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Kidnapping in Nigeria: Dimensions, causes and consequences

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ABSTRACT

The rising incidence of kidnapping both in prevalence and intensity has been a source of concerns to the government, members of the public and international community. It is increasing in frequency, expanding in scope and changing in dimensions. The aim of the study is to investigate the causes, dimensions and consequences of the phenomenon of kidnapping with a view to combat its occurrence. The study was anchored on Robert K. Martin's anomie theory. The widespread of kidnapping is indeed due to socio-economic problems such as; unemployment, poverty, environmental degradation, community hooligans, land grabbers, terrorists, rituality of different religious associations, government insensitivity; corruption among security agencies and political vendettas. The menace of kidnapping has become a societal problem in view of its consequences on the individual, society and government which include: insecurity of lives and properties, lack of trust among citizens, negative impact on economy and social relative, unfriendly environment for foreign investors, psychological trauma on the part of individual victims and their families. The study recommended the following as panacea to combat kidnapping in the country: involvement and empowerment of traditional institutions, attachment of severe penalty to punish offenders, adequate funding of security agencies, and collaboration among the three tiers of government and their agencies and critical stakeholders.

KEYWORDS: Kidnapping, Insecurity, Ransom, Poverty and Psychological Trauma.

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INTRODUCTION

Kidnapping is not a new phenomenon, ¹ the abduction of Joseph (Prophet Yusuf) clearly documented in the Holy Bible and Holy Koran is an indication that kidnapping is as old as human history.¹ However, it was mentioned by numerous scholars that the modern usage of the term “kidnapping” dates back to the 17th century Britain where infants (kids) of rich families were “napped” (caught in the sleep) for ransom. The phenomenon of kidnapping is not also peculiar to developing countries, it is a global occurrence.² It grows over the years in both developed and developing nations as an industry affecting every level of the society and motivated by diverse reasons. However, studies on it have been relatively a recent development, with much of the literature coming from Asia, America and Europe.^{3,4}

Notable scholars attempted a documentation of how “kidnapping originated in the 17 century England where children were “kidnapped and often sold as slaves or agricultural workers to Colonial farmers. Centuries before, in ancient Rome the Emperor Constantine (AD 315) became so alarmed by the incidence of kidnapping that he ordered the death penalty as punishment for the crime. Robber barons were kidnapping merchants holding them for ransom. In the middle ages in Europe, King Richard I of England was held hostage for years by the Archduke of Austria in the 12 century. In 1800 in the sun archipelago, now in part of the Philippines, there was already a standard scale of ransom fees ranging from 200 Pesos for a European Friar to 30-50 Pesos for a male Filipino. The upsurge of kidnapping in the USA by organized criminal gang led, in 1931 to the introduction of federal legislation on kidnapping in both senate and house of representation.^{5,6}

The trend is on the increase all over the world because the Global Slavery Index reported that through 2014, many women and children continue to be kidnapped in village raids and held as slaves by militias in eastern DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo). “The global occurrences are far more disturbing. British Foreign Policy Centre (BFPC) estimated that kidnappers earn more than \$500 million annually with the 2004 statistic indicating \$8,000-10,000”.⁷ It is estimated that as many as 80 percent of all kidnappings for ransom occur in sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Balkans and the middle east .⁸ “Out of more than 15,000 reported kidnapping cases each year, over 70 percent are reported by ransom payments. Only an estimated 10 percent of those held to ransom are successfully rescued by the security forces. Unfortunately, few kidnapping result in the death of the hostage.”⁹

In Nigeria, Kidnapping also known as “gbomogbomo, ntori and maigarkuwa” among the Yoruba of the south west, Igbo in the south east and Hausa in north Nigeria respectively, is a phenomenon that is ravaging the whole fabrics of Nigeria today. Victims of this hideous crime whom according to the native name (gbomogbomo) ought to be children, have more wider scope these days; ranging from: kids, both adult males and females, highly successful chief executive officers, politicians, top government functionaries, traditional rulers, pastors/clergymen, foreign investors and development partners, among others. .

The incidence of kidnapping has assumed widespread dimensions since early 1990s.¹⁰ The rate of kidnapping in Nigeria is said to be geometrically increased such that more people are been kidnapped daily including 200 innocent Chiboik girls, politicians, traditional rulers, pastors clergymen, and foreigners were reported to have been kidnapped between 2014 and 2017.¹ Hiscox Group, ranked Nigeria the 6th highest recorded kidnapping cases in the world, coming after Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela and Philippians. Kidnapping is taking place everywhere in the country, it is a national problem that has eaten so deep into the fabric of the society,¹¹ but it takes more in the form of terrorism and other forms of political violence.

The blight of kidnapping in Nigeria continue to aggravate due to the high level of corruption, unemployment, insensitivity of government to societal needs, economic and political exploitation and social degradation that rendered many skillful and educated youths to become jobless which drive them to desperately looking for a way out to service their needs.¹ Kidnapping is linked to the perpetuation of unemployment among the youth, gangster, community hooliganisms, and land grabbers, terrorist, ritualism, spiritual of different religions associations.² The failure of successive administration in Nigeria to address challenges such as poverty unemployment and inadequate distribution of wealth among ethnic nationality, ultimately resulted to anger, agitation and violent crime against the Nigerian state by sometime individual and groups. This study therefore, is an attempt to investigate the causes, dimensions and consequences of kidnapping with a view to find permanent solution to the crime of kidnapping in Nigeria.¹²

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The concept of kidnapping is difficult to define with precision, because it varies from state to state, from country to country.¹³ Therefore the terms is uncertain and decor of any straight jacket definition. That is, it depends on who is defining it and for what purpose. Kidnapping is defined as “the

forceful seizure, taking among and unlawful detention of a person against his/her will. It is a common law offence and the fact is that it is an unwanted act on the part of the nation".¹³ Kidnapping is perceived as unlawful seizure and detention of a person by force against their will. According to them, it is an act of seizing a person and taking him or her to another country or location for involuntary servitude or the impressment of females into military or naval service.¹⁴ Oxford advanced learners dictionary defined kidnapping as 'to take somebody away illegally and keep them as a prisoner, especially in order to take money or something else for returning them.'¹⁵ This implies that whenever a person is unlawfully taken away against his wish and with the intention to collect money or to extract some other benefits before his or her release, this is tantamount to kidnapping. It is a restriction of something else liberty which violates the provision of freedom of movement as enshrined in the constitution of federal republic of Nigeria, where every other law takes its cue from. For this reason,¹⁶ sees it as a criminal offence. Kidnapping is also defined as an act of seizing, taking away and keeping a person in custody either by force or fraud without legal authority.¹ It includes snatching and seizure of a person in order to collect a ransom in return or settle some scores of disagreement among people.

In criminal law, kidnapping is defined as taking away of a person by force, threat or deceit with intent to cause him or her to be detained against his will.¹ It is an illicit incidence through which human being is forcefully abducted to an unknown area against their will by another human being because of the reason best known to them.^{1,17,18,14}

On the phenomenology of hostage taking and kidnapping,¹⁴ noted "kidnapping as organized crime, is better noticed when a victim's relations are bringing the ransom."¹⁴ Others argues that "kidnapping is an engagement for economic survival, securing political and business advantage over rivals and co-competitors". From the review of relevant literature; kidnapping is a forceful act usually against the will of the victims, motivated by personal or group economic, political and religious gains.^{15,19,20}

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on the Robert K. Merton's theory of 'Anomie'. Merton used the concept of 'Anomie' to describe the strain which occurs when widely accepted cultural values conflict with people's lived social reality. In both developed and developing countries- generally held values emphasizes material success, achieved through self-discipline, education and hard work. Accordingly, people who work hard can succeed no matter what their starting point in life. He argued that for many

social groups, it really is just a dream, because disadvantaged groups have only limited conventional opportunities for advancement or none at all.²¹ Yet, those who do not ‘succeed’ find themselves condemned for their apparent inability to make material progress. In this situation, there is a great pressure or ‘strain’ to try to get ahead by any means, legitimate or illegitimate.²² Deviance and crime are then products of the strain between cultural values and the unequal distribution of legitimate opportunities.

This theory aptly described the menace of kidnapping in Nigeria, as groups and individuals involving in the act are doing so to acquire materials needed to succeed in life. As succinctly put by scholars, the phenomenon of kidnapping has been attributed to such factors as unemployment, poverty, economic depression among others.^{24,19} There is increase of frustrated youths in the country who are been forced to engage in unlawful and criminal activities (including kidnapping) due to lack of work to channel the reservoir of their energy. The need to meet the basic human needs, as posited by Merton,²² force many of them to engage in kidnapping as a survival strategy.^{24,25} Ritual and spiritual proclivity also identified as the factors responsible for the incidence of kidnapping as people are embarking in ‘get rich quick syndrome’ against the societal value of hard work.^{26,27,19} It has been established that attempt to acquire material wealth by disadvantaged people whose doors of conventional opportunities are short, and are desperate to succeed in life take to shortcut to achieve their goals not minding the consequence on individuals, groups and society at large

TYPOLOGIES OF KIDNAPPING

The United Nations office of Drugs and Crime categorized kidnapping as follows:.

- ❖ Kidnapping for extortion (for ransom, to influence business decision or to obtain commercial advantages)
- ❖ Kidnapping between or within criminal groups (for debt recovery or to secure advantage in a criminal market).
- ❖ Kidnapping for sexual exploitation.
- ❖ Kidnapping linked to domestic or family disputes (Spouse or child abduction)
- ❖ Revenge Kidnapping and
- ❖ Kidnapping for political or ideological purpose.²⁸

These Typologies have been broadly categorized into three by Pharaoh as follows:

- Criminal Kidnapping (hostage taking for ransom)
- Political Kidnapping (to settle political scores or further some political objectives and
- Pathological kidnapping for sexual purposes.²⁹

To further simplify the classification, Turner listed out four key rationales for kidnapping as follows:

- Kidnapping for money but no Politics.
- Kidnapping without any political or monetary motive.
- Kidnapping for money and politics
- Kidnapping for politics but no money.³⁰

From these classifications, it seems that kidnapping has criminal, political and economic reasons. However Yang and Huang added the cultural dimension of kidnapping, whereby some communities use it as a cultural practice (e.g. bride capture).³¹ Furthermore, Ani and Nweke identified different types of kidnappings such as:

- ❖ Expatriate oriented
- ❖ Financial exploitations
- ❖ Political Kidnapping
- ❖ Spiritual Kidnapping
- ❖ Religious orientation – Kidnapping of church leaders and faithful.
- ❖ Government staff kidnapping.²³

Motivations and ‘modus operandi’ vary, but generally there are two main kinds of kidnapping for ransom. This can be roughly categorized as “Criminal Kidnapping” where the main motive is to obtain a ransom from the family or business of the victim. This category includes instance where criminals take hostages as a shield to help them escape from the scene of a crime, or use them to obtain money or valuables, or the keys or secret codes needed to access areas where these are stored. The other type of kidnapping is “political Kidnapping”, where the foremost objective is to further political aims of a particular political group or movement. In this case, ransom is usually demanded to obtain money for the group to fund their activities. This made the dividing line between economic and political kidnappings

so blurred. In addition, religious and other political extremists use kidnapping as political weapons and as a means of financing their activities.^{32,33}

For whichever type of kidnapping the psychological and financial impact can quite be devastating both for the victims and their significant others. Ralph described a type of kidnapping, very similar to the cases in Nigeria, which he refers to as “tiger kidnapping”. It involves the abduction or holding of a hostage with the intention of forcing an employee or his/her relative to facilitate immediate valuables or to concede some other form of ransom from an institution or business organization. In this type of kidnapping, it is not necessarily the executives that are at risk, but those at middle and lower management positions targeted as victims or accomplices.⁷

DIMENSION OF KIDNAPPING

The widespread increase of kidnapping in the country is observed to be taking different dimension. Kidnapping take invulnerable forms but the growing persuasiveness of kidnapping crimes and their group brutality has made the issue an important one for the local and international community. In other to find lasting solution to the twin’s problem of kidnapping and hostage taking, knowledge of the various forms it takes will be of great assistance.³⁴

First dimension; In Nigeria in the remote period, kidnapping was a one man’s affair, targeted at children for money rituals mostly among the Yoruba and Ibo traders. Second dimension; The current dimension of kidnapping became alarmed in Niger- delta region when militants in February 2006 abducted some oil workers, ostensibly to draw global attention to the bad situation in the oil rich Niger- delta region of the country but foreigner is their major target.³³ Ngwana confirms that the current wave of kidnapping began with the abduction of expatriate oil workers by the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger – delta (MEND) as means of alerting the world of many years of injustice, exploitation, marginalization and under development of Niger- delta region.¹⁷ He shares the same assertion that the early incidence of kidnapping may have been copied from the Niger-Delta region when the militants abduct some oil workers in February, 2006 draw global attention to the sorry situation in the oil rich Niger-Delta region and the victims were mostly foreigners,¹⁷ a situation Iyang and Ubong concluded that its gravity is so tenses that it has virtually affected most people in our society. Since the social problems of kidnapping has spread like wild-fire in every parts of the country, especially in the South-East, South-West, North- West, North-East and North Central. The targets are no longer foreigners alone practically every Nigerian is now a target.³⁵

It is observed that most kidnappings involve criminal motives rather than political intentions. There are no recent cases of kidnappers making political demands, although political motives can be assumed in connection with a recent kidnapping of the late father of a political candidate in Anambra state during 2019 general elections. The targets of kidnapping are only occasionally foreigners or prominent politicians. Increasingly the victims are ordinary Nigerians. Victims in recent months included a nurse from federal hospital, an actor, a lawyer, and social businessmen.¹ He reported that ten of the 42 incidents recorded between September 14 and November, 2017 included child victims as young as five, who were often ceased on their way to or from school. Elderly parents, wives and even civil servants of the middle class have increasingly become the targets of kidnappers well.¹

Third dimension: Present dimension in kidnapping is the interception of commercial vehicles on major roads in the country. On May 23, 2018, suspected bandits intercepted three (3) vehicles and abducted 21 passengers (male and females) and their drivers in Ladi town, along Birin- Gwari Road.¹ The disturbing issue in the incident was the alleged claims that the abducted females passengers stripped off their clothes before being led into the forest by the bandits. In another incident nine (9) passengers and a driver travelling to Kano state were reportedly abducted in an attack carried out by suspected bandits along the same route. Similarly, on May 20, 2018, National Early Warning System (NEWS) recorded two separate incidents of kidnapping by suspected armed bandits in Birin-Gwari local government area, Kaduna State. These include, the abduction of three house wives in a mid-night attack by suspected bandits in Maganda village. However one of the abducted housewives was later free by the abductors in a bid to make contact with the families of the two abductees for ransom (ibid). Although no life was lost in the attack, one person (a male) reportedly sustained gunshot injuries and, also six (6) people in a commercial vehicle were reportedly abducted along Birni-Gwari high way (ibid). The attackers reportedly open fire on the commercial vehicles, leading to a road accident wherein one of the passengers was reported dead. Prior to those attacks, it was reported that the suspected armed bandits raided communities and vehicles along Birni-Gwari - Kaduna High way, kidnapping more than 100 people.^{36,23} In addition, reports from the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) in Kaduna State claimed that suspected armed bandits in military camouflage intercepted over 15 vehicles including truces and commercial buses and abducted the victims.^{36,23}

In the Southwest, the major roads: Ife/Ibadan , Ife/Ilesha/Akure, Ilesha/Efom Alaye/Ado Ekiti, Akure/Owo have become the dens of armed attackers. Recently two officials of Federal Road Safety

Commission (FRSC), a professor at Obafemi Awolowo University, a pastor with his family were kidnapped along Ibadan/Ife/Akure road and one of the FRSC Official died in the process.^{36,23}

Fourth dimension: Another dimension of kidnapping in the country is abduction of the victims from their homes. This has created fears and despair in the minds of everybody since no one is no longer safe from attack. The recent happenings were the reported cases of a business woman who was kidnapped in her home; the emir of Daura in Kastina State, the father of the wife of the governor of Kastina State, all of them were abducted right away from their homes. There were many cases of this nature that were not reported to the police because of the lack of trust in the Nigeria Police as they are regarded as “allies of kidnappers”. However, whatever the motives or reasons for kidnapping, the incidence has become an economic crime, the source of income for the operation of this illicit business.^{36,23}

CAUSES OF KIDNAPPING

Generally speaking the phenomenon of kidnapping globally has been attributed to number of factors such as unemployment, poverty, economic depression, inadequate security among others.^{36,19,23} In Nigeria and many other developing nations of Sub-Sahara Africa, and Asia the preponderance of the phenomenon of kidnapping is attributed to political, economic and social factors, most especially unemployment, poverty and economic depression.^{25,36} There is increase of frustrated youths in the country who are been forced to engage in unlawful and criminal activities due to lack of work to channel the reservoir of their energy. The need to meet the basic human needs force many of them to engage in kidnapping as a survival strategy.^{24,25,35,23} Supporting the above, Tepperman observed that Nigeria has a number of adolescent making a living on the streets. This has been attributed to economic factors and exposure to all forms of risks including kidnapping.^{19,36}

The wide spread of kidnapping as a business in Nigeria is also attributed to the long period of government neglect of those areas where the menace of kidnapping is frequent most especially the north east, and south/south and parts of the northwest (Zamfara state), causing their people to aggressively adopt militant confrontation to force government attention to the plight of the people.^{37,20,38,39} The underlying stimulus of kidnapping phenomenon in Nigeria is insufficient police response, which has made kidnapping a low, rise crime and encourages people to negotiate and pay ransoms, kidnapping will remain a lucrative business. Therefore, kidnapping is expected to continue to spread to other parts of the country, increase in frequency, and impact even larger segments of the population.^{37,40,41} Further the

general insecurity in the country arising from abduction, begging, illicit intercourse, revenge, prostitution, un-lawful activities, maiming and selling of human parts are the most often cited causes of kidnapping.^{37,38,40,39,20} Insecurity pervaded over society today that one is constrained to travel at will, social relation becomes difficult as no one is trusted, even at home, one security is not guaranteed as people are been kidnapped from their homes, students abducted from schools and passengers are abducted while travelling on commercial vehicles.^{19,38}

Ritual and spiritual proclivity are the causes of kidnapping mentioned,^{27,26,19} as people are embarking in “get rich quick syndrome”. Victims of kidnapping are murdered and their body parts are severed for the purpose of ritual money and protection.²⁶ This practice is too common in the south west and south east most especially among the people who are engaging in trading and traditional occupations such as butchery, driving, farming, artisans etc. kidnapers are known as “Gbomogbomo” (Children Kidnappers) among the Yoruba of the southwest.

Indiscipline and corruption among the law enforcement agents are known to be contributing factors to the growing incidence of kidnapping in Nigeria. There are cases of police officers harboring kidnapers, shielding from prosecution. Arubi reported case of a superintendent of police who was arrested for kidnapping, querying the sensibility of relying in state apparatus to curb kidnapping in the country⁴². Added to this is the loss of social values in Nigeria, absence of apathy, lack of respect for norms and values, displacement of significant others, illegitimate acquisition of wealth and absence of the belief system among others are the aiding factors influencing the phenomenon of kidnapping in Nigeria.¹⁹ How can one explain a situation where the father abducted his own son. There are cases of siblings aiding and abetting the kidnapping of their brothers; brothers selling their cousins to spiritualist friends trading off their friends and neighbours, abducting neighbours.¹⁹

Political apathy to the needs of the poor and failed economic policies encourage all sorts of criminal behaviour in the state. The high rate of unemployment, poverty, increasing cost of living are impetus to social anomies that characterized the Nigeria state today.^{23,10} It is evident from literature that social injustice, proliferation of dangerous weapons, high rate of inflation, political parochialism, poor remuneration of law enforcement agents, poverty and indiscipline are solely and collectively account for the widespread of kidnapping in the country.^{23,19,35,20}

The influence of globalization on the expansion of criminal activities as transcending national borders termed as trans-borders crimes like commercial sex by under-age and human trafficking, and physical movement across borders by illegal organised syndicate has become common practice.⁴³ Finally, some observers speculate that kidnapping is becoming more common because the use of credit card and electronic payments among the rich make armed robbers unattractive; others believe it is the latest fad in crime robberies.^{20,19,43}

CONSEQUENCES OF KIDNAPPING

The incidences of kidnapping and hostage taking in Nigeria have posed many implications on the social relation, economy and the general developmental efforts of the country. The spread of kidnapping activities in most part of the country has created crime waves that have affected Nigeria National Security Service (NNSS) at the national states and local government levels.⁴⁴ The federal government budget for 2009 for police formations and command was 195 billion. The Lagos state government was reported to have spent three billion naira in two years on security. He further pointed out that the present security spending can under develop the economy of the country, by diverting scarce financial resources and trained personnel from project that can create wealth and benefit the poor. If this continues, there is no doubt that it is likely going to prevent the improvement of the economy and the welfare of the population.³⁵

Apart from increase in the defense budget, the nation loses a lot of revenue when expatriates working in the multinational oil companies are kidnapped. This leads to fear and out of fear many people tend to stay clear from the working environment and the adverse effect is always on the economy.³⁵ In 2006 when kidnapping abducted six foreign expatriates from Shell oil company premises, the company was forced to close down and this lead to loss of millions of standard cubic feet per day of gas production for the country. All these show that kidnapping has great adverse effect on the nation's socio economic development.⁴⁶

The economic effects of kidnapping has direct and indirect costs.³⁵ Direct cost of kidnapping involves the economic value that individuals and government may lose to kidnappers, much money has being paid as ransom. According to the former Inspector General of Police, Sir Mike Okiro, ₦15billion have been paid as ransom to the kidnappers between 2006 and 2009.⁴⁷ The payment could affect the state economy drastically. Many people kidnapped paid a lot of money as ransom. This situation affects both state and house hold economy. Some people usually go as far as borrowing to bail their relatives

out from the hands of the hoodlums. In many cases domestic and foreign direct investment are affected and consequently slow down growth.³⁵

Kidnapping weakened economic activities and also impacted negatively on the delivery of democratic dividends.^{47,35} It has plagued the socio-economic development of the country and has had spill-over effect on some jobless youths and graduates who see kidnapping and hostage taking as a lucrative means of making money, acquiring economic power and getting social recognition this has had adverse effect on the socio-economic development of the country.

The impact of kidnapping in Nigeria has been felt in the economic, diplomatic, security, tourism, democratic, security, tourism, democratic, socio-cultural and worst still the national image of the country.³⁷ As succinctly put, most kidnapping involve foreign workers and development partners, the effect on the economic is very enormous as it scares away potential development partners and robs the country the benefits of such development alliances and opportunities. With a rise in daily cases of kidnapping, it is very clear that available and potentials investors are scared of doing business in many parts of the country most especially the Niger-Delta region, Southeast and Southwest, particularly Ondo, Ekiti, and very recently, Osun State.³⁷ Foreign and home investors to these regions have reduced significantly, oil company workers and other business men and women have fled the regions, most oil company and allied operators have been shut while the volume of investment and capital flows to the regions have reduced drastically.³⁷

The menace of kidnapping has also inhibited the growth of tourism in the country. Both local and foreign tourists are weary of kidnapping areas and restricted their movements. Also related, successful sports men and administrators are scared to move around the country because; if they do not kidnap them they go to their parents like the case Michael Obi and Lulu. Government workers are afraid to go to work because those at the helm of affairs like permanent secretaries, directors and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of parastatals and government agencies are prime targets of the kidnapping network.⁴⁸

Furthermore, the incidence of kidnapping is taking its toll on the educational sector as students are now scared to go to higher institutions in areas where kidnapping is prevalent and lecturers too are reluctant to seek appointment to areas where kidnapping is preponderant. The urge to carry out research is been limited for fear of kidnapping and researchers restricted their movement to relatively peaceful

area. This scuttles academic/intellectual growth. Also the ruthless experience of some notable journalists in the country had dampened the morals of students to read journalism in our higher institutions.^{49,50}

Kidnapping for a ransom is a violent crime, a negative event that usually happen suddenly, generating fear and helplessness, threaten people physical or psychological well-being and leave victims in an emotional state which they are unable to deal with using their normal psychological resources. Any kind violent crime is a trauma for the victim it involves a collapse of the person's feelings of insecurity, also affecting indirectly their immediate family circle. Apart from the suffering of the direct victim the entire family structure is affected.³⁴

The victims of kidnapping suffer unimaginable ordeals in the hands of their captors as they are physically and emotionally tortured, most at times in order to elicit quick responses from the relations of the victims towards their request. Irrespective of the type of kidnapping and the motive for its perpetration, the psychological and financial impact of the problem can be quite devastating, both for the victims and their significant others.⁵¹ Victims of kidnapping differ in age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, level of education, and country of origin. Although anyone can become a victim of trafficking certain populations are especially vulnerable to this form of victimization.⁵² Describing the plight of the victims of the kidnapping, Hangroves in his book "Long March to Freedom: The True Story of a Columbian kidnapping" perceived kidnapping as a deliberate creation and marketing of human grief, anguish and despair.⁹ Children have suffered untold plights due to the dehumanizing growth of kidnapping in Nigeria. Not only does forcefully removal of a child from his/her family traumatizes the victim, it also unravels the lives of his/her parents, family and community.⁵³ One common effect of the abduction which seemed memorably traumatic for those concerned, and which was raised many times was the lack of contacts of many times was lack of contacts of many parents with their children during the period that they were away. This was often because the 'left behind parents' did not know the children whereabouts.⁵⁴ Through the incarceration, the victims' family is crippled by fear of uncertainty about the welfare of their loved ones, who the kidnappers are, why they abducted their loved ones and if the matter can, or will be safely resolved.⁵⁵

Child sexual abuse as a result of kidnapping also exposes child to the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.⁵¹ Clark also identified another guised form of sexual molestation of kidnapped children, the abducted under age victims are often subjected to forced marriage with older husbands. As reported by Clark, the child brides are married to older, more sexually experienced men

with whom it is difficult to negotiate safe sexual behaviour, especially when under pressure to bear children.⁵⁶ A study conducted in Kenya in 2004, finds that married girls aged 15-19 were 75 percent more likely to contract HIV than sexually active unmarried girls of the same age.⁵¹ Similar figures have been found in 29 countries across Africa and Latin America.⁵⁶

A victim of kidnapping may experience emotional consequences, which refer to the stabilization of psychological harm, a permanent incapacity that does not subside with passage of times nor with treatment. This constitutes an irreversible alteration of normal psychological functioning, or in legal but conceptually less precise terms an “impairment of mental health. Related to this, the most common psychological consequences in victims of crimes like kidnapping involve ‘permanent modification of personality traits’ (such as emotional dependence, suspiciousness or hostility) that persists at least two years and lead to a deterioration of interpersonal relationships and performance.⁵⁶ The transformation of the personality may be a chronic state or an irreversible outcome of post ‘Traumatic Stress Disorder’ (TSD) that arises as the consequence of having been victim of a violent crime.³⁴ The effect of child kidnapping which is more common and deep-rooted crime worldwide is unimaginable, in many cases, it is often the breadwinners of families that are usually targeted. The implication is always felt particularly within the family, whereby members of such families will have to feed themselves and adjust to their normal daily activities, until they secure the release of the victim. If the victim is a business man or woman the business will suffer, if he is a civil servant or an artisan, his place of work will be affected adversely. In both cases there is going to be some setback. If he/she works in an organization, the challenges to be experience are enormous as the victim absence will impact negatively on the system and the output may drop.³⁵

Victims of kidnapping also suffer indirect cost from the incidents. Some of the victims are killed in the process of kidnapping some sustain various levels of injuries like bullet wounds which may deform them forever. Many victims suffer various degrees of assault, abuse, torture in the hands of the kidnappers. Some of the female victims are even rapped by the kidnappers. Generally most victims suffer severe traumatic pains from their experiences in the hands of the kidnappers.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO AMELIORATE THE INCIDENCE OF KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA

In order to fight the recurrence of kidnapping in Nigeria effectively, there is need for holistically measures on the part of the all levels of government in Nigeria, foreign partners and neighbours, non-governmental organizations, community organizations, families and the vulnerable groups in devising various measures toward fighting kidnapping. To achieve these, the following recommendations are put forward:

- The scourge of unemployment is known to be one of the principal causes of kidnapping, the government and their agencies, the foreign investors and business community should embark on job creation programmes targeting at the youths who are the group mostly involved in abductions and kidnapping out of economic and social frustration.
- There is no doubt that the high level of poverty in the country is a contributing factor to the incidence of kidnapping. There is urgent need for poverty alleviation programmes towards addressing high rate of poverty among women, youth and children who are vulnerable segments of the population mostly kidnapped by terrorists or insurgents and trapped by organized criminals, ending up in abduction for force labour.
- There is need for adequate public information process to sensitise and engage members of the public by the security agencies in tracking and tackling the issue of kidnapping and hostage taking, a behavioural change messages and actions that return the mindsets of architects of kidnapping into the life of rule of law and peaceful co-existence, eliminates the network of organized crime used by kidnappers to carry out its nefarious activities.
- Efforts must be made by the government to reduce the high level of corruption among the security agencies, most especially the Nigerian Police, through transparent recruitment process, outright dismissal of culpable officers to serve as deterrents to others. Any officer found conniving with kidnappers should be dealt with.
- Promotion of democratic value to ensure the eradication of kidnapping, restores security climate for establishment of democratic culture, promoting of national development and foreign direct investments.

- The urgent need to review the current strategy of dealing with issue of kidnapping and hostage taking in Nigeria in particular; there is need to explore the extant and the extent to which they are enforced with a view to establishing their efficiency.
- Emphasis on the need for inclusive governance where by all layers of stakeholders has the benefit of empowerment and capacity building as opposed to the current practice of elitist governance.
- The disbarment programmes initiated by the Nigeria Police command is commendable, but should be comprehensive to include demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation programmes in the affected states, while also working with non-state actors like community security organizations (CSOs), NGOs and Community leaders for an inclusive and sustainable intervention.
- Adoption of tracking down devises (TDDs) such as Global Positioning System (GPS), Mobile Phone Tracking (MPT) and Location Aware System (LAS), design integrating Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) which is able to determine the location of pupils within the school premises, and also to map and determine guardian/ward relationship.
- There is urgent need for the three tiers of government in the country to involve and empower the traditional institution who are the closest authority to the grassroots. These criminals hide in the communities wherein traditional rulers adjudicate. It is easier for them to identify these criminals and checkmate them, hence the need to domesticate the security apparatus in the country.
- There is need for enactment of several penalty by the National and State assemblies on kidnapping convicts. Strict punishment should be enacted and uphold by agencies of government. The fear of legal reprisal can equally disabuse some perpetrations.
- Adequate funding of local hunters, vigilante, Agbekoyas, OPC who are very close to the grassroots which constitutes higher percentage of hideouts for kidnappers.
- The Nigeria police saddled with primary assignment to protect, maintaining peace and security in the country and be well equipped with sophisticated and modern weapons to face the well-equipped miscreants. There is need for adequate funding of the police and other security agencies in the country. Nigeria of over 200 million populations is parading about 300 million police men, there is grossly inadequate. The police should recruit more hands with encouraging salary and better job security as motivation for maximal performance.

- As it was introduced by the Osun State government, the federal and state government in the country should provide surveillance helicopters to aid technical detective assignments by the police and other security agents most especially when investigating kidnappers' hideouts.
- The ultimate panacea, in checkmating if total elimination is difficult, is the implementation of robust youth based programmed and employment for the Nigerian youth. This will address the issue of poverty and unemployment, because the root of every security is idle hands.

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