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Fear of crime: A critical analysis of the situation in Southeast Nigeria

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Abstract

While several studies that examine fear of crime are largely of foreign origin, the problem is under-researched in Nigeria, despite its prevalence. This research contributes to the relatively few existing scholarships on fear of crime in Nigeria. Answers provided to the three critical questions raised reinforced the predictions of existential theory to further guide the analysis. The paper is basically theoretical, relying primarily on library research and review of related literature to obtain required data. From the review, it was found that fear of crime is on the increase in Nigeria, occasioned by heightened insecurity, moral and social panic linked to palpable fear of the unknown gunmen and 'sit-at-home' orders by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). People fear criminal victimization when and where law enforcement agents are selective and reactive instead of unselective and proactive. These have encumbered economic development, social life and human security, as people seldom go for their routine activities to avoid being attacked. These have serious implications for the criminal justice system, particularly, law enforcement administration, which calls for inter-security agency collaborations to effectively address the problem. All levels of government should constantly partner critical social control actors in crime and security management for better outcomes.

Keywords: Crime, Critical analysis, Fear of crime, Victimization, 'Sit-at-home' order, Nigeria

Introduction

The concept of fear of crime cannot be better understood without taking a look at what “fear” and “crime” stand for. Therefore, the concept of fear can be said to be bodily response to stimuli arising from human general environment. Silberman (1987) opined that fear is a sequence of complicated alterations in body function that notifies an individual to imminent danger. In the same vein, it has been described psychologically as a physical feeling that reacts to the recognition of perceived imminent threat (Farrall, Gray & Jackson, 2007). On the other hand, Van der Walt et al. (1982) argued that crime can be defined on two grounds which include, juridical and non-juridical sense. The former which refers to the violation of the law with a punishment attached and enforced by the state, while the latter is seen to be an antisocial act that threatens, breaches, or violates the stability and security of an entire community (society) and its members as a whole (Van der Walt, Cronje, & Smit, 1982). Crime in its broader sense encompasses a wide range of activities that are seen to violate the penal code of the society/state and of which sanction is applied by the state upon transgression.

However, as with any other social phenomenon, there is no universally acceptable definition of fear of crime or fear of criminal victimisation. While fear refers to an emotional response marked by a feeling of risk and anxiety as a result of threat of physical harm (Church Council, 1995), fear of crime is perceived dangers (threats) to individual wellbeing instead of threats to property or obvious impression of risk (Maxfield, 1984). Clearly, fear of crime is an enthusiastic/emotional response set apart by feeling that danger could bring about actual damage. The level of fear an individual feels is subject to factors that influence real risk and impression of risk. For youths, individual attributes, neighbourhood qualities, and attributes of their parental figures add of fear felt (Grinshteyn, 2013). The term depicts a restless passionate state, showing the belief that one is at risk for criminal victimisation (Regoli, Hewitt, & Maras, 2011).

However, fear of crime may be a concern about immediate danger to the person, at the point when feeling of fear toward immediate threat is available then again, a concern, anxiety and fear about high menace of futuristic event, which are undeniably more completely recorded in literature on the fear of crime (Cashmore, 2014), while Gray, Jackson, & Farrall, (2011) argued that the notion of fear of crime relates to prior victimisation of an occurrence, instead of the chance and perceptions (information gotten from indirect sources) of the probability of future criminal victimisation. Hence to DuBow, McCabe, & Kaplan (1979) as cited in Cashmore (2014), all concerns encompassing possible risk to self and/or, risk, fear, worry, anxiety, concern, or behaviour are on occasions viewed as about “fear” of criminal victimization. Thus, utilization of the word “fear” regarding crime in this study pertains to individuals’ tensions towards the chance of future victimisation.

Generally, people fear many things for different reasons, and these fears have been classified. For instance, there are acrophobia, the anxiety toward levels, and arachnophobia, the apprehension about spiders. Hydrophobia, anthropophobia, apiphobia, and a lot more are for the most part genuine feelings of trepidation that individuals should figure out how to live and adapt to (Oxford University Press, 2018). Arising from this, Moore (2012) explained that, to curb these feelings of anxiety (fear), individuals do various things: One method for treating an intense fear is to see a therapist who assists them with reconstructing their opinion on the object of their fear. The author further stated that people who fear crime can likewise do openness treatment; this is where people are progressively acquainted with their apprehensions to assist them with adapting to them and not feel as anxious. Haymaker (2018) argued that specialists will, some of the time, give medicine to reduce the anxiety individuals feel from their particular fear, notwithstanding, a significant fear that is not examined sufficiently, is adjudged to be the fear of crime; sclerophobia—the concern this study tends to address.

The notion of sclerophobia (fear of crime) was introduced into criminological studies in the 1960s, following the growing trends in civil disturbance; race conflicts and urban violence that characterised the United States (US) at that point in history (see Garofalo, 1981; Farral, Jackson, & Gray, 2009). As these problems persisted, scholars, researchers and practitioners began to empirically investigate their causes and consequences, with the goal of reducing fears and harms associated with crimes and criminality. Fear of crime, as an emerging subfield of criminological research, is inseparable from victimology—a branch of

criminology that focuses specifically on the scientific study of victims, victim-offender relationships, and fear of crime/victimisation. According to Alemika (2011), starting from the 1960s, and particularly since the 1980s, victims' movements arose to solicit for strategy reactions to victimisation and the plight of victims in relation to fear of crime.

In analysing fear of crime, the emphasis is usually on an individual's distinctive perception of a given incident in relation to an individual parameter which involves the mental impression (cognitive perception) of the circumstance as undermining or risky (Gabriel & Greve, 2003). It is a build that incorporates very various types of threats like the threat of physical damage, shame, material loss, or humiliation. The normal element is that these dangers result from conduct/behaviour ordinarily viewed as criminal. Crime is an act that is carried out in violation of the law, which has the tendency of destroying lives and property, and causing increasing tension, anxiety, and fear. According to Warr (2000), criminal occasions at their most rudimentary level are terrifying. The devastating outcomes of crime and victimisation on human and material resources instil fear in primary, secondary and vicarious victims.

In the light of the foregoing, it is obvious that both extant and current literatures on fear of crime are extensive (see Garofalo, 1981; Warr, 2000; Farral, Jackson, & Gray, 2009; Alemika, 2011; Grinshteyn, 2013; Regoli, Hewitt, & Maras, 2011). While several studies that examined fear of crime are largely of foreign origin, as progressively reviewed, the problem is under-researched in Nigeria, despite its prevalence. The current research, therefore, attempts to add to the generally few existing scholarships on fear of crime in Nigeria by providing answers to the following critical questions:

Why do people fear crime in Nigeria?

What are the risk factors associated with fear of crime in Nigeria?

How could fear of crime be prevented and controlled in Nigeria?

Theoretical framework

The predictions of existential theory guided the analysis due to its relevance to the subject under discussion. The justification for the adoption of existential theory of Roger (1951) is predicated upon the fact that the theory explains the effects of fear in relation to the environment and crime as a product of environment. The theory argued that anxiety may arise through a threat to individual's self-concept, part of which may include his sexuality, inability to perform certain tasks, and fear of not coping with environment and home. Serious anxiety and obsession reduce the ability to guide one's life and may end up triggering feelings that life is meaningless, and crime is imminent, even when, in reality, they are not. Roger's (1951) thoughts support the Nigerian situation in this period of high rate of crime and insecurity, most especially as people are disconnected from their families, economies and social activities and worship centres, swayed by fear of crime. When people's feelings, thoughts and moods are affected, it will lead to depletion of their physical and social energies as well as inducement of mental stress that can cause fear of criminal victimisation.

Depression has been identified as one of the psychological problems associated with crime and fear of it. According to Ukah, Chukwu & Eyisi (2021), depression reflects an unhappy mood experienced by people due to a prolonged situation that has affected the morale of individuals, which may cause self-inflicted injuries or suicide. Some scholars (see Fischner, 1970; Barlow, Chorpita, Turovsky, 1996) argued that there is a correlation between depression and cognitive ability of an individual. In affirmation, for instance, student's cognitive thoughts were demonstrated to be influencing them and subsequently developed features of depression. Cognitive factors, particularly the way individuals interpret or ponder on difficult situations, play a crucial role in the aetiology of fear. Students are not certain of their future anymore, as the activities of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) are currently preventing them from writing West African Senior Certificate Examinations (WASCE).

From the cultural perspective, people interact with their family members, office colleagues, and business associates, thereby developing strong relationship ties. Naturally, people have sentimental attachment to their families. Communal crises have turned people into refugees; Fulani herdsmen have driven farmers away from their main source of livelihood- farming. People flee away from their homes because of fear of being attacked by members of the rivalry community, bandits, and terrorists. A breakdown in family ties is

like removing a fish from the river which is a threat to its existence. Individuals from the onset are created to live in group settings. Mboti (2001) observed that people act together to promote common interest which can be achieved through shared goals. All human activities revolve round social interaction which is the nerve centre of human relationships. When life becomes individualistic or people are being detached from group functions or social activities, it could lead to people committing egoistic suicide (Levine, Maiolo, & Jendrsiak, 1991).

Review of Related Literature: Factors responsible for fear of crime

Fear of crime arises as a social peculiarity (phenomenon) (Austin, Furr, & Spine, 2002) which, in utmost cases, encroaches on the standard of life (Jackson & Gray, 2010), causes suspicion, tension and other psychological/mental issues on an individual level (Ruijsbroek, Droomers, Groenewegen, Hardyns, & Stronks, 2015) furthermore, at a social level, causes bias and isolation with the goal that this frailty has now turned into a significant policy concern (Carro, Valera, & Vidal, 2010). These underscored the thrust of this research, as re-echoed in Grinshteyn's (2013) study, which revealed that apprehension/fear about neighbourhood crime was seen to fundamentally build adolescents' depression/anxiety.

However, causes of fear of crime have been advanced by Wesley Skogan (1986) to include five contributing factors or categories: (i) actual criminal victimisation, (ii) second-hand information on criminal victimisation diffused through social networks, (iii) the characteristics of the built environment, (iv) physical deterioration and social disorder, (v) group conflict. These fear of crime typologies are caused by people's life experiences, exacerbated by the type of people they are in associate with and the exposure to media, especially the type and nature of television programme they watch. According to Innes (2004a & 2004b), there are four streams of hypothetical exploration (theoretical research) that suggest factors that are liable for fear of crime, thus: "social", "demographic", and "environmental", criminal opportunity and risk of victimisation.

Actual criminal victimization

An individual's life experiences shape this kind of fear. People's fear of crime may have its roots in first-hand encounters with crime, such as when they become victims of crime. This corroborates criminal opportunity and risk of victimisation theories centre on crime as the chief explanatory variable in fear of crime. In support, Box, Hale, & Andrew (1988) view that people with a previous encounter of victimisation might be bound to fear being a victim of crime than the individuals who have not been victimized. Consequently, one's knowledge about crime, previous encounters of being victimised cum perceived vulnerabilities may impact the degree to which they fear crime.

Second-hand information on criminal victimisation diffused through social networks

Research shows that fear of crime sometimes starts from various factors yet a significant one comes from television programs and the crime displayed in them (Haymaker, 2018). In a study funded by the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), National Broadcasting Company (NBC), and the Fox in 1998, uncovered that, within 1994 to 1995, violence depicted in TV programs expanded from 58% to 61%. At the peak of this period, the vicious content of shows also expanded by 14% (Mifflin, 1998 as cited in Haymaker, 2018). For instance, violence in TV shows keeps on increasing, as well as crime programs being displayed on the television. This is critical to inspect in light of how much these shows can affect people and social orders at large. The public, according to Aborisade (2017), experiences the ill effects of insanity about crime stirred up by the television and the newspapers. Certainly, the over-portrayal of crime in the media world has been said to raise the fear of crime in people in general, aggravated by the excessively high inclusion of genuine direct victimisation crimes, for example, violent attack and manslaughter rather than burglary, robbery, or theft. Walklate and Mythen (2008) argued that the improvement of technologies in media has prompted significantly higher public attention to their risks of victimisation.

Warr (2000) explicates that in any event, when individuals are misinformed, they stay resolved that

their information is right and that they know about their risks. Thus, compounded with the frequently vague nature of the media's portrayal of crime, individuals will generally sum up information they gather from news founts, over-sharpening them to their risks of victimisation (Jewkes, 2011). In support, Aborisade (2017) argued that majority of Nigerians do not have logical bases for their conviction about crime. The author further stressed that in day-to-day existence, they are continually faced with information on crime from founts which may not appreciate nor care about the (in)-correctness of that information and that might utilize crime to sell, entertain, exploit or publicised. In that capacity, many are probably going to decide on side of caution, stressing over and making preparations against crime more than is needed.

Characteristics of the built environment

The characteristics that permeate the environment can assume to play a part in evoking fear. For example, fear of crime might be more common in an area which has attained recognition for being fear inclined (Ferraro, 1995). Farraro further argued that an area's recognition for crime inclination relies upon the degree of occurrence of criminal event around there and on the "signs of crime". Signs of crime are elements of the actual environment which elicit people to accept that their probabilities of being victimised are intensified. Similarly, Adigun (2013) argued that incidence and fear of crime have spatial variations; the design and how the environment is built and arranged are believed to be one of the predatory factors influencing deviant behaviour and criminal activities which give rise to some levels of fear of crime in the society. Thus, environment where crime is regular, community solidarity would be low and signs of crime would be as well common, this can trigger fear as people feel risky and judge their possibility of victimisation to be enlarged.

Physical deterioration and social disorder

According to Timothy (2018), there is a symbolic correlation between the physical state of a given environment and the persistent recurrence of criminal activities within such an environment. This includes environments marked by crisis and anti-social activities that cause social unrest and instil panic and fear in every member of the public. Fear can be produced by individual's real or perceived physical or social vulnerabilities. Social vulnerabilities build fear when inhabitants perceive they frequent high crime regions (Austin, Furr & Spine, 2002). However, perceptions of crime as a continuous event might bring about fear as people believe they are 'in danger' of being victimised. Here the fear is psychological and emotional in nature; and happens, according to Gray, Jackson, & Farrall (2011) & Warr, (2000), when the emotion and worrying of crime and aftermath danger of being a victim. Hence, fear of crime can be in form of thought of crime occurring in the nearest future in which one can be a victim (Berenbaum, 2010).

On the other hand, the law enforcement agents are perceived to be selective and reactive instead of unselective and proactive in policing the society, irrespective of gender, class, religion, and ethnic lines. Thus, many people appear to have lost confidence in the ability of the police to safeguard their lives and property as seen by the difficulties of police duties in Nigeria. There is absence of proactive measures in the form of visible role fulfilment both for crime control and crime prevention by the police, their abuse of power and disrespect for human dignity function to increase people's fear of crime, thereby giving rise to violent crimes such as assault, kidnapping, armed robbery, rape, cultism, gangsterism and murder (Oladeinde, 2016 p. 13).

Group conflicts

Group conflicts such as communal clashes, youth anti-social behaviour which causes social unrest can also be seen as a cause of fear of crime. Group conflict within a particular society has been one of the major causes of fear of crime within some societies, especially countries like Nigeria where there is high prevalence of group clash, terrorism, and a lot of banditry cases; this has resulted into the fear of crime among a lot of members of the public. Williams, Ghimire and Snedher (2018) stress the effects of group conflict on fear of crime, beyond the physical direct impact and consequence of armed group conflicts, noting that armed group conflicts inflict the fear of crime on most of the citizens as a lot of them are being scared of becoming a victim of crime.

Mayowa, Matanmi, Awojori, and Fasuan (2021) posited that increase in the prevalence of crime

across the country has brought correspondence in its fear in the land. By implication, the phenomenon of fear of crime is on the increase, occasioned by heightened insecurity and moral and social panic linked to palpable fear of the unknown gunmen and “sit-at-home” order by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the Southeastern and Boko-Haram’s activities in the North-East Nigeria. Ugwuoke (2021, p. 429) noted that the “spate of fear that has enveloped millions of Nigerians due to the protracted acts of these “Unknown Gunmen” is unprecedented”. Stressing that intra-state movements are filled with wariness and anxiety, and even when under lock and key in our homes, the fear is palpable due to the menace of “Unknown Gunmen”. Also, since, IPOB began enforcing the weekly sit-at- order on successive Mondays before it was amended to be implemented on days Kanu appears in court, mainly to deepen its support base and push for the release of its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, who has been in custody of the Department of State Services, the entire five southeastern states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo are deserted on these days forcing businesses and institutions to shut down for fear of being attacked (Ekpali, 2023). Hence, the sit-at-home has made the once peaceful south-east a war zone because there is fear of violent attacks amongst people.

In the northern region of the country, the Boko-Haram, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), armed bandits, kidnappers, and other terrorist organizations are on the rampage. For instance, the rise of banditry in the northwest as noted by Idowu and Arua (2023), has had a detrimental effect on the regional security as well as the national security. According to *Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)* report, Boko Haram is one of the deadliest terrorist networks in Africa and has killed and kidnapped a lot of people since 2009 (CFR, 2022), attacking markets, churches, homes, and federal military installations, causing huge casualties among civilians using improvised explosives, bombings, rape, public executions, and indiscriminately abducting and killing victims, (Ojewale, 2021). This terror increases security risks in all regions and has driven a large number of law-abiding people into a state of fear (Okwuwada, 2023).

Consequences of Fear of Crime

Crime and its consequent fear occur not only within but can also influence and may indeed be compounded by a wide range of socio-economic and environmental contexts (Adigun, 2013). Fear can change a few public spots into “off limits regions” (see Morgan, 1978), which seriously affects the local flourishing. This fear causes occupants to switch their ways of behaving to stay away from the areas that they feel are uncontrolled and dangerous. They pull out from their general public in view of an absence of trust and union. By keeping away from these areas, the occupants are surrendering the power they need to offer common help and attachment in the neighbourhood (Doran, 2012). In the event that residents are keeping away from these areas, they cannot monitor or assist with fixing the issue. This leaves the issue and criminal way of behaving unrestrained, which prompts expanded degrees of crime and accordingly heightened fear of crime.

Other negative emotions that emanate from the fear of crime can induce high expenses on food consumption and lead to low savings, hence threats to human security, particularly food security. According to the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and Food Security Policy Brief (FSPB), food security is accomplished by guaranteeing sufficient food supply concerning amount, quality, and assortment of food, as well as streamlined solidness inflow of provisions and secures supportable approach to accessibility by the people who need them (FAO, 1996; FSPB, 2006). The implication is that conflict and terrorist operations (which induce fear of crime) may have hampered the accomplishment of sustained access and availability of food, education, and economic development in Nigeria, notably in the Northern States, where Boko Haram is a reoccurring issue (see Idowu, Nwangele & Nwosu, 2021; Nnam, Ugwuoke, Njemanze, & Akwara, 2020). These authors added that dealers in the market communicated disappointments about the condition of insecurity which has limited the movement of individuals, merchandise, and administrations. For example, the greater part of the food items sold in Maiduguri are gotten from other Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the state, and moving them into business sectors (markets) has been awkward because of fear of and assaults from Boko Haram insurgents (Nnam, et. al., 2020).

Furthermore, studies have shown that the fear of banditry and Boko Haram attacks in Northern Nigeria impact negatively on agricultural production in the country (Nnam, et. al., 2020; Caulderwood,

2014 as cited in Ogbonna & Jiménez, 2017). The situation has been further elucidated thus: The effect (and fear) of terrorism as regards to the agricultural sector is to a great extent founded on an apparent trepidation by farmers of the danger of being attacked by terrorists. Besides that, farmlands have turned into a refuge for insurgents, who then prey on the agricultural sector for day-to-day supplies. Thus, there is an enormous decrease in farm produces because of imperatives in human movement and assaults on storerooms. The expanded apprehension (fear) of assault (attack) has made different factors, for example, transportation more hazardous and consequently more costly, hence adding additional strain and cost to monetary results. The general effect has appeared in food deficiencies, expanded cost of food items, hunger and poverty (Ogbonna & Jiménez, 2017, p. 14).

When people are afraid of being victimised, they tend to spend less time in productive activities and more time indoors. This also have economic implications as people shutdown their business activities earlier than expected due to fear of being attacked. This situation has direct negative consequences on the economic outcomes. This can be exemplified by the current “sit-at-home” order by IPOB separatist agitators in the entire South East. These have encumbered economic development, social life, and human security in Nigeria, as people seldom go for their routine activities (work, business, market, farming, leisure, and worship) to avoid being attacked. Similarly, Omole (2020) argued that one of the major reasons for Nigeria’s unattractiveness for inward foreign investments is the amplification of news coverage on insecurity that can make things look worse to outsiders than they are. The author further explained that this effect reduces the confidence of foreign investors in the country and lead to either encourage foreign investors to pull out their investments in the country or deter new foreign investors from coming.

Grinshteyn (2013) noted that, in 1972, Frank F. Furstenberg reiterated what has consequently been attributed to as the decade of misrepresentation when he composed that the connection between crime and its repercussion is neither clear nor straightforward. Fear of crime influences people physically, mentally, and behaviourally; in any case, fear of crime can bring about degenerated health in people who experience it. There are both direct results of the trepidation as well as outcomes because of changed behaviour. The two biggest results are because of long-term pressure and diminished physical activity. For example, the decline in physical activity that people encounter because of their feeling of fear of crime can affect their health negatively. Research shows associations among obesity and fear of crime (Grinshteyn, 2013). At the point when people fear crime, they pull out and withdraw to places they have a good sense of security, for instance, their homes. They don’t wish to leave their homes which mean bulk of their time is spent lounging around the house not doing a lot of anything. Since these people are not out practicing and getting natural air, they are not getting the appropriate exercise needed and this can prompt medical problems that can lead to shorter life expectancy.

However, fear of crime may not be totally counterproductive (Mayoyo, Potgieter, & Ras, 2011); it has the capacity of inspiring positive activity by people and communities to decrease their chance of victimisation (Cashmore, 2014). Jackson and Gray (2010) utilise the term ‘functional fear’ to make sense of that a specific degree of fear crime is helpful to motivate critical thinking activity and urge the fearful to go to lengths in limiting their own risks. It also prompts caution among citizens, thereby reducing criminal opportunities. Thus, under numerous conditions, it is an advantageous and even life-saving feeling (Aborisade 2017, p. 77), motivates citizens to shoulder some of the burdens of crime control, thereby adding to general deterrence and publicly supported crime control measures (Moore & Trojanowicz, 1988).

How to Curb Fear of Crime

One of the ways of crime prevention that became famous during the 1970s was the community crime prevention. The primary reason of community crime prevention is to reinforce communities, not simply individual houses, but basically by empowering neighbours to keep an eye out for one another through neighbourhood watch, resident patrol, and related programmes. Indeed, communities that have the benefit of more neighbourliness, social capital, and collective efficacy and social cohesion also encounter low fear of crime (Taylor, 2002; Xu, Fiedler, & Flaming, 2005). Community policing is one of the best apparatuses for diminishing the fear of crime. In instance of law enforcement officers work directly with residents and

organizations and businesses in a community; employing coordinated community policing programmes that include a directed police-citizen contact (Moore and Trojanowicz 1988), it goes a long way in lowering crime rate, enhancing public safety and improving quality of life generally.

As part of curbing fear of crime, Gary (2009) opined that when law enforcement agencies plan and carry out fear-reduction procedures, they ought to remember these counter-contentions: Police need to work brilliant in fear reduction, similarly as the need might arise to work shrewd while handling crime and chaos. Fear of crime is just one more issue on the rundown of issues that police ought to address. It very well might be less unmistakable than some others, and it might not have the very kind of vocal constituencies of victims and family members that drug offences, crime, or drunken driving have. Yet, fear of crime has such adverse results for people and communities that police should ensure that it certainly stands out (Gary, 2009).

Garofalo (1981) explained that people tend to fight fear of crime by ordering their life in a way that can reduce their risks of victimisation, and this can be achieved in three ways. First, avoidance mechanism, which entails avoiding places or periods considered to be threatening. Warr (2000) contended that the absolute most normal response to fear of crime in the United States is spatial aversion; that is, avoiding places deemed as risk zones. The import is that self-restriction remains an essential behavioural responses and remedy to fear of crime. Secondly, by applying target hardening approaches, comprising of strategies that could effectively reduce the propensity for criminal attack. Farodoye, Olawuni, Olawuni, Atoyebi, and Ayoola, (2021) aver that residents should be more conscious of security by installing strong and unique security entry locks in each dwelling. This is done by fortifying places that could be seen as targets so as to increase the risks that will be encountered by offenders. Examples include building high parameter fences, strong gates, personal security guards and installation of physical and digital crime detection devices. Third is the idea of insurance subscriptions, which people embark upon to assuage the effects of criminal victimisation.

Coulter (2008) opined that media stories on possibly problematic criminal events can urge people to take part in prudent steps however may likewise expand fear of crime rates on the occasion that they don't precisely depict the genuine predominance of these events. As such, mindful journalism can illuminate and urge people to take part in crime prevention measures without pointlessly blowing up fear of crime (Crime Report 2009).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Fear of crime is caused by several factors. This research found that fear of crime is on the increase, occasioned by heightened insecurity and moral and social panic linked to palpable fear of the unknown and 'sit-at-home' order by IPOB in the South East of Nigeria. People fear criminal victimisation when and where law enforcement agents are selective and reactive instead of unselective and proactive in policing society that belongs to all, irrespective of gender, class, religion, and ethnic lines. These have encumbered economic development, social life, and human security, as people seldom go for their routine activities (work, business, market, farming, leisure, and worship) to avoid being victimised.

The growing fear of crime has serious implications for the Nigerian criminal justice system, particularly policing and law enforcement administration, which calls for inter-security agency collaborations to effectively address both the predictors and risk factors of this phenomenon. The media likewise has a part to play in impacting the public's perception of crime and, subsequently, their fear of crime and quality of life. By staying alert that impression of crime can inflate fear of crime and its impact on quality of life, as a matter of fact, the media ought to attempt to guarantee that accounts of crime precisely mirror the nature and degree of their actual happening. Also recommended is the urgent need for all levels of government (federal, state, and local) to constantly partner with critical social control actors among civilian populations (family/community, places of work and worship, schools, etc) in crime and security education for better outcomes. Finally, it is the premise of this research that gaining broad-based understanding of the predictors and implications of fear of crime is a vital ingredient of fear of crime reduction capabilities.

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