

SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR IN AKPABUYO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF CROSS RIVER STATE

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ABSTRACT

Historically, criminality has consistently posed economic as well as social, deleterious and counter-productive effects in the country. The actual cost of crime did not become a core political issue until it becomes a dominant social menace which often influenced production and social growth in human history. The desire to shift emphasis on socio-economic variables toward criminality is well recognized as well as documented. Empirically, research has portrayed that socio-economic variables such as income inequality, level of education and occupation are practically responsible for criminality in most societies with particular reference to Akpabuyo local government area. Socio-economic variables and criminality are both geographically concentrated in a strikingly consistent manner, in other words, where you find socio-economic challenges is also where you have criminality of all types. Criminality is an aberration and must be vehemently abhorred in society. Socio-economic variables possess a tremendous influence on the crime rate in the study area. Additionally, it is observed that available statistics reveals that there is an increased jobless youth population and Cross River State had 30.6 percent of unemployment rate in 2019. From the foregoing, socio-economic variables and criminality have been a fundamental danger in contemporary era

and appears to be on the ascendancy in the same direction. Also, it is partly agreed among criminologists, economists, particularly sociologically theorists that criminality should not be condoned in the society as its consequences are counter-productive and deleterious in all ramifications. Criminality is a grave hindrance to harmonious sustainable development as it dissipates or misguides the gains of socio-economic growth as well as impairs the quality of life. Efforts by past and present administrations made concertedly with a view to addressing socio-economic variables and criminality among residents of Akpabuyo have drastically failed as well as ended in futility. The socio-economic implications of criminality in the study area have discouraged tourists recently from visiting as a result of the alarming rate of crime. However, it is in the light of the above observations of the following variables such as income disparity and or inequality, educational level as well as occupation which the paper seeks to address socio-economic variables responsible for crime. It is on this note that the paper actually examines critically the above highlighted issues with a view lasting solutions could be proffered in this paper.

Keywords: Socioeconomic, criminal behaviour, variables, criminality, counter-productive

1. INTRODUCTION

Man naturally looks for ways to make ends meet with all vigor and this culminate getting involved in divergent social, economic as well as political acts that may be morally erroneous based on the intention. Criminality is hugely abhorred and rejected it does not call for negotiation with a view to achieving the needs of the criminals with the inadequate security measures and or strategies in the country. Criminality is the most commonest way for a good member young people to make ends meet in the contemporary economic realities (recession) as a lot of young people fend for themselves as well as becoming breadwinners of their families that encourages so many of them to get indulged in criminal acts.

From the foregoing “socio-economic variables and criminality” [have been a fundamental menace in contemporary epoch and appears to be on the ascendancy in the same direction. Also, it is partially agreed among criminologists, economists particularly sociological theorists that criminality should not be accepted in the society as its consequences are deleterious as well as counter-productive.

Criminality is a serious hindrance to harmonious development as it dissipates or misdirects the gains of economic growth as well as impairs the quality of life. It also serve as a threat to safety wellbeing and potential integrity of all human beings. It also prevents business from striving by generating hostility, instability and uncertainty at the micro and macro-economic levels. International organizations also blame criminality on corrupt countries for hindering Africa’s chances of development recently. Socio-economic variables and criminality combined together leave people with two options which are either to take part in criminal acts or try to look for legal means of survival (Mcgoey, 2015). There is massive population density as well as pressure on the meager resources available and micro-finance enterprises cannot meet up with the population of the teeming youth in the study area. Other fundamental variable such as income level inequality in terms of wages has given a wider gap which culminated to criminality among inhabitants,

Socio-economic implication of criminality in Akpabuyo Local Government Area has discouraged tourists in recent times from visiting the area because of the alarming rate of crime. Ukwayi (2016), further put forward that the combined industrial and commercial land use with single and multi-family dwelling habours the potential for almost every possible crime. However, it is in the light of the above observation of the following variables such as income inequality, educational level as well as occupation which the paper seeks to examine the socio-economic variables responsible for crime in the study area. It is on this note that the paper examine critically the above highlighted issues and to see how lasting solutions could be proffered to curb this malaise under investigation.

2. METHODOLOGY

Data for this paper were derived through a systematic review encompass National Bureau of Statistics, academic journals as well as other relevant literature on the subject of discourse. The paper also adopts principally a descriptive method of analysis of the general implications of socio-economic variables and criminality as both a policy making and practice measure. This is quite pertinent due to the increasing

emphasis on socio-economic variables and criminality which impedes the much desired transformation of the study area. The paper also basically relied on content analysis to support the arguments.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Socio-economic variables give focus on the social implication of economic dynamics in a particular geographical setting. These dynamics might be brought by new technology, market manipulation, international trade treaties, laws or regulations, natural hazards etc. These dynamics might also affect forms of consumption, the distribution of income and wealth, the way in which people behave (both in terms purchase decision and the way in which they choose to spend their time), and the overall quality of life. Socio-economic variable can have wide-ranging social effects, from local effects on a small community to affect an entire society.

The goal of socio-economic variables is to engender social development in metrics such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy, level of employment. Socio-economic variables encompass economic as well as sociological principles which combined total measure of nations, states or communities economic and social positions in relation to others based on income, education, occupation. When analyzing a family's socio-economic status, the household income earners, education as well as occupation are examined (Ering, 2023).

Socio-economic status is typically divided into three levels (high, middle and low) to describe the three phases a family or an individual may fall into when placing a family or an individual into one of these categories, any or all of these three variables (income, education and occupation) can be assessed (Richard, 2019). Additionally, low income and education have portrayed to be vehement predictors of a range of physical and mental economic problems. Low income in a higher socio-economic background families or communities is typically disadvantageous as it will be cumbersome for most families to access basic education which is primarily significant in numerous societies (Hynch, 2014). Teeming youth are uneducated as a result of this in most cities culminating to crime, violence, gangsterism etc.

The concept of crime is contradictory with many views. It lacks both universality as well as precision and can only be meaningfully conceptualized within a particular historical premise. This explicates why this paper devoted much interest on the basic conceptualization of crime to ascertain a direction. The concept of crime has not been exhaustively conceptualized by either the criminal code or penal code, but each has conceptualized the word offence qualified in the same case by the word criminal or penal. Law enforcement officers, legal practitioners have been utilizing the concept of crime and offence interchangeably. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English, New 9th Edition conceptualize crime as the activities which involve breaking the law.

To Ola (2006), conceptualize crime as any behaviour which is in violation of laws. He maintained that from a technically vantage position a crime exist only when a behaviour is in violation of laws. Corroborating this point, Ukwayi (2008), views crime as an act described by the society for being behaviour contrary to one of the society's formal laws rather than just deviating from the custom. He went ahead to put forward crime is an social problem which may be from person-to-person or person to state. He opines that crime ranges from taking a classmate's biro, textbooks, wallet, stealing from the company's or state assets by workers, outwitting with freedom from injurious consequences, government order of importation and exportation through smuggling, to murder, assault, robbery, rape, drug trafficking, forgery, corruption among others all of which are punishable in a law court.

Usher (2014), conceptualized crimes as an illegal act or activity which involves breaking of the law and can be punished by law. He further asserts that crime is an act which the society think is immoral and attract sanctions which are legally approved and sanctioned by law. In the view of Ogbe (2014), crime is the act of deviating from societal normative standard and or expectation which is been accompanied with punishment that is legally constituted through institutions put up by the society. Chin (2013), opined that crime has to do with those activities which break the law of the land and subject to official punishment. Haralambos and Healed (1980) in Ukwayi (2009), views crime as those acts that do not follow the norms and expectations of a particular society group which culminated to negative sanctions. Also, Clinard (1974) in Millneri, (2014), asserts that the term should be reserved for those situations in which behaviour is in a disapproved direction and a sufficient degree to exceed the tolerance limit of the community.

Commenting further, Ola (2001) in Maltzan (2015), crime is an act or default or conduct prejudiced to the community, the commission of which by law render the person responsible liable to punishment by fire or imprisonment in a special court proceedings, normally initiated by officers in the service of the crowd (state). In the same vein, Iwarimie-Jaja (2012), asserts that crime is an offence because it consists of wrong doing which directly or in serious degree threatens the security and well-being of the society. It is not safe to remedy crime by compensation of the party affected because it is a public wrong which implies a wrong doing, secondly, the wrong contradicts accepted behaviour and expression of crime as a public wrong is the division of offence whose acts that are essentially wicked and condemned. Ezenibe (2002) in Ateb (2015), opposed to different propositions of crime, he put forward that morality and criminality are not far from co-existence, nor is the sphere of criminality necessarily part of moral code necessarily disappeared of all acts prohibited by the state in which case the argument move circuitously.

4. SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES AND CRIMINALITY

Socio-economic is also referred to as social and economic often studied by social scientists how economic activities affect as well as shape social processes. It emphasized how societies progress, stagnate or regress because of their local or regional economy or global economy Ering, (2023). Socio-economic is sometimes utilized as an umbrella terms with divergent usages. The term social economy may offer broadly the use of economics in the study of society. More narrowly contemporary practice considers behavioural interactions of individuals and groups through social capital, social markets etc in relation to social values and human dignity on the other hand towards reconstruction as well as improvement of standard of living (Aikens, 2010).

Socio-economic status is typically broken into three levels (high, middle and low) to describe the three phases of a family or individual into one of these categories, any or all of these three variables can be assessed (Richard, 2019). Additionally, low income and evaluation have depicted to be strong predictors of a range of physical and mental economic challenges. Low income in a higher socio-economic background families or communities is typically disadvantageous as it will be cumbersome for most families to access basic education is primarily significant in numerous societies (Hynch, 2014). The teeming youth are uneducated due to these in most cities propelling them to criminality, violence as well as gangsterism etc.

Right from the 1970s, economists have contributed in explicating and validating the additional socio-economic determinants of crime such as unemployment, education, income inequality, social networks, age and socio-economic background (Buonanno, 2013). Several reviews over the years of the economic contributions concluded that crime is closely related to poverty, social exclusion, wage and income inequality, cultural and family background, level of education as well as other economic and social variables, although the relationship between crime and unemployment is not unambiguous and unclear by economists.

Lochner and Moretti (2012), argues that the implication of education on crime is so vehement. Commenting further, Freeman (2016), put forward that increase in income inequality has a strong and robust effect regarding crime rate rising and the place of residence is particularly the urban agglomeration. Crime is present in most communities due to lack of comfort and the general state of the harsh reality in Nigeria. The sole official statistics referring to the crime for certain economic reasons putting the blame on unemployment and poverty rate behind their actions while others still commit crime even when government economic policies have addressed socio-economic variables which is against certain behavioural ills in the society is a fundamental concern in most developing societies (Moldovan, 2014). Robbery, domestic burglary, motor vehicle theft, drug trafficking are crimes involved by financial gains while homicide and violent crimes are not crimes relatively caused by financial gain. These classifications are pertinent to economists, sociologists and even public analysts in consensus with socio-economic variables motivating crime in most communities. Grogger (2016), hypothesized that the propensity to commit crime depends on the comparison between the expected costs and the benefits of legal as well as illegal activities. This paper examines the relationship between socio-economic variables and criminality putting out the causative factors as well as the deleterious and counter-productive effects of criminality in the society.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The paper examined socio-economic variables and criminality in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. In doing this, particular emphasis was hinged on the effects of socio-economic variables and criminality in the study. In this appear, it was also noted that, criminality is primarily a problem among young uneducated men, individuals with low skilled level are more which engenders the zeal for them to innovate ways of making earns to meet thus, they resort to criminality in the study area as a survival strategy. Literature reviewed accordingly portraying that socio-economic variables and criminality are very closely related in the study area. Thus, curbing criminality in Akpabuyo Local Government Area demands appropriate strategies with a view to dealing with youths involvement in criminality as well as the implication on socio-economic wellbeing and or developments in the area under investigation. The beginning point should be focused on the awareness of the people to the remote and real cause of criminality which is embedded in the society with a proffer lasting solutions to curb the social malady for an enhanced living in a peaceful and a relative crime free area.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper considers the following recommendations

- i) Attempt must be made to bridge the gap between income inequalities of people in order to reduce the alarming rate of criminality in the study area.
- ii) Government should create employment opportunities for the teeming unemployed youth so that they can be meaningfully economically engaged.
- iii) Government programmes and policies should be geared towards creating employment as well as alleviating poverty among the people in order to curb the rate of criminality in the study area.
- iv) Concerted efforts should be made to encouraged quality education in Akpabuyo Local Government Area.
- v) Relevant authorities and or agencies should ensure that adequate and regular sensitization programmes are embarked upon to educate and or enlighten the public on the deleterious as well as counter-productive consequences in the study area.

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