

# **Students' Kidnapping and Security Brouhaha: Implications on Secondary Schools in Lagos Metropolis, Lagos State, Nigeria**

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DOI: 10.6007/IJARPED/v6-i3/3146 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v6-i3/3146>

## **Abstract**

This paper examines students' kidnapping and security brouhaha with implication on secondary schools education in Lagos metropolis. Kidnapping is an offspring of terrorism and social vices that spread all over the world. It is a notorious and nefarious behaviour orchestrated by criminal with the mindset of abducting and hostage students for ransom package. It is a social vice that parade secondary schools student in Lagos state, Nigeria. Student kidnapping is a nefarious, villainous, terrible and seasonal crime that portend security challenges in Lagos state.. The perpetrators include; Unemployed youth, Gangster, Community hooligans' a.k.a (Badoo), Land grabbers, Terrorists, Ritualist, and Spiritual father of several religious. The rate of such menace is on the geometric progression while the security tactics of combating it is on arithmetic progression. Nigeria has witness an increased increasingly spate of kidnapping in the South, particularly South-South and South-East geo-political zones. The purpose of this study is to determine the notorious and nefarious atrocities of kidnapping and streamline the impediments to its control. The findings reveal that unemployment, corruption, indiscipline, inadequate security, poverty, economic depression high rate of inflation, loss of societal value and get rich quick syndrome among others are the major causes of kidnapping. Sequel to these findings, it is recommended amongst others that government should improve on reducing inflation gap, improve standard of living for the people by providing employment for youth, ensuring adequate security to protect lives and properties, establish wealth creation center to reduce poverty and sentence any political or public officer working in tandem with kidnapper to life imprisonment.

**Keywords:** Kidnapping, Security, Students' Kidnapping, Implications on Education.

## **Introduction**

Kidnapping is the offspring of terrorism and social vices that spread all over the world. It is an endemic disease that cut-across all the state in Nigeria. The word Kidnap was derived from two English words “Kid” meaning (Infant) and “Nap” meaning (Sleep). Literarily, it is a process of abduction people as hostage for ransom payment. Historically, kidnapping was traceable to 1874 around 17<sup>th</sup> century as child abduction in Britain when the kids of the rich families were been abducted for “ransom while asleep (nap)” (Tzanelli, 2009). Kidnapping is a notorious and nefarious behaviour orchestrated by criminal with the mindset of abducting and hostage students for ransom package. Student kidnapping is a nefarious, villainous, terrible and seasonal crime that portend security challenges in Lagos state. The perpetrator involve: unemployed youth, gangster, community hooligans a.k.a (Badoo), Land grabbers, terrorist, Ritualist, Spiritual father of different religious association. Historically, Kidnapping gained momentum in Lagos metropolis as a response to unemployment, poverty, corruption, inflation, moral decadence, hopelessness and frustration among the youths. The perpetrators of kidnapping choose their victims based on their ability to cough out the money (Tzanelli, 2006). According to Turner (2008), the phenomenon began in the Niger Delta region as a freedom fight by militants protesting the degradation of their environment by oil industry activities. According to Demola (2011), it soon turned into a money making avenue through kidnapping of expatriate oil workers for huge ransoms. Since then, kidnapping has become a daily occurrence and it has spread throughout the South-South states of Edo, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross Rivers, Akwa Ibom and the South-East States of Abia, Imo and Anambra. The South-West has not been left out. There are occasional brushes with the daring young men in Ondo and Lagos States. The widespread of kidnapping in Nigeria has been a contagious disease to Lagos metropolis. Many Youths have taken to the business of kidnapping with some godfathers working behind the scene. People no longer sleep with their two eyes closed. The crime of kidnapping has created serious security challenges for the Lagos metropolis as it affects secondary schools and create negative image for the state. The security of the Lagos secondary schools is at stake with series of incidence of kidnapping activities in many parts of the Six (6) Education District. Kidnapping of student have become a bullish market like armed robbery business. The rate of such menace is on the geometric progression while the security tactics of combating it is on arithmetic progression. Kidnapping is a social vice that bedeviled secondary school students in Lagos. Our students have been the victims of such menace.

Lagos state has a palpable security challenge. Kidnapping of secondary school student has become rampant and the high incidence of insecurity on student kidnapping have portends danger for the peace, progress and development in the state. Based on these premise, It is pertinent to note that economic depression, poverty, moral decadence, poor standard of living, high cost of living, inflation, graduate unemployment, poor parental upbringing, greed amongst the youth; get rich quick mentality, inadequate crime control and insecurity are the major problems that contribute to secondary school students kidnapping in Lagos metropolis. It is in the light of this that all stakeholders in education such as: Government, policy maker, Non-governmental Organization, community leader, parents, teachers and students must collaborate and work assiduously to motivate and commit Nigerian Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Ibrahim Idris; Director-General of Department of State Security, Mr. Lawal Daura and Service chiefs such as: Chief of Defense Staff, Gen. Abayomi Olonisakin; Chief of Army Staff, Lt.

Gen. Tukur Buratai; Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Sadique Abubakar; and the Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas to support the Lagos State government in fighting crime rate and security challenges on Student kidnapping. Because, “all hand must be on desk”.

### **Concept of Kidnapping**

Kidnapping refers to criminal offence which involves abduction a person against his freedom and subjugates him to the threat of murder or assassination and requesting for ransom before his release. It is a criminal and traumatic behaviour orchestrated by gangster with the mindset of abducting human being for ransom. Abraham (2010) define kidnapping as an act of seizing, taking away and keeping a person in custody either by force or fraud. However, it includes snatching and seizing of a person in order to collect a ransom in return or settle some scores of disagreement among people. Goldberg (2000) argues that kidnapping is a criminal act involving seizure, confinement, abduction, subjection, forcefulness, acts of threats, acts of terror and servitude. Dode (2007) saw kidnapping as a process of forcefully abducting a person or group of persons perceived to be the reasons behind the injustice suffered by another group. It is “a low-cost, high-yield terror tactics”. This was the initial case in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Thomas and Nta (2009) defined kidnapping as robbery of the highest rank. According to them, it is an organized and systematic robbery which is not as deadly as armed-robbery, but more profitable than the former. The profitability has encouraged those that indulged in it to carry on with the act although there is a law prohibiting it. In criminal law, kidnapping is defined as taking away of a person by force, threat or deceit with intent to cause him/her to be detained against his or her will (Asuquo, 2009 cited in Inyang and Abraham, 2013). Whereas Nwaorah (2009) viewed kidnapping as an act of an angry man who wants to take any person of value hostage, and who could be rescued by loved ones. In most cases, victims are often released after payment of ransom. According, to Ogabido (2009) “kidnapping” means to abduct, capture, carry off, remove or steal away a person(s). Ngwama (2014) defined kidnapping 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 free from the restraint of movement. According to Uzorma & Nwanegbo-Ben (2014), kidnapping is the act of seizing and detaining or carrying away a person by unlawful force or by fraud, and often with a demand for ransom. According to Turner (2008), the phenomenon began in the Niger Delta region as a freedom fight by militants protesting the degradation of their environment by oil industry activities. According to Demola (2011) it soon turned into a money making avenue through kidnapping of expatriate oil workers for huge ransoms. Since then, kidnapping has become a daily occurrence and it has spread throughout the South-South states of Edo, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross Rivers, Akwa Ibom and the South-East States of Abia, Imo and Anambra. The South-West has not been left out. There are occasional brushes with the daring young men in Ondo and Lagos States. Many Youths have taken to the business of kidnapping with some godfathers working behind the scene. People no longer sleep with their two eyes closed. However, Ottuh & Aituf (2014) posits that kidnapping is the wholesale taking away or transportation of a person against the person’s will usually to confine the person in false imprisonment without legal authority. They expounded that this act may be done principally to extract ransom or in connection with a child custody as a fall out of marital dispute. Such kidnapping or abduction of a child is often labeled “child stealing” and “parental

kidnapping”, particularly when the act is carried with the intention of keeping the child permanently as against collecting a ransom or other things the ‘child stealer’ is agitating for. Ugwulebo (2011) cited Uzorma, & Nwanegbo-Ben, (2014) on the phenomenology of hostage-taking and kidnapping, noted that “kidnapping as an organized crime, is better noticed when a victim’s relations are bringing the ransom.” Osumah and Aghedo (2011) argue that kidnapping is “an engagement for economic survival, securing political and business advantage over rivals and co-competitors”

### **Nature and Causes of Student Kidnapping**

Student kidnapping is a nefarious, villainous, terrible and seasonal crime that portend security challenges in Lagos state. Many reasons are given as probable causes of kidnapping student in Lagos metropolis. Ogabido (2009) agreed that the issue of poverty and unemployment of youths as well as social injustice and unfair distribution of the nation’s resources are potent causes of kidnapping in Nigeria. These factors have caused the youths to engage in kidnapping and criminal activities as a way of getting their share of nation wealth.

- i. **Poverty:** The impoverish life-style of people have prompt many have-not to involve in kidnapping activities so as to use the ransom fees to cater for their basic needs. Our society have riddle with poverty to the extent that citizen are serious hungry with pauper and penury way of life.
- ii. **Youth Unemployment:** the problem of unemployment as one of such reasons why kidnapping in Nigeria is often associated with youth unemployment (Inyang, 2009). He used the widely acknowledged adage, which says that “an idle man is the devil’s workshop” to present the situation of unemployment in Nigeria. He noted that there are uncountable able-bodied men and women in Nigeria roaming the streets in search of non existing job. Out of frustration together with mounting responsibilities to tackle many idle young persons have ventured into criminal activities of which kidnapping are not an exemption. However, he further acknowledged that, a graduate who is unable to secure a job is psychologically bereft of other means of survival. Such situation the young person could develop a negative attitude towards society and attribute his failure to that society.
- iii. **Corruption and Insecurity:** corruption within the law enforcement agencies sometimes thwarts serious effort in crime prevention. Nwaorah (2009) noted that, in a situation where government officials, especially top ranking persons in civil services who are custodian of government resources spend recklessly or loot, it could automatically encourage few of the dissatisfied persons to vent their anger on them and their relatives.
- iv. **Social Injustice:** many people today who are desperate in economic and social needs are often the ones who commit kidnappings. So where the gap between the rich and the poor is constantly widening and where the possibilities to earn money in an honest way are often difficult to attain kidnapping turns out be a lucrative means to fall back on and to draw attention to what is considered an intolerable situation
- v. **Indiscipline and Moral Decadence:** The issue of “moral decadence” and the “quest to get rich quick” syndrome have been identified as some of the causative factors of kidnapping. Nobody asks questions on how people make their wealth. According to him,

a poor person today can show up with an expensive car tomorrow and nobody dare to question the sudden wealth. Also, people who have donated money to develop their communities are rewarded with chieftaincy titles thereby creating a wrong impression in the minds of Nigerian youths who thereafter take to kidnapping (Inyang (2009).

- vi. **Proliferation of dangerous weapon:** the proliferation of arms as a result of political patronage of miscreant who were dumped after elections may indirectly encourage and enhanced kidnapping.

### **Cases of Students Kidnapping and Security Brouhaha in Lagos Metropolis**

The incidences of kidnapping in Lagos State are forcing schools to approach insurance companies and security agencies in the state for protection of students. Most government schools and private school owners are also seeking helps from Lagos State Police Command and private security outfits to protect their students and employees from being kidnapped. Similarly, Security agencies of the state are forging stronger ties with their local counterpart on how to beef up security across the Six (6) Education District in the state. Because, it is obvious that kidnapping cases was rampant in secondary schools has the target of kidnapper in order to collect ransom fee from the rich parents. Some schools have started negotiating with some private security enterprise because are the main target of kidnappers and most of them don't employ or equip armed guard to protect students. If security guard were equipped with guns and other arm instrument, the attack will reduce to barest minimum if not totally eradicated.

Recently, schools in Lagos metropolis have been targeted by kidnappers with the ultimate objective of making money through payment of ransom. On Thursday, May 25, 2017 the notorious gang of gunmen abducted Six (6) students from Lagos State Model College, Igbonla-Epe, Lagos. Those students includes: **Yusuf farouk, Ramon Isiaka, Pelumi Phillips, Peter Jonas Adebajo George and Judah Agbaosi**. They were abducted at about 5am, when a section of the school fence was broken down. That was the second time of student abduction in the school in the last Eight months. Three suspects were arrested in Benin by Inspector General of Police's intelligent response team in connection the student abduction. The suspect include: **Egelu Endurance, 25 years, aka (Jubby); Stanley Yomi Irabomini, 25years, aka (Powe) and Bentel Endurance, 24years all from Ovia South Local government Area of Edo State**. The kidnappers had earlier demanded N1 Billion Naira ransom for the release of those students but it was later reduced to N600 Million Naira when the parents were asked to pay N100m for each student. However, the ransom was later reduced to N20m for each victim and police had yet to secure student release as of time this research. However, some kidnappers in October, 2016 attacked the same school and abducted four students and two members of staff, including a Vice Principal. Also, in Federal 2016, three students of Babington Macaulay Junior Seminary School, a private school in Ikorodu area of Lagos, were abducted by some gunmen. The kidnapper initially demanded N100m ransom for each victim but it was later reduce to N20m. the student regained freedom about a week later through the help Lagos state government and Nigerian Police. Moreso, in January 2007, three students, three female supervisors, one female cook and a female Turkish teacher were also kidnapped at Nigeria Tulip International College, Isheri, Ogun State. The kidnappers demanded N1.2bn for the release of the abducted persons (Punch, 17 June, 2017). Kidnapping atrocity has been industrialized in Lagos metropolis which involve: artisan, unemployed youth, gangster, community hooligans a.k.a (Badoo), terrorist, Ritualist,

Spiritual father of several religious are the prime suspected of such atrocity with purpose of hostage people for ransom pay. However, victims like: Students, Teachers, principals, Lecturers, business mogul, politicians and Royal fathers are the major target of kidnapper.

In Lagos, a notorious, dubious, high-profile kidnap kingpin called **Chukwudi Onuamadike popularly known as Evans** have been terrorizing Lagos Metropolis. **Evans** a native of Nnewi of the Nnewi North Local Government Area of Anambra state. He went into kidnapping in 2005 when his spare part business collapsed in Lagos. **Evans** proclaimed that ransom for the release of his victims is usually paid in Dollars. The 36- year-old who dropped out of schools at Junior Secondary school 2 also confessed to have collect \$4m ransom on several abductions. **Evans** was arrested on Saturday in his mansion at Magodo Estate, Lagos after a shootout with operatives of the Inspector General of Police Intelligence Response Team and men of the Lagos state Police Command. However, six of his gang members are: **Nwosu chukwuma aka. Sudo-42years, Suoyo Paul a.k.a Nwana-42years, Felix Chinemerem-36years, Chukwuemeka Bosah 28years, Uchekukwu Amadi and Ogechi Amadi**. It is pertinent to note that, **Oguchukwu** and **Ogechi** are husband and wife. While **Ugochukwu** was said to be the leader of a gang in a camp in New Magodo, Lagos were they kept their victims and his wife reportedly prepare food in the camp for the captive. **Nwana** was in charge of supplying guns used by the gangs, while **Chinemerem** was Evan's second in command. They were all paraded with Five, AK-47 riffles, One AK-49 riffle, two English pistols, 59 AK-47 magazines with ammunition, 1, 272 pieces of live ammunition of AK-47 (9mm) and five number plates were recovered from the suspect. **Evans** has 11 phones with 126 numbers of SIM card and those SIM cards were registered by miscreant in computer village. The Turaya phone is a satellite phone which can be used anywhere including in the bush, on the sea and desert where there are no GSM service. However, two different virtu phones-containing anti-tracking features were also used by **Evans**. He bought the virtu phone N4.6m and used three phones for his nefarious activities (The Punch, 2017).

Kidnappers have creates perpetual fear among the educational stakeholders in Lagos. Parents, Teachers, School administrators, community leader, Policy maker, Government and NGOs are seriously facing the security challenge to combat the menace of kidnapping. The nefarious activities have prompt People to psychosomatic disorder in to avoid being kidnapped. Some parents have stopped their children from attending secondary in those affected Education District. The social life of many people have changed due to human insecurity (Tzanelli, 2006), and some people are subjected to self-imprisonment in their homes and (locked) offices (David, 2009). Some people build nice houses and fail to finish the exterior walls, presenting themselves with the look of poverty in an effort to prevent popularity. Some people are afraid of buying new vehicles, and even some rich people resort to using commercial motorcycles called 'Okada' to market, school and social outings, as a means to elude hostage takers (Soyombo, 2009).

### **Implication of Students kidnapping in Lagos Metropolis**

The findings of this study indicate that colossal rate of youth unemployment, abject poverty, corruption, moral decadence, indiscipline, inflation, poor standard of living, high cost of living, inadequate of security personnel, poor motivation of law enforcement agency, loss of societal value and get rich quick syndrome among others. The mentality of "man must survive" and "quick money syndrome" has brought many of these misfits, into group of kidnappers;

targeting both students and teachers who they perceive to be a family of high financial prospect in the state metropolis. Therefore, this finding was in congruence with former President Goodluck Jonathan position cited in Wakili (2013) thus: "I agree totally that until we create jobs; until Nigerians can wake up and find food to eat; until Nigerians sick can walk to the hospital and get treatment; the economic indices may not mean much to us". This study also improve the position of Ogabido (2009) in Inyang and Abraham (2013) that "the issue of poverty and unemployment of youths as well as social injustice and 'unfair distribution of the nations' resources are potent causes of kidnapping in Nigeria. These factors have caused the youths to engage in kidnapping and criminal activities as a way of getting their share of nation wealth".

The kidnapping activities have created negative headline news on the Nigerian Newspaper Report which have dent the image of state in the world. This type of report depicts the state metropolis as one of the most dangerous places to travel in the world. Therefore, the unsuccessful apprehension of kidnapping culprits and successful collection of ransom by captors detest Nigerians to lost interest in security operatives whom they christened as collaborators with the perpetrators. Base on the findings, this study posits that inadequate security personnel have exposed the weakness and lapses of Community police, Nigeria police, Civil defense, Army, Air force and navy due to their inability to curtain criminality in the schools and the country water ways. This menace has scare away potential investors, tourists, manufacturing companies, and business developer, educationist to boycott Lagos as centre of excellence. The parents and students of Lagos secondary school are living with perpetual fear of kidnapers. Many parents have withdrawn their wards from schooling due to insecurity of life and property parading government school. Therefore, Lagos State government need to make frantic effort to create employment opportunities for graduate, instill discipline, tackle corruption, subsidies the state economy, establish wealth creation centre for artisans to reduce poverty and inflation gap, re-equip and motivate law enforcement agencies so as to curb the prevalence of student kidnapping and security challenges bedeviled Lagos metropolis because "an idle man is the devil's workshop". Also, in response to the security challenges, Lagos State government was also reported to have spent three billion naira in two years on security alone (Soyombo, 2009). Because, large sum of money spent on ransom could affects the State economy drastically, as it could have been use for meaningful economic development. As a result of rampant kidnapping of student, broad-day and night travel has become a high risk venture and many school administrators, parents, teachers and student have been forced out of their newly completed schools or houses by kidnapper and inflict them with psychosomatic disorder because nobody know who will be next victims. Commercial motorcyclists have been banned from operation between 6.00am-6.30pm due to the fear of their involvement in kidnapping activities (Inyang and Abraham, 2013).

### **Conclusion**

This study provides evidence that Kidnapping is one of the offspring of terrorism and social vices in Nigeria. Student kidnapping is a nefarious, villainous, terrible and seasonal crime that portend security challenges in Lagos state. It is a major problems being experienced in Lagos metropolis today because categories of criminals are neglecting other means of money making to this quickest means of making huge sum of money. Based on the major findings of the study,

it can be concluded that kidnapping of secondary school student in Lagos metropolis are caused by economic depression, poverty, moral decadence, poor standard of living, high cost of living, inflation, graduate unemployment, poor parental upbringing, greed amongst the youth; get rich quick mentality, inadequate crime control and insecurity. Therefore, these problems has degenerated to high level of crime rate; dent the image of Lagos state with insecurity of life and properties, and administrative lethargy of secondary school system in Lagos state. Based on those problems, some parents have relocated from one community or state to another due to fear of being kidnapped and many schools have been closed down for a short period of time. Finally, all stakeholders in education such as: Government, policy maker, Non-governmental Organization, community leader, parents, teachers and students must collaborate and work assiduously with Nigerian Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Ibrahim Idris; Director-General of Department of State Security, Mr. Lawal Daura and Service chiefs such as: Chief of Defense Staff, Gen. Abayomi Olonisakin; Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Tukur Buratai; Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Sadique Abubakar; and the Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas to support the Lagos State government in fighting crime rate and security challenges in the state. Because, "all hand must be on desk".

### **Recommendations**

In order to avoid student kidnapping and guarantee security of life and school properties in Lagos metropolis, the following recommendations are made for government:

- Government should create more jobs opportunities for the youth and unemployed graduate through the establishment of wealth creation centre.
- The Lagos State Government should equip community police and motivate other law enforcement agencies such as: Nigerian Police, Department of State Security, Military and Para-military forces.
- Lagos State Government should design economic policy that will alleviate poverty and compulsory all schools proprietor to employ security from license Security Company which is under the Ministry of Interior and Supervised by Nigerian security and Civil Defense Corps.
- Lagos State Government should insured life of all students and responsible for the ransom payment of every abducted student by the kidnapers
- Lagos State Government should work in tandem with Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) and all network providers in order to track the kidnapers within and outside Nigeria.
- Lagos State Government should incarcerate all corrupted individual that sponsored kidnapers of students with death sentence and schedule periodic meeting with all the community leaders and landlords on quarterly bases in a year to expose the perpetrator within their vicinity.
- Lagos State Government should confiscate all properties and houses used for accommodating victims of kidnapers and turn it to home of destitute.
- All private and public secondary schools in Lagos metropolis should redesign their security techniques and covered the leakages through checks and verification exercise.



- Lagos State Government and private school proprietors should install surveillance devices like closed-circuit television cameras at strategic area of the school environment so as to monitor the intruders.
- Lagos State Government should train and station joint security task force to all community where schools are located.

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