

Research Article

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Impacts of Crime on Socio-Economic Development

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Abstract

Crime is as old as man and it exists in every society in respective of its level of development. The rate at which criminals operate unhindered in most societies especially in developing countries around the world is worrisome. Crime creates fear and untold suffering among people. Crime often stands as a barrier to socio-economic growth of society, discourages investment, increases the cost of transactions and ultimately fuel migration which eventually creates economic development disparities around the world. The aim of this study is to analyze the manifestation of crime the world over with a view to intimating government of all countries to have a firm control of all criminal activities in their respective countries for a better society. The approach methodology is based on a literature review of scientific journals and reports. Secondary data were sourced from both published and unpublished works as the study applies descriptive method. The main results showed various manifestations of crimes such as banditry, kidnapping, rape, stealing and murder among others. Therefore, crime fuels corruption and destabilizes development of any society. In conclusion, crime knows no boundary nor personality as it affects people at all levels. This sad activity will continue to be a major factor of lack of socio-economic development if no strong action is taken by governments to effectively tackle the activities of criminals, terrorists and bandits around the world.

Keywords: Criminology, Crime, Management, Security Agencies, Victims, Socio-Economic Development

1. Introduction

Crime is one of the problems governments all over the world have been confronted with as many innocent people have been maimed and killed due to the activities of criminals around the world. Crime constitutes a major human security problem confronting humanity across the world (Ukoji and Okolie-Osemene, 2016). Crime is a universal phenomenon and has always been associated with society. Nations like the United States of America, Mexico, Mali, South Africa, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq and Nigeria among others have course to contend with rising incidence of crimes like homicide, robbery and cybercrime among others. Criminal activities around the world can be experienced in the forms of armed robbery, kidnapping, banditry, drug trafficking, traffic offence, rape, murder, drugs abuse, corruption, assault and stalking among others (Tretter, 2013; Ayodele & Adeyinka, 2014). The inability of security agencies to effectively combat the aforementioned crimes has adversely retarded growth and development in most of the countries around the world (Osawe, 2015). Crime is not uniformly distributed across space and it abounds in every country, however, the degree of crime varies from society to society as no society is completely immune from crime (National Institute of Justice Website, 2010 and Ratcliffe, 2014). The activities of criminals can be manifested either on land, air or at sea, especially sea robbery/piracy which has become a major source of apprehension to mankind (World Bank Group, 2020).

According to Ejemeyovwi (2015), for a crime to occur there must be victims, offenders and properties located at a point over a given period of time, just as Mehran *et al.* (2019) defined crime as an act which seems to violate and breach an existing law of a state. For any crime to occur, there must be a motivated offender; a suitable target and the absence of someone or something like close circuit television that can act as a protector. Crimes against persons and property have become a serious threat to life and socio-economic activities of the people all over the world. Balogun *et al.* (2014) observed that the quick report of up-to date information on crime prone areas to security agencies will contribute to effective policing thereby enhancing the reduction of crime in the society.

In 2017, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) observes that crime fuels corruption, infiltrate business, politics and destabilizes growth and development of any society. The UNODC maintained that crime undermines governance; as crime makes life miserable, short, harsh, continues to instils fear on people and generate a general sense of insecurity around people (Okpuvwie and Toko, 2020). Salim (2015) noted that various variables like poverty levels; family stability; individual and societal health; demographic and political considerations are related to and have influence on crime. Crime affects the psychological, financial, physical and spiritual well-being of the victims (Eidell and Ellis, 2010). The effects of crime on the socio-economic stability of society cannot be overemphasized as people always have the fear of been attacked or killed by criminals and hoodlums. This paper is aimed at contributing to existing literature from a theoretical and descriptive point of view. The study analyzes the causes of crime, types of crime and the overall effects of crime on the socio-economic development of the society.

Study Area

The work does not cover any particular study area as the paper generally discussed the subject matter hence, no specific area, region or location is covered in this paper.

3. Materials and Methods

The study basically used only secondary data that were sourced from both published and unpublished works. Materials were also sourced from the internet and police official documents to enhance the quality of the work.

3.1 Methodological Approach

The study mainly applies the descriptive method. This approach adopted for the study entails the analyses, syntheses and dissection of various scientific literatures to enhance a better understanding of the subject matter under investigation. This methodological approach describes the characteristics of the phenomenon (crime) that is being investigated.

3.1.1 Research of Literature

The research of literature has been carried out in the libraries of AFRIGIST and Obafemi Awolowo University Campus. Also, some literatures were obtained from the internet through www.google.com research engine.

3.1.2 Description of Documents

To enhance the quality of the work, the study mainly applies descriptive method on the various collected documents to retrieve relevant information on crime.

4. Literature Review

4.1 Causes of Crimes

Crime does not just occur in society as there are numerous reasons why people indulge in criminal acts, just as there is no one cause of crime because crime is a complex phenomenon that changes across cultures over time. Some people commit crime due to the gains and attractiveness of the target and the conducive nature of the environment they find themselves (Ayuba *et al*, 2016). Ukoji and Okolie (2016) observed that most criminals indulge in criminality for various reasons ranging from unemployment and pressure to fill up the gap between the rich and the poor, drugs to greed and inadequate crime control model of national security among others. Salim (2015) noted that various variables like poverty, family stability, individual and societal health, demographic and political considerations are related to crime. Crime is a complex and dynamic phenomenon that changes across cultures with time. As cultures change over time, behaviours that were once not seen as crime may become criminalized and then decriminalized again. Hence, the issue of crime needs to be studied holistically for enhanced security.

Sowmyya (2015) argues that there is no individual that is born criminal. He opines that it is the situations and the conditions around the individual that make him act as a criminal. Marilyn (2014) noted that the motivation to commit crimes is unevenly distributed across space as offenders tend to be concentrated in areas with high unemployment, low economic status and physical deterioration. Some scholars believed that greed/grievance, relative deprivation and frustration among others are some of the causes of crime in the society. The problem with crime is that it is usually linked with greed and violence which stimulate the abuse of unchallengeable rights of the people (Ukoji and Okolie, 2016). Bhorat *et al.* (2017) asserted that the high rate of crime in South Africa is traceable to the problems associated with poverty, high unemployment and inequality among the growing population. Similarly, Justia (2018) cited in Jeke *et al.* (2021) equally avers that the occurrence of crime in South Africa can be adduced to the subculture of violence in the societies, susceptibility of young individuals and the easy manner in which people have access to weapons and ammunitions of different calibres. It is true that crimes are caused by combination of factors ranging from family hereditary, social, economic and psychological among others. Some of the socio-economic factors that caused crime in the society are considered in the succeeding paragraphs.

4.1.1 Unemployment

Unemployment is one of the major causes of crime in the society. It is observed that if a person is unemployed, he may be tempted to adopt some innovative but negative methods to meet up with his daily needs and wants. Soh (2012) noted that criminal behaviour can be found in all types of people; even wealthy and educated citizens also commit crimes. The issue of crime cut across all category of persons in the society as both the rich, poor, politicians and government officials are cut in the web of crime in most countries around the world. There is a positive relationship between crime and unemployment as people with low socio-economic background are good targets that can be lured into criminality with ease. Adegoke (2014) viewed unemployment and poverty as twins which provide support to each other. When people are unemployed and homeless, social unrest may take over and lead to increase in crime. Salim (2015) posited that whenever people have no financial means to purchase their basic supplies, they may be tempted to indulge in criminality in order to survive.

Rajnish (2018) opines that people who exhibit criminal activities are linked to the effects of unemployment in the society, just as Chinedu and Bartholomew (2015) in their study on developing a crime mapping GIS system for law enforcement agencies in Owerri metropolis, Imo State, Nigeria, asserted that unemployment, poverty and use of illicit drugs are some of the most common factors that are responsible for crime. Unemployment and poverty are the main sources of criminal behaviours that manifest in the forms of rape, kidnapping and armed robbery among others (Ajaegbu, 2012; Adegoke, 2014; Adeyemi et al, 2021).

4.1.2 Lack of Education

Lack of education is another reason while some people indulge in criminality, as there seems to be a strong correlation between crime and education (Seda and Guler, 2013; Lochner,2020). Several studies indicate that completing high school significantly reduces criminal activities, considering the fact that low literacy rates and education gaps serve as tools and opportunities for recruitment into criminal gangs. A survey conducted in the United States on various inmates in prisons revealed that many of the inmates could not read or write above elementary school. The most common crimes committed by these inmates according to the survey were robbery, burglary, automobile theft, drug trafficking and shoplifting. According to Hjalmarsson *et al.* (2015), criminal seems to have fewer academic qualifications when compared to the rest of the population and an increase in education can lead to decline in the commission of crime.

The researchers are of the view that the issue of crime cannot be related to the uneducated persons in society alone as both the educated and the uneducated persons also commit crimes. There are instances where high government officials, officials of corporate organizations, chief executives of banks and university officials have been caught in the web of crime. It is therefore important to note that the issue of crime does not only revolves around the uneducated persons alone as people who are highly educated in the society have been arrested, charged and prosecuted in competent courts of jurisdiction for money laundry, fraud and conspiracy among others.

4.1.3 Income Inequality/Poverty

Inequality and poverty have positive relationship with crime. This is because, people living below poverty level may be tempted to indulge in criminal behaviours in other to survive. It is also believed that the rich also commit crimes as crime is not the exclusive reserve of the poor (Matthews, 2014). The relationship between poverty and crime is multifaceted and difficult to understand as poverty is generally connected with criminal activity (Sharkey *et al.*, 2017). It is vital to note that people who are associated with poverty and unemployment have the potentials to be involved in crime, however, the rich and wealthy persons in society also commit crime through tax evasion and denial among others. To Owusu (2016) crime and fear of crime are not evenly spread across space, and that areas that have

higher poverty rate are likely to be associated with high crime incidence considering the fact that there is a strong correlation between socio-economic conditions and crime. This view was reverberated by Savolainen *et al.* (2013) when they posited that poverty has an overwhelming influence and effect on crime in the society. The more there is a major gap in income distribution across the society, the more crime rate will increase. Rufrancos *et al.* (2013) in their study on income inequality and crime revealed that whenever there is a rise in income inequality there is a corresponding property crime increase and violent crimes such as homicide and robbery. Also, in a study conducted on crime and inequality in some parts of Latin America by the World Bank on 5 September 2014 confirms that less inequality means less crime (World Bank, 2014). From this study, it can be inferred that when leaders make conscious efforts to breach the gap between the poor and the rich, there is the likelihood that crime will be reduced to the barest minimum in the society. There is therefore the need for political leaders around the world to make deliberate efforts to close up the gaps between the rich and the poor. This would enhance peace and stability and by extension reduce the rate of crime across the world.

4.1.4 Injustice, Oppression and Marginalization

Injustice, oppression and marginalization have been identified as some of the root causes of terrorism, banditry, and agitation for disintegration and separation of some countries across the world. Injustice and the lack of real opportunities which make the poor lack good access to societal resources forces them to engage in crime. The researchers were of the view that the inability of some political leaders to provide real leadership propels some people to indulge in criminality. Injustice, oppression and marginalization affect certain individuals and groups within a society more directly and widely than others. Crime, injustice, marginalization and social disorder are continuous apprehensions for the sociology of nonconformity and aberration (Findlay, 2019).

The concentration of developmental projects in one section of a country, leaving the other parts of the country undeveloped, having lopsided appointments favouring some section of a country neglecting other tribes or sections among others could breed anger, sentiment, hatred which may eventually snowballed into all forms of violent acts and criminality. In addition, where there is a social dysfunction in the society, crime can be associated with a situation of marginalization and situations of constrained opportunity. People learn and imitate by observing the way others act, behaved and treated. Promoting compassion for some group of persons while humiliating others in the same offences committed within a society breeds hatred and acrimony. Also, brutality that is perpetrated by security forces that goes unpunished communicates the erroneous message that maltreatment and humiliation of some types of people is acceptable when it is done by other types of people. Divisive politics and economic hardship promoted by political leaders can lead to outbreak of violence and disorder (Jenny, 2017). There is the need for political leaders to re-invent, re-engineer good governance, promote policies and programmes that will unite and bring peace among their growing population. This would enhance stability, sustainable growth and development in the society.

4.1.5 Use of Illicit Drugs and Low Self-Esteem

The use of illicit drugs and low self-esteem are equally identified by the researchers as some of the causes of crime in the society. Criminals due to low esteem, tend to use drugs as enhancer to boost their criminal activities. Various contraband drugs like heroin, meth, cannabis, cocaine and amphetamines are usually consumed by criminals to aid their operations, hence their relationship with drug barons is inseparable. In a study conducted by Singh *et al.* (2020) on the relationship between amphetamine-type stimulant use and violent crime in Penang, Malaysia, revealed that there was a substantial relationship between the use of Amphetamines Type Stimulants and violent crime. Their study also reveals that some of the criminals arrested and detained by the police were allegedly

linked to criminal or narcotic offences between July-December 2017. There are instances where arrested criminals confessed to have purchased their drugs from drug traffickers who smuggled these drugs from various locations around the world. Criminals used illicit drugs to overcome boredom, boost their confidence during operations, enhance their sexual performance which invariably leads to violence and sexual assaults among others (Singh *et al*, 2020). It is therefore imperative for political leaderships around the world to make concrete efforts to effectively wage war against the sale and use of illicit drugs. This would prevent criminals from using the drugs to enhance their criminal activities.

4.2 Types of Crimes

Many types of crime exist as criminologists commonly group crimes into several major types. Vijayarani *et al.* (2020) identified personal crimes, property crimes, inchoate crimes, statutory crimes and cybercrimes as major types of crimes in the society. The Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (Crime Statistics) (2018) classified types of crime as offences against persons, offences against properties, offences against lawful authority and offences against local acts.

Sowmyya (2015) identified types of crime based on the medium which is being affected. The types of crimes according to him include: personal crimes, property crimes, victimless crimes, whitecollar crimes, juvenile delinquency, organized crimes, violation of public safety and cyber-crime. These crimes are closely related to the United State National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) classification of crimes. The NIBRS grouped types of crimes as: crimes against persons such assault, homicide and rape; crimes against destruction/damage/vandalism of property, arson and robbery; and crimes against society such as drug/narcotic violations, drug violation among others. Basically, crimes are classified into crime against persons, crime against property and other forms. All these types of crimes affect the socioeconomic activities of man as well as the social cohesion of any society (Woźniakowska, 2013).

4.3 Effects of Crimes on Socio-Economic Activities and Countries' Development

There is a strong relationship between crime and development. No society can develop in an atmosphere were crime reigns supreme. Development is an omni-dimensional process that involves the restructuring, redirection and reorientation of the socio-economic systems in a holistic manner wherein the end products will lead to the improvement in the entire well-being of the people. This also includes attitudinal changes, changes in institutions and structures, as well as the quickening of economic growth, decrease of disparity and inequality and the extermination of poverty (Todaro, 1981, cited in Popoola, 2020). No society will develop in an atmosphere that is characterized with high crime rate, hence nations all over the world are making frantic efforts to ensure that crime rate in their countries is brought to the barest minimum.

Crime knows no boundary nor personality as it affects people at all levels. Balogun *et al.* (2014) asserted that 'the situation of crime in Nigeria disregards all forms of social stratification in the society, as both the high (haves) and low (have nots) experienced the effects of crimes. For any meaningful development to occur, there must be adequate security and for security to be guaranteed, crime must be brought to a minimal level. This is absolutely true since security is all-encompassing and of benefit to individual, communities and even nations across the world (Sa"ad and Abdullahi, 2015).

Many studies revealed that crime has negative influence on economic growth and development. Folorunsho and Rufus (2017) argued that crime rate had an effect on firm entry. This implies that as crime rate increases; the activities of businessmen will decline and would eventually have negative effect on economic activities of a nation. Crime generally reduces safety, disrupts order, creates chaos, generates stress and creates serious economic cost. Crime drives away development and investment as no good investor will like to invest in an environment with high crime rate. Jackson and Gouseti (2015) observed that victims of crime experience various short- and long-term emotional

and psychological effects. Indeed, everyone is affected by crime, either as a direct victim, a friend or family member of a victim (Eidell and Ellis, 2010). Other impacts of crime include rapid heart rate and stomach distress, physical injuries, shock, confusion, fear and anger etc. Many scholars have realized the relationship between crime and economic growth and many have tried to estimate what the direct and indirect costs of crime are on the society (McCollister *et al.*, 2010).

A lot of studies conducted on crime revealed that crime has negative impacts on socio-economic growth (Gaibulloev and Sandler, 2008), whereas other conclude that the effect is uncertain (Goulas and Zervoyianni, 2012). The effect of crime on the socio-economic development of society is great. This is because as crime rate increases; the activities of investors will decline and this will eventually have a serious negative effect on the economic activities of a nation. Folorunsho and Rufus (2017) in their study conducted on crime rate and firm entry in Nigeria posited that crime can act like a tax on the entire economy as it can dampen the morale of investors, create doubt and inefficiency in an industry. Ojiako *et al.* (2016) corroborated the above assertions when they observed that a city with high rate of criminal activities will be less attractive to both local and foreign investors.

Rosenthal and Ross (2010) as cited in Folorunsho and Rufus (2017) analyzed the effects of crime on business location in five cities in the United States of America. Their study revealed that while firms tend to unduly locate in areas with high crimes, an increase in violent crimes will drastically affect the business climate of any highly prone crime infested area. It is a common knowledge among scholars that crime generally reduces safety, disrupts social order, creates chaos and confusion, hinders community collaboration and trust and creates serious economic cost to both the people and the nation at large. Ralph (2006) observes that whenever there is an increase in crime level, there is the tendency that there will be a decline in the development of a community. He identified social, psychological, economic and behavioural consequences of crime on the society. The sociopsychological consequences of crime according to him include unwillingness to intervene in events on the street, more mistrust between neighbours and less cooperation among the people, while the behavioural consequences of crime include making people to limit their round of activities, participating less in local affairs and makes people to migrate out of their neighbourhood.

Mahofa *et al.* (2016) believed that crime has serious consequences on nation's economies, conveys the cost of enforcement of the law and ultimately results to loss of both small- and large-scale businesses. Tamar and Ania (2017) opined that crime victimization has a variety of effects on the physical health of the victims, finances and emotional well-being. People who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder due to the impacts of violent crime are prone to develop high risk of committing suicide (Jackson and Gouseti, 2015).

The financial impacts of crime according to Eidell and Ellis (2010) include medical bills (e.g., emergency transportation, hospital stays etc.), loss of wages due to incapacitation, burial expenses and loss of income among others. Office (2014) observes that people who do not have their own homes or shelter coupled with high crime rates can create numerous problems within the society. Crime has serious effects on economic activities of nations as it affects investment decisions and economic indices. Other adverse effects of crime in the society include the cost of repairing various kinds of damages/destructions caused by crime, loss of revenue used in the maintenance and rehabilitation of prisons, the associated trauma, hurts and pains inflicted on the person who is the direct victim of crime and the huge resources allocated for the arrest, investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of crimes at various time (Jeke et al, 2021).

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Ranking of Crimes Causes

The paper identified several causes of crimes in the society and how these causative factors have influenced the socio-economic development of society. To effectively tackle crime, the need to identify what gives birth to these deviant acts exhibited by criminals and bandits around the world

cannot be underestimated. There are various categories of crime causes as reviewed by the paper. NetNewsLedger (2019) identified poverty, peer pressure, drugs, politics, religion, family consideration, society, unemployment, deprivation and unfair judicial system as some of the root causes of crime in the society. Crimes are committed by people who desire luxury, who wants to feel big, respected and honoured and not for necessities (Shargorodskii, 2014). From the study, the causes of crime prevalent in the society in order of precedent include unemployment, lack of education, poverty, inequality, injustice/oppression and marginalization, drugs and low esteem. Others are peers influence and get rich quick syndrome among others. These identified causes of crime if not tackled effectively by the governments could destabilize the peace and security of the society. It is imperative that governments at all level could holistically looked at these identified causes of crime and proffer lasting solutions with a view to enhancing absolute peace, security for its citizens and guarantee development.

5.2 Weight of Income Inequality and Poverty in Crimes Occurrences

The influence of income inequality and poverty over crime cannot be overemphasized as no society can develop and have minimal peace and stability where there is an uneven distribution of income among the growing population. Poverty and inequality can cause social tension and disorder, apprehension, and strain, which invariably propel some people to become more violent (Enamorado et al, 2014). It is vital to note that people who are associated with poverty and unemployment have the potentials and propensity to be involved in crime, however, the rich and wealthy persons in society also commit crime through tax evasion and denial among others. Poverty can motivate people to commit crime as people always seek to find economic means of survival and where such means are difficult to get, they tend to resort to criminality irrespective of the associated consequences. Income inequality and poverty can destabilize peace of a society and generate tension among the population, thus leading to stunted growth and development.

There is therefore the need for political leaderships of all countries around the world to ensure equitable distribution of wealth and resources among their growing population in order to reduce tensions, ill-feelings, violence and criminality of all forms. It is also imperative that governments at all levels to make concerted efforts for the provision of better wages, family support services, job security and better access to self-development schemes. These efforts if implemented will definitely help eliminate the fear that makes most income-deprived people to develop the propensity to commit crimes. Addressing the issues associated with income inequality and poverty will support the various efforts put in place by law enforcement agencies and justice system to bring about reduction in crime rate which will result to a safer, stable, more peaceful and more orderly and organized communities around the world.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper discussed the causes, types and effects of crimes on the socio-economic development of the society. The paper identified unemployment, income inequality, poverty, hereditary factors and influence of peer groups among others as some of the causative factors of crime in society. Various types of crimes such as kidnapping, burglary, murder, rape, arson which were generally subsumed into crime against persons, property and society were identified. Crime hinders economic growth, instils fear and tension. Other adverse effects of crime include the cost of repairing various kinds of damages caused by crime, loss of revenue used in the maintenance and rehabilitation of prisons and the huge resources allocated for the arrest, investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of crimes (Jeke *et al*, 2021).

It is on the basis of this study that the paper recommends that government should equip security agencies with modern crime fighting equipment and continuous training of security personnel with a view to effectively reduce crime to a minimal level for enhanced security. It is also

recommended that political leaderships the world over should also ensure equitable distribution of wealth and resources among their growing population in order to reduce tensions, ill-feelings, violence and criminality of all forms thereby enhancing peace and development. Furthermore, governments at all levels should make concerted efforts for the provision of better wages, family support services that can enhance the living standard of people around the world. Finally, policymakers should equally make concerted efforts to initiate measures, policies and strategies for crime reduction in order to create enabling environment for development as no society can develop in an atmosphere of chaos and criminality.

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