

The Impact of Militia Violence on Socio-Economic Development in Ukum Local Government Area, Benue State

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Abstract

The paper examined the impact of militia violence on socio-economic development in Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State. The study adopted the relative deprivation theory as the theoretical framework of analysis. Primary and secondary sources of data were used for the study. The study is carried out on the 292,900 residents of Ukum local government. That the violence is caused as a result of struggle for resource control. Poverty, unemployment and irregular boundary demarcations are amongst the causes of violence in Ukum Local Government which has brought about security challenges in the area over time. Criminal youth gangs have been known for committing heinous crimes. These crimes are perpetrated due to the proliferation of small and light weapons in the hands of the youth many of who had been armed by the politicians to fight their dirty battles in order to win elections at all cost. One of the cardinal consequence of armed militia activities in Ukum Local Government Area is the general loss of lives and properties. The study in line with the findings recommended that, the task of crime prevention and control is not to be left in the hands of the government or the security agencies alone, as everyone must strive to achieve a lasting peace and orderliness in the local government. Thus, a comprehensive security strategy that greatly involves stakeholders and citizens must be put in place to effectively tackle armed robbery and other sundry crimes militating against the socio-economic development of the area.

Keywords: Ukum Militia, Militi Gangs, Armed Youth Gang, Sankrta Youth and Criminal Youth Gang,

Introduction

Throughout history, militias have existed and operated in various parts of the world since the 19th century. These militias often

mounted on horses, would emerge from their hideouts to launch attacks on villages and then retreat to safety. In Europe, militias have primarily been present in mountainous regions of Italy, Spain, Greece and Turkey (Cassia, 1993). In Africa, militias have consistently caused devastation in homes across East and Central Africa, as well as along the Trans-Saharan trade routes from Niger Republic to Libya. They have also maintained a significant presence in parts of Chad and the vicinity of Lake Chad, as well as in certain regions of Southern Africa (Aregbesola, 2020). The prevalence and severity of armed militias in West Africa have contributed to a growing regional insecurity, posing a potential threat to regional integration in the sub-region (Abdullahi, 2019). Abdullahi (2019) further observed that some militias from countries such as Niger Republic and Mali were invited to carry out large-scale attacks in neighboring countries. These militias crossed the porous borders of West Africa with their weapons to support their counterparts in executing extensive retaliatory assaults.

Their method of operation involves inflicting injuries and causing death to their victims when they are least prepared. Typically, they traverse the forests and infiltrate neighborhoods on swift motorcycles particularly during nighttime, shooting indiscriminately. They strike terror into communities, especially in the absence of security forces such as the police or military, who are usually absent during afternoon hours. This escalating threat has resulted in the loss of hundreds of lives, leaving numerous children orphaned and women widowed. The issue of food insecurity exacerbates the humanitarian tragedy, making life unbearable for many Nigerians.

The Nigerian government has made efforts to counter this menace by employing a deterrent force and implementing sanctions as part of its policies. They have also taken measures to reduce the activities of armed militias in the country. However, despite these efforts, the level of insecurity remains alarmingly

high, leading to Nigeria consistently ranking low in the Global Peace Index (GPI), indicating a worsening state of insecurity in the nation (Ajibola, 2015). Aluforo (2010) argue that the government's endeavours have not yet yielded significant positive outcomes, emphasizing the necessity for proactive measures to combat this menace.

Benue State has had its fair share of militia violence. The activities of armed militia in Benue State have reached alarming heights in recent years. The militia groups terrorize villages with impunity. They have settled in the Sankara axis of Benue state, setting up fortified enclaves in the hinterland and on the frontiers, from where they plot and carry out their operations. Several attacks have been carried out on homes in different communities and public facilities, such as local council offices, markets, schools and police stations. Mbumega (2019, pg. 7) "stated that, the attacks have left no fewer than two hundred (200) people dead with several others sustaining life-threatening injuries". Properties worth millions of naira have also been destroyed. The attackers branded as bandits and local militias are not deterred by the heavy presence of the joint military operations in the area. They are reported to have, on several occasions, engaged the military in a heavy gun duel with casualties most times recorded on both sides (Mbumega, 2019). Apart from fatalities recorded, armed militia attacks on communities increase social risks, discourage investment and trigger an economic crisis for individuals and communities. The conflict is having a spillover effect on other neighboring communities and local government areas of Taraba State hindering inter-communal and inter-state trade. It is against the foregoing background that, this paper examines militia violence and its implication on the socio-economic development of Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State.

Conceptual Clarifications

Militia: Militia is an organized crime committed by outlaws under arms involving the threat or the actual (manifest) use of violence. A person or group of persons under arms that engage in banditry is/are known as armed militia who primarily commit violent crimes such as robbery, murder and forceful extortion. The term militia can be defined as that person who is proscribed or outlawed. Hence, he can be referred to as lawless, desperate, a marauder and a brigand. Armed militia could also be referred to as organized group of thieves who are out to steal through forceful means and violence (Philip, 2014).

Militia refers to the occurrence or prevalence of armed robbery or violent crimes involving the use of force or threats to intimidate individuals with the intent to rob, rape, or kill. It is a crime committed against individuals and has become a prevalent form of violence in modern societies (Nigeria Watch, 2011). In Nigeria, the presence of militia groups has been consistently high and increasing over the years. According to Rotberg (2007, pg.33), “crimes against individuals, including murder, rape and robbery have escalated in Nigeria since 1999, both in terms of scale and brutality”. This is evident in the widespread incidents of armed robbery in the country, reflecting a broader trend across Africa. Onimode (2000, pg.37) “noted that, car theft, burglary of homes and offices, as well as highway robbery targeting travelers, are common manifestations of armed robbery in Africa nations. The frequency of such crimes has been on the rise since the onset of crises in Africa during the 1980s.

Militia also refers to occurrence of armed robbery or similar violent crimes, including activities like cattle theft and raids on villages or markets. It entails the use of force or threats to intimidate individuals or groups with the aim of carrying out robbery, rape, or murder. These militia activities are often driven by economic or political interests. In Nigeria, tertiary institutions have unfortunately become fertile grounds for nurturing criminals,

which is further facilitated by the involvement of the political class. As a result, there is a history of rivalry among university-based confraternities. These competing groups have even found utility in the realm of university administration politics, ultimately becoming a factor within the political landscape (Odinkalu, 2018).

Socio-Economic Development: Socio-economic development is a product of development and is seen as the process of social and economic transformation in a society. Socio-economic development embraces changes taking place in the social sphere mostly of an economic nature. Thus, socio-economic development is made up of processes caused by exogenous and endogenous factors which determine the course and direction of the development. Socio-economic development is measured with indicators, such as Gross Domestic Product, life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. Changes in less tangible factors are also considered, such as personal dignity, freedom of association, personal safety and freedom from fear of physical harm, and the extent of participation in civil society.

Causes of socio-economic impacts are, for example, new technologies, changes in laws, changes in the physical environment and ecological changes. Scholars like Nwanegbo and Odigbo, (2013) and Chandler (2007) identified links between security and development since the cold war ended. They argued that development cannot be achieved in any nation where there is the prevalence of conflicts, crisis and war. There is a consensus that security and development are two different and inseparable concepts that affect each other, and this has naturally triggered debates on security-development nexus (Chandler, 2007; Stan 2004).

Causes of Violent Militia in Benue State

The development of militia in Benue state and Nigeria as whole can be traceable to a number of factors. among others as identified by Omoniyi (2013).

Politically motivated causes: the fear of domination, marginalization and subjugation by superior individuals, or ethnic groups have made the formation and patronage of militia groups in protest against such presumed marginalization.

Boundary related causes: many a times in Nigeria, land and territory demarcation have resulted in inter-ethnic clashes leading to the deployment of militias (Albert, 2011)

Poverty and unemployment: poor management of state resources by visionless leaders has resulted in widespread poverty and youth unemployment. In Benue state, poverty has pushed many unemployed youths to become common foddors violent conflict in different parts of Nigeria (Fayeye, 2010). Apart from being an avenue for showing up their emotion, militia have become the basis for opposing unpopular government policies.

Resources Control causes: it is a fact that nature endows regions and localities differently and that some people by birth have privilege of being situated in a resource-endowed zone. Such people in some cases have sought the use of ethnic militias to fight against unjust distribution or allocation of resources.

Theoretical Framework

The paper employs relative deprivation theory as its theoretical framework. The concept relative deprivation was first used by Robert K. Merton in his study in 1950 on the American Soldier on the response of groups to promotion (Cherkaoui, 2015). Relative deprivation suggests that crime happens when individuals or groups see themselves as being unfairly disadvantaged compared to other individuals or groups who they see as being similar (or inferior) to themselves (Greg, 2021) According to Cherkaoui (2015, pg. 34) deprivation occurs mainly under specific conditions: The individual retains some knowledge of the system of social promotion, mobility or retributions; He/she does not get an expected good; for example promotion, employment; This expectation is based on an evaluation and a comparison that the

individual conducts between his/her position, contributions, and retribution on the one hand; and those of his/her peers, who make up his/her reference group on the other; and He/she has a feeling of inequity, which translates into criticism of the mobility system.

The theory of relative deprivation argues that individuals experiencing various degree of relative deprivation due to economic comparisons may be motivated to engage in criminal behaviours (Ontario Ministry of Children Community and Social Services, 2016). These individuals would have compared themselves with others based on some valued dimension (such as income) and found they are worse off than others. The recognition of their deprivation (the cognitive component of relative deprivation) can be powerful motivators, accompanied by feelings such as anger (the affective component of relative deprivation) to alleviate their sense of deprivation (Ontario Ministry of Children Community and Social Services, 2016). The affective components of deprivation may drive individuals to seek remedies, whether legally or illegally depending on how they perceive their deprivation.

Another thrust of the relative deprivation theory is that individuals may compare themselves to others (egoistic relative deprivation) or their group to other reference groups fraternal or collective relative deprivation). In that vein, egoistic relative deprivation may motivate individual action, while fraternal deprivation may motivate collective action (Ontario Ministry of Children Community and Social Services, 2016). Ajaegbu (2012) attributed the rise in crimes such as robbery, kidnapping, thuggery and terrorism to “gap” in the society. Summarily, relative deprivation is a feeling that one is generally in a worse position compared to the people they associate with and compare themselves to (Longely, 2018).

Relative deprivation theory has been criticized by scholars like Albert O., Davies J., & Gurr Ted, (1970) for failure to explain why some people, though deprived of rights and resources, fail to take

part in social movements meant to attain those things (Longely, 2018). It is a clear fact that not all unemployed youths are involved in crime. However, the theory is relevant to explain militia activities and socio-economic development in Ukum LGA. Thus, the inability of most youths to be gainfully employed is a major motivating factor for various crime activities perpetrated by the youths. The theory contends that frustration becomes a norm in a society when the political and socio-economic benefits enjoyed by a people are far below their expectations. Such degree of frustration manifests in the form of violence and conflict.

Methodology and Study Area

The study employs the use of primary and secondary data collection method. The study population of the study is purposively drawn from the 292,900 residents of Ukum Local Government Area from 2015- 2022 (National Population Commission Projected population, 2020). The data collected from the questionnaire administered were analyzed quantitatively with the use of frequency counts, percentage and mean statistics as the descriptive statistics used in answering the research questions. A mean value greater than 3.0 was considered as accepted for items in the questionnaire while a mean value less than 3.0 was rejected.

The geographical unit known today as Ukum local government lies between longitude $8^{\circ} 40'$ East and Latitude $6^{\circ} 55'$ and $7^{\circ} 23'$ North. Sankera the local government headquarter is situated Eastward of the local government, along Katsina-Ala Wukari road. Apart from the four sons of Ukum there are minor fishing communities like the Igbos, Etulo, Yoruba and Hausas who are mainly immigrant fishermen and traders. The people of Ukum are predominantly farmers with agricultural activities side by side fishing, blacksmithing, carving and weaving which form part of the economic activities of the people of the local government. The area is indeed endowed with abundant rich and fertile agricultural soil. The bulk of yams in the country are produced in the local

government area. The local government provides the biggest rubber market in Africa South of the Sahara. The town is blessed with well enrolled schools where Agricultural Science is offered as a subject (www.benuestate.gov.ng/Ukum).

Results and Discussion of Findings

Demographic Parameters of Respondents

The demographic parameters of this study covered the sex distribution of respondents, their age composition and educational qualifications. Knowledge of this will enhance our understanding of the respondents and the kind of responses that were generated during the study. This would go a long way in determining the intelligibility of the responses and what recognition and consideration they should be accorded in terms of accepting and appreciating the findings of the study. The table shows the demographic parameters of respondents involved in this study:

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Parameters of Respondents

Attributes	Frequency (N = 389)	Percentage (% = 100)
Gender		
Male	183	47.10
Female	206	52.90
Age (years)		
18-25	74	19.02
26-40	170	43.70
40 and above	145	37.27
Marital status		
Single	175	44.98
Married	214	55.01
Educational Qualification		
First School Leaving Certificate	86	22.10
Secondary School Certificate	194	47.04
Tertiary Institution	120	30.84

Occupational Qualification

Civil Servant	70	17.99
Farmers	145	37.27
Business Man	127	32.64
Politician	47	12.08
Total	389	100.00

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

Presented in table 1 above is the analysis of the socio-demographic parameters of respondents. Results obtained revealed that majority of the respondents (52.90%) were females compared to male (47.10%). Thus, this shows that females dominate the study area. The involvement of females in the study area showed that, they are more knowledgeable on the research area under study. Majority of the respondents were within range of 26-40 years (43.70%), this was followed by those within 40 years and above (37.27%) and 18-25 years (19.02%). Most of the respondents (55.01%) were married compared to those who were single (44.98%). Thus, married people dominate the research. The involvement of married people in the study showed that they are matured adults and have vast knowledge on the study area. In terms of education qualification, majority of the respondents (47.04%) secondary school graduates, this was followed by those with tertiary education (30.84%) and first school leaving certificate (22.10%). Thus, this shows that the respondents with secondary school certificate dominate the study area. The involvement of secondary school holders in the study area showed the extent to which the people are educated which may be of help in carrying out the study effectively. In terms of occupational qualification, results obtained revealed that 37.27% of the respondents were farmers, this was followed by those who were business men (32.64%), civil servants (17.99%) and politicians (12.08%). This shows that the majority of the respondents are farmers hence the major occupation of people in the local government area is farming.

Insecurity situation in Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State

The insecurity situation in Ukum Local government area of Benue State is presented in Table 2. Results obtained were presented using frequency tables as shown below.

Table 2: Insecurity Situation in Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State.

Insecurity Situation in Ukum LGA		Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Ukum LGA have witnessed high level of armed militia activities in recent times	327(84.06)	62(15.93)
2	In several parts of the Local government, armed militia groups are known for terrorizing towns and villages	331(85.08)	58(14.91)
3	Ukum LGA is characterized with activities of armed militia, such as raping, kidnapping robbing and cattle rustling	262(67.35)	127(32.64)
4	The activities of armed militia have created fear and anxiety in the people of Ukum	285(73.26)	104(26.73)

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

The insecurity situation in Ukum government area of Benue State is presented in table 2. Majority of the respondents (84.06%) opined that Ukum government area has witnessed high level of armed militia activities in recent times compared to those who were of the opinion that the Local Government Area has not witnessed high level of armed militia activities in recent times (15.93%). 85.08% of the respondents stated that armed militia groups are known for terrorizing towns and villages in several parts of Ukum government area while 14.91% opined that armed militia groups

are not known for terrorizing towns and villages in the Ukum government area of Benue State. Most of the respondents (67.35%) opined that Ukum government area is characterized with activities of armed militia, such as raping, kidnapping robbing and cattle rustling while 32.64% stated that Ukum government area is not characterized with activities of armed militia such as raping, kidnapping, robbing and cattle rustling. More than half of the respondents (73.26%) stated that the activities of armed militia have created fear and anxiety in the people of Ukum LGA while 26.73% of the respondents opined that the activities of armed militia have not created fear and anxiety in the people of Ukum government area of Benue State.

Predisposing factors to armed militia activities in Ukum LGA of Benue State

The predisposing factors to armed militia activities in Ukum government area of Benue State is shown in Table 3. Results obtained were presented using frequency tables as shown below.

Table 3: Predisposing Factors to Armed Militia Activities in Ukum LGA of Benue State

Predisposing Factors to Armed Militia Activities in Ukum LGA	Yes (%)	No (%)
1 Poverty is a predisposing factor to armed militia activities in Ukum LGA	334(85.86)	55(14.13)
2 Proliferation of small and Light weapons is a predisposing factor to armed militia activities in Ukum LGA	362(93.05)	27(6.94)
3 Weak security and judiciary system is a predisposing factor to armed militia in Ukum.	365(93.83)	24(6.16)
4 Porous borders around the LGA which facilitates unrestricted and	364(93.57)	25(6.42)

untracked movements of people
 have greatly contributed to armed
 militia activities in Ukum

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

Presented in table 3 above are the predisposing factors to armed militia activities in Ukum LGA of Benue State. Majority of the respondents (85.86%) itemized that poverty is a predisposing factor to armed militia activities in Ukum government area compared to those who were of the opinion that poverty is not a predisposing factor to armed militia activities in Ukum government area (14.13%). Most (93.05%) of the respondents stated that proliferation of small and Light weapons is also a predisposing factor to armed militia activities in Ukum LGA while 6.94% opined that proliferation of small and light weapons is not a predisposing factor to armed militia activities in Ukum government area of Benue State. Majority of the respondents (93.83%) opined that weak security and judiciary system is a predisposing factor to armed militia in Ukum government area of Benue State while 6.16% stated that weak security and judiciary system is a predisposing factor to armed militia in Ukum LGA of Benue State. Higher percentage (93.57%) was recorded for those who opined that porous borders around the government area which facilitates unrestricted and untracked movements of people have greatly contributed to armed militia activities in Ukum compared to those who were of the opinion that porous borders around the Ukum government area is not a predisposing factor to armed militia activities in the government area (6.42%).

From the responses above, the opinion of the researcher shows that the factors responsible for the activities of militia in Ukum government area shows that the rise in unemployment also raises the country's poverty level, as people are compelled to live below what is considered acceptable due to lack of a source of income. As unemployment and poverty levels rise, crime of various nature become more prevalent. The youth are at the forefront of all of

these initiatives. Unemployed youth have become dependent clients of political entrepreneurs and various criminal gangs in many of these scenarios, and they have developed nearly impenetrable networks controlled by kingpins. Political elites employ this pool of defenseless youth to scare voters, maim, murder opponents, and spread misinformation. The youth are hungry and idle, and that they struggle only to acquire tiny sums of money and other presents from the wealthy politicians. This means that unemployed youngsters are sometimes used as mercenaries in land conflicts and elections to wreak havoc. These idle minds can easily be enlisted as mercenaries by desperate and opportunistic political elites or any feuding faction. The government's inability to perform its constitutional functions including security of lives and properties therefore informed people to be rebellious and take up arms against same government chiefly to protest their socio-economic challenges. There is widespread depression among the youth because of their economic situation and corruption. The alarming rate of unemployment gives them away as willing tools ready to be used for negative actions such as thuggery and armed robbery. While many educated youths can be seen operating commercial motorcycles (Okada) and selling telephone recharge cards, it is from within their ranks that contemporary armed robbers and assassins are found.

The Implication of Armed Militia Violence on Sustainable Socio-economic Development in Ukum

The implication of armed militia activities to sustainable socio-economic development in Ukum LGA is shown in Table 4. Results obtained were presented using frequency tables as shown below.

Table 4: Implication of Armed Militia Activities to Sustainable Socio-Economic Development in Ukum LGA

	Implication of Armed Militia Activities to Sustainable Socio-Economic Development in Ukum LGA	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Armed militia group in Ukum LGA have created a fearful atmosphere that discourages investors	381(97.94)	8(2.05)
2	The activities of armed militia group in Ukum LGA have led to the destruction of lives and properties	337(86.63)	52(13.36)
3	The activities of armed militia group in Ukum affects the demand for goods and services that could boost the economy of the state and nation at large.	377(96.91)	12(3.08)
4	The activities of armed militia has affected all facets of human life among which is food security and shelter	366(94.08)	23(5.91)

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

Presented in table 4 above are the implications of armed militia activities to sustainable socio-economic development in Ukum local government area of Benue State. Higher percentage (97.94%) was recorded for those who opined that armed militia group in Ukum local government area have created a fearful atmosphere that discourages investors while 2.05% was recorded for those who stated that armed militia group in Ukum local government area have not created a fearful atmosphere that discourages investors. Most (86.63%) of the respondents opined that the activities of armed militia groups in Ukum local government area have led to the destruction of lives and properties while 13.36% of the respondents itemized that the activities of armed group in Ukum

local government area have not led to the destruction of lives and properties. Majority of the respondents (96.91%) opined that the activities of armed militia groups in Ukum affect the demand for goods and services that could boost the economy of the state and nation at large while 3.08% opined that the demand of goods and services that could boost the economy of the State and nation at large is not affected by the activities of armed militia group in Ukum local government area of Benue State. 94.08% of the respondents itemized that the activities of armed militia have affected all facets of human life among which food security and shelter is while 5.91% of them opined that the activities of armed militia have not affected all facets of human life among which food security and shelter are still intact.

Impact of the Amnesty programs on the security situation in Benue State

The impact of the Amnesty programmes on the security situation in Benue State is shown in Table 5. Results obtained were presented using frequency tables as shown below.

Table 5: The Impact of the Amnesty Programs on the Security Situation in Benue State

Impact of the Amnesty Programs on the Security Situation		Yes (%)	No (%)
1	The Benue State Amnesty programmes have been carried out to the end; nevertheless, there is controversy about its outcome	360(92.54)	29(7.45)
2	The amnesty programmes have succeeded in reducing crime and unemployment rates in the state	360(92.54)	29(7.45)
3	The resurgence of armed violence in the state is attributed to poor implementation of the Amnesty programme in Benue State	324(83.29)	65(16.70)

- 4 The extra judicial killing of Benue's most wanted terrorists Terwase Agwaza has placed a doubt about subsequent Benue Amnesty programmes in the State 290(74.55) 99(25.44)

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

Presented in table 5 above are the impact of the amnesty programmes on the security situation in Benue State. Higher percentage (92.54%) was recorded for those who opined that the Benue State Amnesty programmes have been carried out to the end; nevertheless, there is controversy about its outcome while 7.45% was recorded for respondents who opined that there is no controversy about the outcome of the Benue State amnesty programmes. 92.54% of the respondents opined that the amnesty programmes have succeeded in reducing crime and unemployment rates in the state while 7.45% of the respondents stated that the amnesty programmes have not succeeded in reducing crime and unemployment rates in the state. Majority of the respondents (83.29%) opined that the resurgence of armed violence in the state is attributed to poor implementation of the Amnesty programme in Benue State compared to those who opined that resurgence of armed violence in the state is not attributed to poor implementation of the Amnesty programme in Benue State. Higher percentage (74.55%) was also recorded for those who opined that the extra judicial killing of Benue's most wanted terrorist Terwase Agwaza has placed a doubt about subsequent Benue Amnesty programmes in the State while 25.44% of the respondents opined that the extra judicial killing of Benue's most wanted terrorists Terwase Agwaza has not placed a doubt about subsequent Benue Amnesty programmes in the State.

Discussion of Findings

From the data collected, presented and analyzed in the study, the findings of the study revealed that, Ukum has witnessed an

unprecedented level of insecurity. This has threatened national security and has prompted huge allocation of the state budget to security. Ukum government area has witnessed a number of security challenges associated with armed robbery, political assassination, arms proliferation, ethno-religious conflicts and herdsman/farmer's conflict. The security challenges have assumed a formidable dimension forcing the state political, economic managers and, indeed the entire nation, to mourn over the loss of their loved ones, investments and absence of safety in most parts of the State.

The findings revealed that, crimes in Ukum are perpetrated due to the proliferation of small and light weapons in the hands of the youth, many of whom have been armed by the politicians to fight their dirty battles in order to win elections at all cost. Poverty is also predisposing factors to banditry activities in Ukum LGA. Porous borders around the LGA which facilitate unrestricted and untracked movements of people have greatly contributed to insecurity in the state and weak security and judiciary system is a predisposing factor to banditry activities in Benue State. The lack of employment opportunities for many students is a significant source of frustration and school leavers are therefore prepared to join the gangs of political thugs who participated substantially in causing havoc.

The study further revealed that, insecurity destabilizes the production of food and raw materials for the manufacturing sector in Nigeria. It also contributes to the high rate of poverty and starvation and also leads to social disorganization amongst the families in the state. Another consequence of armed militia activities in Ukum LGA is the general loss of lives and properties. A lot of inhabitants in Ukum LGA especially farmers died as a result of the activities of armed militia. This made the economy of the people low and the conflict has thus rendered the people impoverished and indeed worse than they were before the conflict in all spheres of livelihood. The effect of insecurity has also brought

about inadequate health facilities and unaffordable educational system, high level of unemployment which has reached a crescendo proportion. Apart from the fact that many virile men of the state were seriously affected by this crisis which consequently led to their death, the state sources of revenue are equally affected. Since no economic development could take place in an atmosphere of fear, anarchy as insecurity become the order of the day.

Lastly, the study revealed that, the high rate of insecurity in Benue State led the present administration to launch the Benue State Amnesty programme on May 29th, 2015 at Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida square in order to recover these weapons from the youth and train them to engage in socially acceptable employment and consequently reduce crime in Benue State. These Amnesty programmes have been carried out to the end. Nevertheless, there is controversy about their outcome. While the Ortom then administration contends that, the amnesty programmes have succeeded in reducing crime and unemployment rates in the state, critics of the administration have submitted that the amnesty programmes have failed woefully and it is evident in the increasing crime and unemployment rates in the state.

Conclusion

Militia activities in particular reference to Ukum LGA within the past few years have been systematic with the occurrence and frequency of armed robbery, murder, kidnapping and burglary. Security agencies undoubtedly are doing a lot to quell the incidences of armed militia in Ukum local government area. However, apparently, much more is required of them as crimes of veracious character have continue to persist even till recent times. Thus, the problem of militia activities in Ukum local government area has been exacerbated by the high rate of unemployment and economic hardship which has pushed many jobless youths, some of whom are graduates into various deadly crimes. Evidently unemployment creates poverty and poverty leads to insecurity.

Ukum local government area is becoming increasingly criminalized, especially with the proliferation of youth gangs. Neither homes, nor markets are safe because of frequent occurrence of armed robbery incidents. Unemployment problem, which now seems beyond remedy, has produced an army of idle hands and some of them have decided to punish the society that fails to provide them with means of livelihood and dignity by robbing its members of their property at gunpoint. The police cannot perform effectively because they are overstretched by the number of cases that await them daily.

The situation is worsened by outdated instruments they use that are no match to the modern sophisticated weapons used by the criminals. The study concludes that the feeling of deprivation produces frustration and could be expressed through aggression. Therefore, if factors that are responsible for youth unemployment in Nigeria are addressed, violent crimes could be reduced. For peace to reign supreme in Benue State, the following recommendations are made:

The task of crime prevention and control should not be left in the hands of the government or the security agencies alone, but all stakeholders should be actively involved in order to achieve effective and relative peace and order in the local government for the return of normalcy in farming activities and other life endeavours.

A comprehensive security strategy that greatly involves the stakeholders and citizens must be urgently put in place so as to effectively tackle armed robbery and other sundry crimes militating against the security and economic development of the local government. To this extent, the Federal and State government should collaborate and provide social security allowance/package for unemployed graduates as this might reduce the rate of youth involvement in crime and violent activities in the society

The Nigerian government should reconsider those laws that exclude or discriminate against youth participation in politics, decision-making, and policy-making, among other things, and include youth participation. Institutional constraints within security agencies, such as insufficient manpower in terms of strength and expertise, insufficient education and training, and insufficient equipment, should be decisively addressed; other constraints, such as insufficient cooperation with security agencies from members of the public and poor working conditions, should be visited. Every police operation should be tied to intelligence policing.

Indeed, security generally should not be the responsibility of government and security agencies alone but an inclusive reserve for all and sundry, especially religious leaders, traditional institutions, and all legitimate social groups in the area.

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