking.
4. There should be proper protection of identities of the public members that supply useful information to the security agencies and officers and men of the security agencies.

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