

**A REVIEW OF THE HEALTH IMPLICATION OF KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA**

**BY**

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**Abstract**

*Kidnapping is among the contemporary social problems that are affecting the citizens and the socio-economic development of the Nigerians and lived the victims or escapees with some health conditions that required medical treatment or services such as protein-energy malnutrition, sexually transmitted disease, peptic ulcer disease and physical injuries. The main objectives of this paper are, to find out the physical health implication that is associated with kidnapping, to find out the psychological health implications associated with kidnapping and also the emotional health implication associated with kidnapping. The paper reviewed various researches from different authors. The paper was highlighting the physical, psychological and emotional implications of kidnapping. This paper was concluded and recommended that the federal and state government should provide a skills acquisition centre and the necessary training materials for the unemployed youths in their various communities to become self-reliance and independent in the society and also the government and non-governmental organizations should provide a free health care service after the victims released or escaped from the terrorist/kidnappers to ensure ensured each escapee are free from sexually transmitted disease examples Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), syphilis and gonorrhoea infection.*

**Keywords: Health, Implication, Kidnapping and Causes**

**Introduction**

Kidnapping is a global problem that affects several countries all over the world from the United States, Europe, Asian countries and many countries in Africa, most especially in Nigeria. Governments are working with security agencies to eliminate this problem in Nigeria and ensure that the perpetrators are captured and brought to justice. Kidnapping refers to the seizure and custody of a person, typically to obtain a ransom. At times kidnappers embrace their captives longer to require extra cash from the sufferer's family or associates. No matter the level of complexity and person is facing, that is not enough reason to prefer kidnapping as an alternative to survive (Okwuagbala, 2020). Kidnapping is among the contemporary main social problems that are depressingly affecting the free pressure group of citizens and the socio-economic development of the country. Kidnapping which is mainly widespread in the southern parts of the country is now very popular in the Northern parts of the nation due to diverse elements of carrying weapons conflicts such as ethnoreligious conflicts, farmers-herders conflict, Boko-Haram insurgency among others (Wajim, 2020).

Even though the record of kidnapping is a very long one, it is just relative a moment ago that there has been a logical effort to recognize the effects, both long-standing and short-range, on persons and their families. This is a significant concern for medical and educational reasons. The guidance of mental health professionals is sought with increasing incidence with regard to the deliberate management of hostage incidents and the clinical management of those who have been abducted (Alexander & Klein, 2009). Kidnappings persist to donate an environment of insecurity in the South East, the South-South and the Southwestern state. Hostages have most in recent times also been taken in the state of the North-West zone of Nigeria (Ibrahim & Mukhtar, 2017). In 2021 there are many students were kidnapped in secondary schools and institutions of advanced learning, the affected schools; are greenfield University, Federal forestry Mando and the students of Baptist school were in Kaduna state.

### **Concept of Kidnapping**

Kidnapping can be seen as false incarceration in common sense that it involves the unlawful detention of persons against his or her own will by another human being in such a way as to violate the confined human being right to be free from the self-control of movement. This involves captivating the away someone against the human being's will, generally to hold the individual in false custody or detention without official right. This is often done for money or in furtherance of an additional offence. No single person is free from being kidnapped. In Nigeria, the hostage-taker is all over the place targeting both foreigners and non-foreigners alike with little or no resistance from our law enforcement agencies (Ngwama, 2014). The Nigerian security organization has been destabilized in the face of this conflict, a slight has been done to discover the socio-economic and underlining factors precipitating this offence (Ngwama, 2014). In view of Wajim (2020), kidnapping is termed as robbery of the highest rank, it is a prepared and logical robbery that is not as deadly as armed robbery, but more money-making than the previous. The money making through kidnapping has encouraged those who have participated in it to continue doing so despite the fact that it is illegal. Kidnapping and abduction are two such crimes that have a great psychological effect on the victims. Usually, victims take days to recover from the psychological wounds which are inflicted on them, and at times they are not even able to properly heal from them.

According to Bhatiya (2018), the term kidnapping consists of two words, kid and napping. Kid means a child or a minor while napping means to take away. Therefore, kidnapping means taking away a child. In India, the term kidnapping is used only for minors, but in English law, it is used to refer to the kidnapping of both adults and minors. Kidnapping is confirmed as illegal by the Indian penal code. Kidnapping is done for a variety of reasons such as for ransom, as a way to allow someone or themselves to escape or for terrorizing a group or forcing a person or third party to agree to their demands, usually for money or for letting a prisoner escape. On occasion, kidnapping is done for varying or dominating political decisions. Kidnapping and abduction give both emotional and psychological scars to the victim and eventually they become so much broken that they have trust issues, autonomy problems, etc. not only the victims but also the family members of the victims suffer with them. It must be understood as to why people use resorts such as kidnapping and abduction and also as to why people become sufferers of these crimes. The victim of kidnapping and abduction faces a lot of psychological problems. People who survive such problems usually face certain issues such as trust issues for their whole (Bhatiya, 2018).

When it comes to kidnapping, in terms of forensic psychology, there are usually a small number of core motivations. primary and leading is sexual fulfilment. Often a human being will kidnap to hold the sufferer detainee as a sexual slave. In severe cases, captors may torture and take the life of their sufferers when they no longer have any use for them. These types of cases are extremely worrying and often leave a lasting impact on the consciousness of civilization. Kidnappers may also commit their crimes for money (Akwash, 2016).

### **Genesis of Kidnapping in Nigeria**

Kidnapping has now become a common word both in community and private discussions going by its occurrence in Nigeria. Literarily, the word, which has become famous, decomposed and nauseating in the ears of almost every person has derived from "kid" meaning; child and "nab" which means; to snatch. Kidnapping now appears to be an arising concern in Nigeria though it is not the latest trend. It is as old as the word itself. But the cause may be different from country to country. Since 1673 the unfriendly world has been used to the carrying out of the robbery of children for use as servants or labourers during the colonial era. So it has come to mean any illegal detain or arrest of an individual or public against their will, apart from their age (Ngwama, 2014). Kidnapping has become common in Nigerian society. It is fast becoming a producing change to armed robbery offences. The state of kidnapping is so severe that it has virtually affected most people in our society. The current aspect of kidnapping became troubled in the South-South communities when militants in February 2006 kidnapped some oil workers to draw global concentration to the terrible situation in the oil-rich South-South zone of Nigeria, the sufferers were generally foreigners. Since then the contemporary social dilemma of kidnapping has increased like wildfire in most parts of Nigeria, particularly in the south-eastern part and northern part of Nigeria (Inyang & Abraham, 2013).

Kidnapping have had a detrimental influence on the economy, increased capital flight, had a massively negative impact on health resources, and degraded the country's health indices. The many health

implications of insecurity and insurgency endanger Nigerians' overall health as well as the efficient operation of the country's health system.

### **Concept of Health**

World Health Organization (1948) defined health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity and the ability to lead a socially and economically productive life. Health is a state or quality of the human organism expressing the sufficient execution of the human being in given conditions, hereditary or environmental. According to Fuad (2016), mental health is a state of equilibrium involving the human being and the surrounding world, a state of harmony between oneself and others, coexistence between the reality of the person and that of other people and that of the setting. Initially psychological and emotional aspects were seen as one in the same thing but as more study becomes accessible a definite difference is emerging. Mental health can be seen as "Knowing" or "Cognition", whereas Emotional health refers to "Feeling". Social wellbeing implies the value and amount of human being interpersonal ties and the degree of association with the community. Social health takes into account that every individual is a part of a family and a wider community and focuses on the social and economic situation and well-being of the Whole Person in the background of his social group. The level of living consists of nine components: health, food utilization, education, profession and working situation, shelter, social security, clothes, recreation and leisure and personal privileges. These distinctiveness are understood to persuade human well-being. The quality of life is an individual component which can be seen as the condition of life resulting from the combination of the effects of the complete range of factors such as those determining health, happiness together with comfort in the physical surroundings and an enjoyable occupation, education, social and logical attainments, choice of action, righteousness and liberty of expression (Fuad, 2016).

### **Health Implication of Kidnapping**

In common terms, the psychological impact of being taken captive is related to that of human being uncovered to other trauma, including revolutionary incidents and disasters for adults and children. Characteristic of adult reactions as explained by Akwash (2016) consist of:

- i. Cognitive: impaired memory concentration; confusion, dizziness and disorientation; intrusive thoughts ('flashbacks') and memories; denial (i.e. that the event has happened) and the adult victims, tend to have nightmares and of being alone.
- ii. Emotional: shock and hypesthesia; fear and anxiety (but panic is not common); helplessness and hopelessness; dissociation (feeling numb and 'switched off' emotionally); anger (at anybody – perpetrators, themselves and the authorities); anhedonia (loss of pleasure in doing that which was previously pleasurable); depression (a reaction to loss); guilt (e.g. at having survived if others died or for being taken hostage).
- iii. Social: withdrawal; irritability; avoidance of reminders of the event. Denial (i.e. a total or partial failure to recognize what has happened) has often been maligned as an answer to excessive stress, but it has continued existence value at least in the short term by allowing the human being a delayed stage during which he/she has time to adjust to a hurting reality.

### **Stockholm Syndrome**

According to Bhatiya (2018), Stockholm syndrome is a situation in which the hostages or victims becomes attached to their captors. The victims feel psychological alliances with their kidnappers. This is usually measured as a victim's survival policy. At times this strategy is not pre-decided but devised by their subconscious minds. The victim becomes attached to the kidnappers and depends on them for their survival. It is seen that at times these victims support their kidnappers, pleads before courts for the release of their kidnappers etc. These feelings are generally called irrational because of the danger in which the victim is, in such a state the victim must not enlarge such feelings for the kidnapper it is both dangerous and risky. In layman's terms, in Stockholm's syndrome, the victim develops strong emotions with the individual who have held him captive, has beaten, threaten, intimidates, and abused him. This is not healthy for the life of the victim. It is said that around 8% of victims of kidnapping and abduction get Stockholm syndrome.

According to Sundaram (2013), four main components cause Stockholm syndrome; which are

1. Positive feelings of the victim towards their kidnapper/abductor.
2. No preceding association among both victim and their kidnapper.
3. Refusal by the victim to work together with police and other authorities.
4. The victim believes that there is a humanitarian side of their victim.

### **Sexual Transmitted Diseases**

Child sexual abuse as a result of kidnapping also exposes a child to the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), syphilis and gonorrhoea infections, whenever the victim experienced sexual harassment the infectious disease may occur. Another guided form of sexual molestation of kidnapped children is that the abducted underage victims are often subjected to a forced marriage with older husbands. As the child brides are wedded to older, more sexually knowledgeable men with whom it is complex to agree to safe sexual behaviours, particularly while under anxiety to bear children (Ibrahim & Mukhtar, 2017).

### **Physical Effects**

Detainees are possible to have to suffer, mostly during continued periods of imprisonment, an exacerbation of pre-existent physical situations, such as asthma and diabetes. Also, the confinement itself causes fresh conditions due to a lack of the fundamentals of healthy breathing, such as a healthful diet problem, tenderness of legs and malaria. Physical and mental torture causes traumatic depression, anxiety, fear and most times post-traumatic stress syndrome, which may last a lifetime (Alexander & Klein, 2009).

### **Causes of Kidnapping in Nigeria**

#### **Leadership Failure**

The existing state of economic our political history could be responsible for poor leadership elite who are unsympathetic to this state of insecurity as they over concentrate on how to acquire political power. They place and give little or no value to matters concerning greater nation aspiration and the distinction of lives of the people. The rising rate of kidnapping and other criminal behaviour is a direct consequence of the failure of leadership. Our political leadership is too absorbed with the issue of control gaining because of what they universally get out of it and negates the tasks likely of them. The character of our political leadership at all levels contradicts the logic and philosophy of governance which essentially is the support of human dignity and the protection of the foundation values of society (Nasiru, 2020).

#### **Poor Security System**

While there is a need to criticize these acts of criminality, there is need also to express disapproval of the security agencies for lack of ability and participation on their part. There is the need to restate that the Federal Government which has the exclusive power over security matters immediately put in place machinery for ending the booming kidnapping or hostage-taking racket for most of the country, anything short of ending the widespread tension, the regime of fear and general insecurity is intolerable to the Nigerians who have waited in unsuccessful for the realization of the promises of democratic governance since 1999 (Ngwama, 2014).

#### **Unemployment and Poverty Issue**

The amount in which unemployed youths are roaming about the street is alarming. These youths without a job, at present, provide work for themselves by engaging in unlawful activities such as kidnapping, robbery, child abduction, and other immoral actions. As a result of the high level of being without a job and poverty among Nigerians, particularly the youths, they are negatively fascinated by violent crime. This is depicted by current development in Anambra State where reports unveiled a 70-year old farmer butchered by disgruntled, hunger-infested and jobless youths residing in their villages due to unemployment (Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anigbuogu, 2019).

#### **Solidification of Security Personnel/Agencies**

Nigeria's population is estimated to be at 220 million people, with the Nigeria Police Force employing around 370,000 people. The police-to-population ratio is 1:595, which is lower than the UN standard (Nasiru, 2020). This suggests that Nigeria is significantly under-policed as a country, which may explain the police's incapacity to successfully combat kidnapping and other security threats. Training and retraining of officers must be carried out regularly with a special focus on human rights, weapon handling, communication skills, new interrogation techniques (torture is outdated), exposure to modern technological equipment used to confront the security challenges in Nigeria.

#### **Good Governance**

According to Oluwarotimi (2012), good control is the common preparation for the security challenge in Nigeria. The war together with insecurity would be won only by raising power standards, which is, humanizing the ethnicity of good governance where the government is responsible and answerable to the people. Security engagement cannot be alienated from good governance. Many others have also related security to the governance system. The point of view is that peace and security are determined by good governance. Moreover, as Oluwa (2012) has pointed out, good governance is a gathering of effective, creative, apparent, trustworthy and reliable political management whose powerful force of an enhancement

in the collective well-being of the general public through well-conceived, successfully implemented financial policies and human growth development programme. The fundamental rule of good governance is the focus on community as the vital goal of governance.

### Conclusion

The occurrence of kidnapping is on increase in Nigeria most especially in the North-West zone of Nigeria. There is a mass population in the north; the northwest zone occupied the most population that resulting in unemployment and poverty issues, poor security system. Some of the youths are turning into kidnapping in Nigeria to get ransom (illegal money) as their source of income. Leadership failure the federal government was neglected the issues of kidnapping from the starting line. The victims are mostly accompanied by health conditions such as physical implications; nutritional deficiencies for prolonged detention and tenderness of the legs, psychological implications; anxiety, confusion, impaired memory concentration and also disorientation. Due to this health implication, there is a need for medical attention to be given, after the release or escape from the hand of kidnappers.

### Suggestions

This paper made the following recommendations to concentrate on the incidence rate of kidnapping and to provide the necessary assistance to all communities that were affected by this security challenge and the areas that were yet, to be affected.

- i. The federal and state government should provide a skills acquisition centre and the necessary training materials for the unemployed youths in their various communities to become self-reliant and independent in society.
- ii. The government and non-governmental organization should provide a free health care service after the victims are released or escape from the terrorist/kidnappers to ensure each escapee are free from sexually transmitted disease example human immune virus (HIV), syphilis, gonorrhoea infection and malaria disease.
- iii. The community members should regularly organize an awareness campaign programme, especially for youths, about the dangers of engaging in deathly activities like banditry and kidnapping.

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