

Kidnapping in Nigeria: An Emerging Social Crime and the Implications for the Labour Market

Ngwama, Justice Chidi

Lecturer

Department of Industrial Relations and Personnel Management

College of Business and Social Sciences

Crawford University, Igbesa, Ogun State, Nigeria

Abstract

The significant impact of kidnapping and other associated crimes is becoming worrisome and perplexing not only to Nigerians but to the international community. This has heightened the fear of foreigners, especially international investors; thereby threatening the foundation of economic development. The overall implication has worsened the labour market situation resulting to thousands of unemployment and displacement of the workforce from the affected areas. This study takes a critical look on this new wave of crime and relative impact on the Nigerian labour market. This study indicates that the current wave of kidnapping has aggravated massive unemployment, worsening the already faulty labour market situation, and creating unfriendly environment for economic development. Recommendations were made on how this wave of crime should be tackled and labour market expanded to accommodate these restive youths who are major the culprits in this crime.

Key Words: Kidnapping, Employment, Economic Growth, Labour Market, Crime, and Security.

1.0 Introduction

The kidnapping of all manner of persons has gained ascendancy in Nigeria. A malady previously unknown to the people has rapidly become domesticated. In the last ten years, the volatile oil rich regions of the Niger Delta witnessed this phenomenon on a large scale with the target being mostly expatriates and Nigerians in the oil business. It has spread throughout the country extending to places as far as Kano and Kaduna in the far Northern part of Nigeria. South-East and South-South Nigeria have become known as the kidnappers' playgrounds of Nigeria.

Kidnapping seems easier compared to other forms of serious crimes. According to Davidson (2010), a group of criminals armed with guns and cell phones apprehend unsuspecting victims and drag their victim into a secluded spot and begin to make phone calls to whomever and demand for a ransom. The police with a mandate to provide security for the people are often unprepared for the task at hand. They think their job is done if they manage to secure the kidnapped, but of the kidnappers nothing much is ever heard. As we all know, the police are poorly trained and poorly equipped, but beyond these inadequacies there are worrying signs that their loyalty is suspected. Some whistle blowers have come to grief for confiding in them. The primary role of government is the provision of security for its own people. In Nigeria this role has been largely ignored. The Nigerian state no longer provides security for the Nigerian people. Nigerians have compulsorily become religious as whole families barricade themselves at night in prison-high walls and pray that God protection. But kidnapping as a variant of armed robbery is infinitely more disturbing as it often occurs in the open among persons going about their normal business.

The widening scale of insecurity in Nigeria is a cause for concern as all are affected by it. Churches, mosques, markets, schools, homes and the highway, all are susceptible to this menace. The abductees and their families are traumatised by the ordeal of kidnapping. Foreign investors are scared away from Nigeria. Nigerians are paying the price of poor governance and failures of leadership. Davidson (2010) points out that the general state of insecurity in some parts of the country has no doubt reached a stage where virtually everybody is now worried the direction the region is going. Presently, hardly can people sleep because of the fear of being robbed or kidnapped. Businessmen have taken flight with their businesses for fear of being kidnapped or robbed.

In a spate of three years, kidnapping and hostage taking have spread from the Niger Delta creeks to the mainland. The monster has spread and taken deep root in the South-East where thousands of able bodied but unemployed youths abound.

The current security challenge in the country is better understood against existing evidence that even government officials and traditional rulers are not spared. Kidnappings are targeted at the executive, legislative, and the judicial branch of the government, and also their family members in spite of the tight security at their disposal. This has led to some of these officials relocating their families outside the geopolitical zone or outside the country, thereby leaving the civilian population at the mercy of the marauding gangs. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Abuja, and Lagos; that were once regarded as insecure states, are now destinations of choice for many, and Ghana, for those that can afford it.

1.1 History of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Kidnapping has now become a generic word both in public and private discuss going by its prevalence in the country. Literarily, the word, which has become notorious, putrid and nauseating in the ears of virtually everyone is derived from "kid" meaning; child and "nab" which means; to snatch. Adewale (2009) pointed out that kidnapping now appears to be an emerging concern in Nigeria though it is not a new phenomenon. It is as old as the word itself. But the motive may vary from country to country. Since 1673 the unfriendly world has been used to the practice of stealing of children for use as servants or labourers in the American colonies. So it has come to mean any illegal capture or detention of a person or people against their will, regardless of age.

The kidnapers, who can be very erratic, have been found to engage in the criminality for several complex motives ranging from unemployment, idleness, vengeance, rituals, monetary gains and political reasons.

The first act of kidnapping in Nigeria started 2006 when the militants of the Niger Delta took total hostage to protest the inequality in the region. According to the militants, Nigeria is built at the expense of the region which serves as the cash cow for the whole country.

The action which started from the kidnapping of government expatriates has moved to men of God and their children, Nigerian politicians and their children, and religious leaders. Reuters (2009) pointed out that a total of 512 kidnapping cases have been reported so far this year, up from 353 for all of 2008.

Virtually, all of the kidnappings this year occurred in the south-east and Niger Delta regions, which harbour the Africa's biggest oil and gas industry. Most of the hostages are released unharmed after payment of ransom.

South-Eastern Nigeria (Abia State) in particular had most incidents with 110 people taken hostage; all of them have been released while police have arrested 70 suspects in connection with the kidnapping.

Gangs have taken advantage of the breakdown in law and order to target any high profile expatriate or Nigerian that could provide them with a large ransom.

2.0 Literature Review/Theoretical Framework

Kidnapping can be seen 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. This involves taking away of person against the person's will, usually to hold the person in false imprisonment or confinement without legal authority. This is often done for ransom or in furtherance of another crime. No one is free from being kidnapped. In Nigeria, the kidnapers are everywhere targeting both foreigners and non-foreigners alike with little or no resistance from our law enforcement agents.

Nigerian security system has been weakened in the face of this confrontation, a little has been done to find the socio-economic and underlining factors precipitating this crime.

Several theories have been put forward to explain kidnapping within the Nigerian context. Accordingly, the "Economic Theory" views kidnapping from economic concept of making ends to meet, Nseabasi (2009) citing (Tzanelli 2006, Gerth and Mills 1948: 56-7) has raised the idea that kidnapping is regulated by the laws of demand and supply and is a type of social action that involves the calculation on the most efficient means to the desired ends.

Kidnapping is a social enterprise and according to The Nation (May 10, 2002), "kidnapers are businessmen, they just happen to be on the illegal side of it...if you deprive them of the demand then there is not going to be any supply. This is the reason why perpetrators of this crime choose their victims based on their ability to cough out good money (Tzanelli 2006).

As kidnapping was first used as a weapon to fight for economic and environmental justice in the Niger Delta, the economic motivation was intermittently used as a means to fund and sustain the fight. The beginning of 2007 saw the emergence of various other deviant groups by various names that hide under liberation struggle to commit economic crimes.

The "Political theory" of Kidnapping see the act as a Political Tool which is motivated by attempt to suppress, outsmart, intimidate and subjugate political opponents, like the case in Anambara state when the former Central Bank governor who then was PDP gubernatorial candidate had his father kidnapped by the aggrieved opponents of the same party who felt marginalised by the PDP political process. Turner (1998) as cited by Nseabsi (2009) established relationship between "money and politics" accordingly, where there are political motivations for kidnapping and where ransoms are also demanded. Such ransoms are often used to further the political objectives of the kidnapping organisation or simply to facilitate the survival of the organisation. Nseabasi (2009) in his treatise stated that the most top kidnapping operations are masterminded by government officials, opposition groups, unrewarded or uncompensated members of election rigging militant groups, among others. Kidnapping is then seen as instrument for political vendetta and settling of political scores. The operation is organised and targeted mainly at key serving politicians or foreign workers or contractors working directly for government they affirmed. Once the victim is kidnapped, a high level negotiation is expected which will ultimately lead to a very heavy ransom. Such a ransom is used to further political goals, self -settling of aggrieved groups or a way of financially crippling a serving politician.

Another theory views kidnapping from the angle of unemployment which pervade the countries labour market. This is blamed on the inability of the government to create adequate employment for the youth. (Nseabasi,2009 Umoh, 2010) posited that the political consequence of kidnapping activity has had a spill-over influence on the jobless youths and criminals who take it as a new substitute or complement to robbery and pick pocketing. Such a group of kidnapers target not only prominent and well-off individuals but also ordinary citizens who possess little wealth. The common target includes every perceived person with prospects of high and lucrative ransom including teenagers, children and adults alike.

2.1 Current Statistics and Incidents of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Statistics appear to support the views of analyst. In December 2009, Police Affairs Minister, disclosed that 512 cases of kidnapping had been recorded from January 2008 to June 2009 against 353 recorded in 2008. Rundown of the statistics indicates that Abia State led the pack with a total of 110 kidnapping incidents: Imo: 58,109 arrests, 41 prosecution and one is dead, Delta recorded 44 kidnap cases, 43 releases, 27 arrests, 31 prosecuted and one death, and Akwa Ibom recorded 40 kidnap cases, 418 arrests and 11 prosecutions. The report added that between July/September 2008 and July 2009, over 600 million was lost to kidnapers. But beyond statistics being available, it is a known fact the most kidnap cases are never reported to the police authority for the fear of murder of the victims hence most families prefer to pay ransom to losing one of its own. For instance, in Kano, N80 million ransom was allegedly paid to kidnapers for the release of Kano -base multi- millionaire businessman, without a recourse to the police authorities; an industrialist in Nnewi paid 70 million to regain his freedom from his captors; another multi-millionaire businessman was kidnapped and released after he allegedly paid a ransom without recourse from the police Umejei, (2010).

The Associated Press in its report of August 27, 2008 stated that "more than 200 foreigners have been kidnapped in two years of heightened violence across Nigeria" restive South, the victims are normally released unharmed after a ransom is paid, although several have been killed during botched seizures or rescue attempts "Victims are maimed, raped and manhandled in such a manner that the stigma remains almost perpetually. The families and associates are knocked down by intractable trauma," Kupoluyi (2009).

On Sunday, July 11, 2010 four journalists and a driver travelling in a convoy of buses from a conference in Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State, were kidnapped in Abia State on their way back to Lagos. From their hideout, the abductors demanded a ransom of N250 million, and later reduced it to N30 million. A torrent of protests, condemnations and threats, greeted the action of the kidnapers and they were forced to let go of their victims. However, the police did not make a clear statement whether ransom was paid or not.

In Idah, Kogi State, the mother of the former President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), was also abducted. In Kano, a businessman was forcibly abducted in the presence of his family.

The criminals were apparently looking for dollars; not finding it, they shot and injured his three children and still made off with him. In Akwa-Ibom State where as many as ten medical doctors were kidnapped, staff at the University Teaching Hospital went on an indefinite strike following the failure of kidnappers to release their latest victim, a consultant pediatric surgeon. As a consequence, medical services at the specialist hospital were paralysed and patients were stranded. Also 26 UK nationals were kidnapped in Nigeria in between 2006 and 2007.

The oil-rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria has seen an explosion in the number of foreigners kidnapped for financial or political gain. Seven foreigners were reported kidnapped in Nigeria in 2005. That figure increased to 72 in 2006 and 223 in 2007. This exponential increase has been largely the result of activity by the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and other armed militant groups. 26 of the hostages were UK nationals. Of the 295 foreigners kidnapped in 2006 and 2007, five died as a result of injuries sustained during their abduction - including a Briton killed when the kidnappers' boat was attacked by the Nigerian Navy. One Syrian hostage died of illness very shortly after his release.

If you analyse the political, economic and security issues present in the Niger Delta and then look at the terrain, which favours the militants, the conclusion must be that kidnapping will continue. Nigeria may be a special case but expatriate staff is at risk of kidnapping where judicial and police systems are weak or corrupt, there is a huge disparity between rich and poor coupled with political and economic breakdown.

2.2 Table 2: Selected Cases of Niger Delta Liberation Fights

Year Cases

2003:

Troops were sent to the oilfields amid clashes between rival Ijaw and Itsekiri groups. Around 30 people died.
April: militants seized four Niger Delta oil rigs, taking some 270 people hostage, 97 of them were foreigners. After negotiations, the hostages were released.

2004:

Five Nigerians and two Americans working for Chevron and Texaco were killed by pirates in the Niger Delta. Fighting between groups seeking to control the oilfields left some 500 people dead in Port Harcourt and surrounding regions, according to Amnesty International.

October: the groups reached a ceasefire agreement.

2005:

Six oil workers including two Germans were kidnapped and freed three days later.

2006:

January: Separatist gunmen kidnapped four foreign oil workers and blew up a pipeline feeding an export terminal. Five days later, gunmen shot dead several troops and attacked a Shell oil plant. The four foreigners; an American, a Briton, a Bulgarian and a Hungarian were freed at the end of the month, but the group threatened to take further hostages.

February: An armoured government helicopter was brought in to fire on barges being used to smuggle oil near a separatist militant base. Militants stroke back later, firing on the aircraft. Separatists kidnapped nine foreigners - three Americans, one Briton, two Egyptians, two Thais and a Filipino working for a Shell subcontractor. The attack forced Shell to suspend exports from a major terminal. Six of the hostages were freed after a week, but the other three were held until late in March.

April: The US firm Exxon Mobil briefly evacuated non-essential staffers from its Nigerian oil installations due to fear of an attack by militants. At the end of the month, separatist's militants used a car bomb to attack oil tanker trucks, and warn China not to invest in the Nigerian oil industry.

May: Nine officials for the Italian Petrol company Eni SpA were killed when armed members of MEND attacked Eni SpA's security forces in Port Harcourt. MEND militants briefly occupied and robbed a bank near the Eni SpA base. A company official stated, "Eni has temporarily evacuated staff and contractors from the area of the base affected by the incident and the situation is currently under control."

May: Three foreign oil workers, one of them was an Italian, were seized but released after a day. A Nigerian court ordered Shell to pay 1.5 billion dollars in compensation to the Ijaw people of the Niger Delta for environmental damage, but the company said it is appealing the ruling.

May 10: An executive with the United States-based oil company, Baker Hughes, was shot and killed in the South Eastern city of Port Harcourt. At the time of the shooting, it was not immediately known if MEND had any involvement or not. Witnesses said the attacker appeared to be specifically targeting the American executive.

June 2: Militants abducted six Britons, an American and a Canadian from a Norwegian-run drilling rig off the coast of Bayelsa State.

June 20: Two Filipinos, workers of PGF Explorations Limited, an oil servicing Contract Company to Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), were on a Tuesday kidnapped by unknown gunmen at P. W. J Jetty in Port Harcourt.

August 20: Ten members of MEND were killed by the Nigerian military. The members were working on releasing a Royal Dutch Shell hostage.

October 2: Ten Nigerian soldiers were killed off the shore of the Niger Delta in their patrol boat by a MEND mortar shell. Earlier that day a Nigerian/Royal Dutch Shell convoy was attacked on in the Port Harcourt region resulting to some of them getting wounded.

November 20: Two former militants were killed in a raid by an unidentified armed group at the premises of a non-governmental organisation AAPW (Academic Associates Peace Works) in Port Harcourt.

November 27: A British oil worker, kidnapped with six others from a Saipem Oil Rig was killed in crossfire when the kidnappers ran into a Navy patrol later in the day of the abduction.

Source: Adapted from Akpabio and Akpan (2009) in Nseabasi (2010)

2.3 Comparative studies

Below are kidnapping statistics for various countries.

Rank	Country	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	TOTAL
1	Colombia	464	244	217	469	947	908	960	972	5,181
2	Mexico	46	87	31	48	109	275	436	402	1,434
3	Former Soviet Union*	5	5	13	3	21	41	57	105	250
4	Brazil	94	66	73	56	65	67	43	51	515
5	Philippines	53	56	78	61	113	61	51	39	512
6	Nigeria	1	0	0	1	0	2	6	24	34
7	India	9	10	13	9	5	8	5	17	76
8	Ecuador	1	10	15	11	7	5	5	12	66
9	Venezuela	15	6	7	7	28	24	10	12	109
10	South Africa	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	10	11
	Total	688	484	447	666	1,295	1,391	1,573	1,644	8,188

Source: Hiscox Group

The above table shows the global rating of incidents of kidnapping. Although it has become very rampant in Nigeria, however it has been a global problem which suddenly finds itself in this part of the world. Nigeria is ranked six while Mexico comes first and South Africa comes last among the first-ten nation where kidnapping is rampant. Though Iraq is not listed among the first ten countries, however it is still at the extreme end of the risk spectrum.

The discovery in March 2008 of the bodies of four American contractors kidnapped in Iraq more than a year ago, illustrates the extreme risks that employees and employers are prepared to undertake in search of an extra dollar. Some will argue that Iraq is at the extreme end of the risk spectrum and that the deceased were fully aware of the risks.

Meanwhile, somewhere in the UK the families of five Britons kidnapped in Iraq on May 27, 2007 are still awaiting further news of their loved ones.

These developments appear not too good for human and economic survival. More than 300 hundred foreigners have been abducted in Iraq since kidnapping erupted there in April 2004. Of these, 149 have been released but 56 are known to have been killed by their captors and 86 are missing and presumed dead.

In a recent statistics posted by NationMaster.com, according to Adewale (2009) showed that out of the 13,973 reported cases of kidnapping, United Kingdom had 3,261; South Africa was 3,071, while Iceland had two cases among the countries documented.

Aster Van Kregfen, Amnesty International Representative Researcher in Nigeria, stresses that Nigerian police needs to be strengthened to the challenge of kidnapping.

“The way to be tough on violent crimes like kidnapping is to strengthen police ability to detect potential crime before they occur and prevent them” Kregfen stated. The Federal Government needs to strengthen the police training resources to increase police investigation capacity and effectiveness

2.4 Socio-Economic Factors Facilitating Kidnapping in Nigeria

Leadership Failure

The current state of anomie on our political history could be blamed on poor leadership elite who are unresponsive to this state of insecurity as they over concentrate on how to acquire political power. They place and give little or no value to matters concerning greater nation aspiration and the dignity of lives of the people.

Increasing rate of kidnapping and other criminal activities is a direct consequence of failure of leadership.

Our political leadership is too engrossed with issue of power acquisition because of what they personally get out of it and negates the responsibilities expected of them. The character of our political leadership at all levels contradicts the logic and philosophy of governance which essentially is the promotion of human dignity and the protection of core values of society.

Poor security system

While there is need to condemn these acts of criminality, there is need also to condemn the security agencies for incompetence and complicity on their part.

There is the need to restate that the Federal Government which has the exclusive power over security matters immediately put in place a mechanism for ending the booming kidnapping or hostage-taking racket particularly in some parts of the country, anything short of ending the prevailing tension, regime of fear and general insecurity is unacceptable to the Nigerians who have waited in vain for the realisation of the promises of democratic governance since 1999.

The negative impact of the worrying trend on the economic well being of the country was also lost on government. Wogu (2010) described the incident as a violent assault on the dignity and right of Nigeria workers.

Political Economy of the Niger Delta

Political Economy of the Niger Delta Crisis continues to dominate the discussion on the current Nigeria political economy. Lack of true federalism has contributed to the injustice in Nigeria, which has denied the people of Niger Delta the fair share of the national resources to finance community development projects. Thus, the inequity in resources allocation and systemic injustice that have subjected the people to economic hardship and misery prompted the agitation for resource control and youth militancy (it appears that force is the only option to correct social injustice in Nigeria) in the region. This could degenerate into a greater political and national security problem and cripple the economy if the root causes of the agitation are not amicably resolved. As the crisis deepens and as the key economic indicators look southwards, foreign and local investors would relocate their resources elsewhere.

Loss of societal value

Looking at Nigeria today we have mortgaged our culture of respect, love for human lives, hard work, friendliness and receptiveness to strangers in exchange of the Western culture and ostentatious orientation. These have given birth to the modern crime and social evil destroying the core value of our society.

Onovo (2009) attributed the rising crime in the different regions to the celebration of fraudsters by leaders. He frowned at the appointment of individuals indicted of corruption as head of parastatals and various ministries of government.

This explains absence of clear direction on those in the corridor of power who are preoccupied with self aggrandizement rather than pursuing policies that will benefit the society. He also condemned the practice in the country, where people who embezzled or misappropriated public funds are celebrated by religious and traditional rulers. Celebrating people of questionable character is an indictment on the societal and moral value which such rulers should represent. He pointed out that one of the obvious reasons which encourages kidnapping to thrive, is that people who celebrate such criminals end up encouraging them to do more.

Onovo (2009) opined that the high wave of crime in the country, especially in the South-East and South-South is fundamentally due to materialism and loss of societal values, noting that people were ready to do anything to get rich and be celebrated in the society. While also blaming the wave of kidnapping and armed robbery in these areas on unemployment, he pointed out that most of the graduates of Nigerian universities are half-baked and cannot defend their certificates.

He suggested the need to resuscitate many industries like the Nkalagu Cement Company that have been moribund which could employ 50,000 people while Nigerian Railway Corporation could employ 78,000 people if fully operational. The religious leaders should join in fighting this war by stopping celebration of people who embezzle public funds and are of questionable character. "Traditional rulers should also stop conferring titles on them because they encourage them to continue by doing so," Onovo affirmed.

Unemployment

Every year, Nigerian universities graduate millions from higher institutions of learning. Since this administration/government came into existence, how many jobs has it created in the Federal Civil Service? So, the thing boils down to unbridled unemployment in the country. If people are empowered, if people are given jobs to do, if you provide one million jobs in this country, most of these crimes will be reduced. Even at times when you want to be creative, there is no government incentive to empower you. The Nigerian government lack vision and that is why the country has so degenerated that nobody is interested in the welfare of the citizens.

Okoro (2010) states that it is no longer news that the unemployment factor in Nigeria with its alarmingly increasing rate, is among the country's top five headaches. Neither is it news that this evil monster, unemployment, has succeeded massively in pouring into the minds of its victims, bright but negative thoughts and ideas on how to make fast cash, by ignoring all cautions. Today, the newest idea seems strongly to be 'kidnapping.'

It was not until the late 90's that the kidnapping business became popular as a route to consider, especially amongst the militant groups in the oil-rich Niger Delta. It was all along considered a veritable tool in fighting the refusal of oil operators to install in host communities some developmental projects, for constantly sucking their resources - oil. Victims were usually foreigners, who were either staffers or expatriates of an oil operator. They would be captured, kept safely away until some huge amount is paid for their release. This trend continued successfully for a long time. However, going by reports, a total of 353 kidnappings were reported in 2008. As at July this year, an estimated 512 persons have been kidnapped in Nigeria. It must have slipped at some point into the minds of some group of unemployed buddies, to want to experiment with kidnapping their own black brothers and sisters, who are either oil workers, public figures or just wealthy. The experiment obviously turned out to be a huge job offer, for as much unemployed graduates who saw it as such.

So far, the list of victims has grown so tall. It becomes less difficult to predict the future from here. In an interview after his release, a victim of kidnapping identified his kidnappers as "young graduates who did not have employment and were looking for how to survive."

If the activities of kidnapping are not checked, everybody will become a potential target, even the so called 'common man.' If the Government, in their usual check-back approach, fails to address the unemployment situation in the country, soon the entire country may have to go for a ransom at one time or another.

The kidnappers believe they should take their destinies into their hands and grab whatever they could, using the barrel of gun in the face of systematic looting of funds by government officials, to have a fair share of national resources. Politicians have reported to have stolen about 220 Billion pounds in the face of four decades of independence from Britain - an amount roughly equivalent to the Western's aids ever given to Africa.

3.0 Labour Market Implications and Outcome of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Despite increased attention to the problem of young people on the part of the state, a number of problems remained unsolved. The most urgent problem is providing jobs for graduates from the institutions of higher learning under the conditions of world crisis and rising unemployment, it is especially hard for young specialists to find their place in the labour market.

Joblessness creates a number of material and psychological problems which could lead to social vices. Young people are trying to find a way to achieve self-realisation, and when they encounter difficulties, they find alternative ways to make a living. Accordingly, Ivonova (2011) points out that many of them are aware of the need to take personal initiatives and they intend to find a way out of their difficult situation. At the same time the worsening of the problem of youths' employment requires that a state policy be worked out and a programme be designed to tackle these challenges. The labour market represents aggregate supply and demand for manpower, through the interaction of the two that the economically active portion of the population deployed in various sphere of economic activity. It is in the labour market that the relationship is established between employer and hired workers, relationship that helps to bring the workforce together with the means of production. This serves to meet the needs of the former for labour and the needs of the latter for income.

No doubt, the menace and impact of kidnapping have created a faulty labour market in Nigeria. So, the impact of the menace began to emerge and businesses in the country began a journey down the abyss of economic decline. Hence, while the kidnapper ravaged the entire Nigeria, business and investors' confidence becomes casualties, and the people suffered. Other connotations associated with these youth, crime, unemployment and labour market development in Nigeria current trend are as follows;

Work Place Insecurity

Indeed while workers move about their daily chores constantly watching their back, it is regarded as a sour grape in the mouth for any employer to post employee to where kidnapping is rampant.

Wogu (2010), the current Minister of Labour, cited in Umejei (2010) appeared to read the mind of workers, when he gave assurances that workers should go about their duties without fear, but labour movement differs as it expressed fears that except government takes pro-active steps, the effect on productivity could be enormous.

Such actions negatively affect the productivity of diligent workers as it raises fear concerning the working place. Whether at work or in leisure all Nigerians are entitled to their fundamental human right including the right to movement, which the kidnappers have now curtailed. There is every reason to condemn kidnapping as an evil business and call on these abductors to channel their energies into productive ventures that will benefit them, their families and society as a whole. Nigerians should be worried about the potential of kidnapping business to impact negatively on the Nigerian society as a whole.

Threat to Industrial Harmony and Unemployment

The threat of kidnapping to the workforce in Nigeria no doubt constitutes threat to industrial harmony which has a ripple effect worsening the current unemployment problem in the country. It is estimated that 874 companies have left Nigeria since last year (Punch Nov. 2010 pg 1, 2). Okolo (2010) notes that the ugly development is scaring away both local and foreign investors and portends grave danger for South East and South South survival as a people, stressing that "if industries are closing shops and investors are not forthcoming because of insecurity and other attendant problems faced by businesses, then the future particularly that of the children should agitate the minds of everybody."

Destabilisation of Labour Market

The exit of firms and organisations in these areas dominated by kidnapping tantamount to sending thousands of workers back to the labour market thereby worsening unemployment situation.

Apart from this, with the threatening situation many workers are willing to resign their jobs and relocate to other areas for the fear that they might become victims of the kidnappers. This has gross implication on the labour market. Fajana (2000) posited that people may migrate based on socio-economic and socio-cultural reasons of which kidnapping constitute a push-out factor in some particular areas. Non-economic factors act as a pull-in factor and cause population mobility creating a different opportunity structure in two geographical areas which is based on social and psychological crime factors.

This again results to more unemployment. However, statistics released by the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed that about 10 million Nigerians were unemployed in Nigeria as at March, 2009. The Bureau defines the unemployment rate as the percentage of Nigeria's labour force that is qualified to work but did not work for at least 39 hours in the week preceding the survey.

The destabilisation of the Nigerian labour market via kidnapping has created untold hardship for the workers and members of their families and dependants. The exit of companies in these areas also has its own serious effect on the economy apart from the impact on labour force. There is gross loss of revenue to our great nation which is already rated as one of the most poverty stricken nation with low gross domestic product (GDP).

Oil companies in the region suffered years of attacks which at their peak were costing the OPEC members \$1 billion in lost oil revenues until an amnesty programme began last August, buying more than a year of relative peace.

Economic Implication of Kidnapping

Not only does kidnapping affect the psychology of the direct victims and their families, it spread a fear that hinders direct economic investment in the area where such evils are perpetuated. This in the short and long term leads to declined economic productivity and unemployment and a threat to the federal government's recent successes in wooing investors into the country”

Omar (2010), the President of Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) cited in Umejei (2010), lamented that the ungodly venture was threatening the very foundation of the Nigerian economy. Not only does it have negative implication on the economy, this crime constitutes a serious threat to the Nigerian labour market which had already been fractured. To Omar, the seizure of workers was the final nail that the Nigerian economy might be waiting for to go into complete recession. He explained: “it will be dangerous times in view of the general state of insecurity in our country. Kidnapping in particular has become the norm such that even poor workers are not spared.”

4.0 Policy Analysis

There is no doubt that Nigeria is today one of the major kidnapping capitals of the world. This has obvious implications for investments, development and even the quality of governance.

Adibe (2010) expressed that the common tendency is to blame the all-encompassing wave of kidnapping outside the Niger Delta exclusively on the unacceptable rate of unemployment in the country, an inefficient and corrupt Police force that is ill-equipped to fight crime, and collusion between kidnapers and politicians. These factors however appear to be mere symptoms of a larger malaise, namely that pervasive kidnapping, is one of the major symptoms of both ‘failed’ and ‘failing’ states. Most of the countries where kidnapping have been pervasive have been either failed or failing states – Baghdad after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Columbia from the 1970s until about 2001, and Mexico, between 2003 and 2007.

Nwokedi (2009) points out that kidnapping and terrorism in Nigeria were unknown in the early years of Nigeria's independence in 1960. It became rampant in the late 90s and further culminating in today's epidemic proportion. If you look at kidnapping and terrorism you will understand from its definition that it reflects a breakdown in law and order in society. It is a sign that formal authority is ineffectual and that checks and balances in governance are not working since little or no prosecution of cases abound.

The kidnapper grows his trade on the assumption that there is no justice and equality provided by organisation of society as to encourage people to work and conscientiously earn a decent living. In that light, they arm to become powerful in order to join the loot. Where there is proper education and civic orientation perhaps this impression could be changed but not in Nigeria at the moment where money is held too high surpassing every other virtue in the pursuit of survival. In response to this precarious state of the nation, Nwabueze (2010) suggests a bloody revolution to sanitise the country and to save the future generation from descending into the abyss of economic misfortune, degradation and poverty.

In the 2010 failed state index report, Nigeria is ranked 14th among countries that are most likely to fail. In 2009, Nigeria was ranked 15th, in 2008, it occupied the 19th position, while in 2007 it was regarded as the 17th most vulnerable country in the world. It is obvious that the Nigerian state has failed to bring about positive changes to the lives of the people even under democratic government. Democratic and economic progress in the country is challenged by poor governance, entrenched corruption, intensive conflict, ineffective service delivery and pervasive poverty.

The nation remains very close to the bottom of the united nation development programme. Human development index report shows that about 70 per cent of Nigerian youth are unemployed whereas the labour market can only absorb 100 per cent of new job entrants. Nigerians ranked 70th out of 71 countries in 2008 report in the state of the world's mothers. The national maternal mortality is 800 per cent per 100,000 live births, but the rate is at least three times higher in the Northern States.

Since 1999, Nigeria has been witnessing recurrent incident of ethno- religious and communal conflicts, many of which are derived from distorted use of oil related wealth, flaws in the 1999 constitution and long standing disputes over the distribution of land and other resources.

From 1970 to 1999 oil generated almost \$231 billion rents for the Nigeria State. It is also estimated that Nigeria earned a cumulative revenue of about N38 trillion from June 1999 to December 2009.

In spite of the government's anti-graft war, government contracting remains rife with corruption and kick backs, and many state and local officials continue without stealing of public funds. By 2002, in spite of oil wealth the nation's per capita income had plunged to about one – quarter of its mid 1970s height, below the level at independence.

Official graft is rife because the institutions meant to fight the monster are weak and ineffective. In 2004, Nigeria was one of the four African Countries to sign up to the Extractive Industries Transparent Institute, an international effort to promote the publication of payments that oil and mining firms make to governments.

Today, the initiative has been crippled by lack of political will. The two anti-graft bodies, the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) established to fight graft have become overwhelmed and ineffective. The result is the impunity with which public treasures are looted.

Recent reports in The Punch Newspaper (Punch 2009:14) stated that while senate president gets 250million quarterly allowance or 83.33 million per month, ten other principal officers take home 78 million every three months or N26 million per month. The allowances of members of the house of representative are within the same range.

For many reasons, Nigerian's security agencies have not been able to respond effectively to security threat, which is both political and criminal. Armed robbery, kidnapping, assassination and sectarian violence define the Nigerian people daily lives.

Nigeria state faces real threat of collapse or revolution, if the rapid descent into the abyss is not immediately arrested. The path to a peaceful change is to immediately begin to prune the bloated size of government and tackle corruption in order to release more public funds for the provision of infrastructure and social services and creating employment for thousands of unemployed youth who are roaming about the streets for want of job to sustain living. It is equally urgent for the nation to move toward fiscal federalism in order to create wealth from solid minerals and other natural resources now lying idle in various parts of the country.

5.0 Conclusion

This vividly captured the point raised by an analyst in "Public Relations for Maximum Productivity" that "no matter the level of international diplomacy and brinkmanship we employ, if we do not work conscientiously to rid our country of negative tendencies that abound here and show our determination to build a new foundation for collective development and progress, Nigerians will be wasting their time and money because the international community will not take us seriously." Genuine investors now shy away from venturing into the Nigerian business environment that is already enmeshed in dearth of infrastructure, epileptic power supply, high cost of finance and unfavourable political climate. It started in the Niger Delta Region with the toga of kidnapping to drive home militants agitation for the development of the region.

Today, it is assumed a business status for unscrupulous criminals who kidnap for ransom. This has remained one of the greatest drawbacks to investment in Nigeria. Today, social vices in the form of armed robbery, murder, assassination and lately kidnapping have assumed a frightening proportion thus giving vent to full realisation of productivity.

Though investors had always found the Nigerian business environment suffocating, kidnapping capped it all and made investing in the country both discouraging and unattractive.

For example, “in some states, factories are closing up, people no longer visit their villages, social and economic activities are grinding to a halt”, Akunyili (2009) stated that kidnapping is fast destroying economic good and can destroy the survival of Nigeria as a nation. “The economic implication is that investors, if we are to have some of them will not come because of the insecurity arising from kidnapping, and it has a spiral effect on businesses.

“So, business activities have been affected by kidnapping, especially high profile business activities because kidnapers don’t kidnap newspaper vendor or motor mechanics. They kidnap somebody who owns a factory or who is capable of bringing millions that they normally demand. So, when such people keep away, you will find the economy of that area being affected.” A prime candidate for explaining this phenomenon is the labour market. Unemployment and low wage have been blamed as principal facilitators of crime. It is noted that labour instability have been associated with crime, especially violent crime, kidnapers that were interviewed blamed the economy for their actions Viridiana (2010)

It is easy to attribute the attractiveness of a crime to a combination of lack of labour qualification, low salaries and high unemployment rates. Indeed a young man without formal education and facing difficulties to secure a job, criminality like kidnapping may look attractive. No qualifications are required to become a kidnapper, only boldness, and even such a requirement becomes less important overtime. The Nigeria government should take pragmatic step in its policy decisions to address these fundamental issues like poverty, economic hardship which has been fueled by corruption of the leaders and above all, massive unemployment and low wages that are threatening the foundation of peace and our existence as a nation.

6.0 Policy Recommendation

Government should Partner with Labour Market Institution.

It is high time the government revisited some institutions that facilitate information between the potential employee and the employer. In the good old days, there were job centres in ministry of Labour, and other private consulting organisations that helped to bring the suppliers and demanders of labour together. Since labour market is an abstract concept, Fajana (2000) posited that jobs may be in existence and the suppliers of labour resources are not aware of the existence of such vacancies.

Applying Appropriate Sanction on the Culprit

Curbing this social malaise is a collective effort, while we advocate that the culprits should be apprehended and punished as appropriate, more importantly public officers should shun corruption and ostentatious display of wealth. Focus should be centred on good governance with accountability, transparency and fair play. With these variables in place, kidnapping will become less attractive and in turn stimulate more sense of compassion, patriotism, sustainable development and nation building.

Fair Distribution of Resources

The government should ensure that the resources of the country are harnessed and they should also promote national prosperity. This government has a responsibility, without being told, to ensure that every Nigerian is secured. The government must ensure that every Nigerian is gainfully employed and that social infrastructure is provided for the people of the country.

Diversifying the Economy to create employment

Solution to the problem of youth unemployment must therefore be found in the diversification of the economy from oil to agriculture and agro-allied industries. If employment must be generated, the curriculum in both secondary and tertiary institutions must be reviewed in line with the demands of economic diversification.

Equipping the Youth with Appropriate skill and training for Entrepreneurship

The government should revamp NDE programme, this will assist in providing training for young people who were out of school and out of work, but caution that the training had to provide the young people with marketable skills. Inadequate and faulty educational system in Nigeria is really a source of concern, there is a disturbing and growing mismatch between the skills of those looking for work and the skills employers seek to hire. If left unchecked, this could lead to a situation of a "lost generation," where those with the necessary skills do very well while those without the desired skills will struggle economically for the remainder of their lives. We may be seeing a shift in the labour force widening the gap here between haves and have-nots. As long as this situation is unchecked, it will be difficult contending with restiveness, crimes, kidnapping and other negative tendencies associated with our young people.

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