

Development of Family Therapy and the Treatment of Juvenile Delinquents: A Strategy to Curb Youths Violence in Rural South-South Nigeria

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Abstract

The South-South region of Nigeria has of late been a very volatile and insecure region. Incidence of youth's violence spanning from cultism, militant activities, vandalism, arson, drugs violence etc. has risen to horrifying dimension. Most of these youths were juvenile delinquents who had graduated from mere disorderly conduct to fully grown dangerous youths who had made the streets in the urban centres and rural communities unsafe to dwell and do business. Despite the full scale war declared by the Nigerian security forces against these youths, their population and the frequency of their dangerous actions are still on the rise. This has left the government with the question of 'what is to be done' to curb the increasing spate of youths violence in the region. In line with this question, a clinical study has been carried out here to get a clearer picture of the situation in the region. In the face of these crises in the region this paper has come to the conclusion that development of family therapy and the treatment of juvenile delinquents will help to reduce the army of violent youths in the region. This approach will act as a check and subsequently transform such juvenile delinquents into useful youths and on the long run into responsible adults in the society; adults who will not take to criminality. This paper is a product of intense days of field research. Information from primary and secondary sources coupled with the residual knowledge of the researcher in this area made the study a success. Primary data were collected through face-to-face interview with detainees from various police cells across the region and some social workers in government Establishments and Ministries in charge of family and social welfare. The response at all levels was encouraging.

1.Introduction

The family stands as a channel for learning, discovery and socialization in the human society. It offers protection in the development of the child in the wider society, thus when the family is dysfunctional the child is exposed to several risk. Hence the importance of family involvement in addressing the therapeutic transformation of juvenile delinquents into fully functional people in the society cannot be underestimated. International best practices had emphasized the involvement of parents in the areas of prevention, intervention and after care of juvenile delinquents (Greenwood, 2008 Bray, 2013). Scholars had opined that this singular fact is the reason behind the emergence of family therapy as a vital tool for the therapeutic transformation or shaping of children's behaviour (Ayeni 2012). It should be noted that juvenile delinquents are minors who are in conflict with the law. Such children are looked upon as people with behavioural challenges that are inimical to the society. For Chesney(2011) careful design of correctional institutions and programmes is a tool for the rehabilitation and re-integration of such children into normal life in society. By extension this is to say that failure to toe this option will see such children graduating into violent youths and subsequently adults with criminal career in the society. Garfinkel (2010) had stated that such correctional programmes that work with families in the rehabilitation of such children have shown more success than others. Despite the cost effective nature and the success recorded globally, the application of family therapy and development of correctional institutions to manage juvenile delinquencies in rural South-South Nigeria is almost non-existence. In the country itself according to Ayeni (2012) the framework for integrating families in the therapeutic transformation of children involve in behavioural anomalies remains a significant problem area for counselors and social workers alike.

The South-South region has recently been one of the most volatile regions in Nigeria. It has become a den of violence and crime ranging from cultism, militant activities, kidnapping, vandalism, arson, rape, drugs violation, armed robbery etc. Most of the people involved in these crimes were juvenile delinquents who had graduated from mere disorderly conduct within the immediate family circle, within the community or neighbourhood into fully grown youths who have become extremely dangerous to the larger society. Ayeni (2012) has stated that each year over two million young people come into contact with the juvenile justice system in Nigeria. Police report had shown that majority of the population that are frequently at conflict with the law in the South-South region are young people below the age of twenty. These young people have been involved in different criminality ranging from cult war, rural violence, militant activities, kidnapping and all sorts of crime. Though most of these juvenile delinquents are minor, some of them are extremely dangerous and violent. They are commonly found among street or community gangs and groups that have injected fear into rural dwellers in the South-South region. They are part of the groups that are making a fortune from kidnapping activities and oil

bunkering in the region. As at 2013 the Nigerian Prisons Service alone has 811 juveniles in Borstal Institutions in Nigeria located in Ilorin, Abeokuta and Kaduna (Maazu 2013). Documented evidence has also shown that several juveniles are being detained in various Nigerian prisons for various offences while those that have served their sentences have been released back into the society without going through any programme of rehabilitation. Police records have also shown that some of them are sent back into the society from the Police cells for either lack of evidence for prosecution or intervention from highly placed godfathers from the society. Whatever may be the case, it is evidently clear that either through arrest and detention in Police cells to service in the prison yard, these juveniles are often exposed to myriad traumatic experience either as victims or witnesses. As a result of this exposure a great number of them end up developing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other stress-related disorders (Arroyo 2001).

Wassermar, McReynolds, Lucas, Fisher and Santos (2002) have all agreed that arrest and detention experiences themselves can be traumatic event for some children, can expose children to risk for additional trauma and can trigger memories and reaction to previous traumatic experience. Without an effective correction therapy for these juveniles they are likely to develop into more problematic youths and adults who may take to crime as a career in the society. In the South-South region there is a dearth of correction-focused therapy designed or adopted for juveniles. The Ministry of Social Welfare or other government agencies assigned with the responsibility of intervention in incidents of disorderly conduct among juveniles lack the clinical resources to identify basic psycho-social problems as well as managing behavioural issues.

Studies have shown that most of the youths and adults involved in militancy or cult war today or leading militant or cult groups in the region are people that have had conflict with the law while they were below the age of twenty. Experience had also shown that people who experience juvenile delinquency are heading the list of those who could not succeed in their educational career; school drop-outs in the South-South region. The same can be said in the list of those with unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and out of home placement. The picture is also the same in the list of the under-employed and unemployed adults, and single parenthood in the region.

The development of correctional institutions in the South-South region for juveniles will help reduce the frequent cases of youth's violence in the region as well as the number of adults that will take to criminality as a career in the future. Such institutions if properly modeled to allow the families play some significant roles in the corrective and therapeutic processes will produce positive results. Though it is clear that children exist within multiple system that influences their behaviour; family, peer, school, community, etc. nevertheless it has been documented that corrective processes which involved families tend to have recorded improved outcome than any other approach (Ayeni 2012, Liddle, 2011). This approach if carefully designed and pursued will help in transforming the juvenile delinquents in the South-South region into useful youths and subsequently responsible future leaders in the region.

2. Method and Techniques

The South-South region of Nigeria is made up of six States; Rivers, Cross Rivers, Edo, Delta, Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa State. A total of 123 local councils were identified in the region. Each local council headquarter has a divisional Police Station. Approximately 30% of the total number of police stations in each State was randomly picked for this study. By this the total number of police stations used for the study in the entire region stands at 35. Our primary target population for this study will be taken from among those detained in the sample police stations. A total of 1002 structured questionnaires were evenly distributed among the 35 sample police stations (see table 1). The duration of questionnaire administration in the sample police stations to our target population covered a period of twenty calendar months. The total number of questionnaire allotted to each police station was divided into ten sets and each set administered at the last week of every second month. In each police station only those who had been in detention for less than two weeks were identified and interviewed. Out of the total number of questionnaire administered for this study, a thousand was returned while two non response cases were recorded. Relevant information from the questionnaires were extracted and used for the study. Oral interview was conducted with two social workers randomly selected from the leading government establishments in charge of child and family welfare in each State. Personal observation and documented information relevant to this study were extracted and used. In all, the response at all levels was encouraging

Table 1. Number of divisional police stations, sample size and questionnaire administered

State	Total number of local council areas/headquarters	Total number of divisional police stations at council headquarters	Sample divisional police stations	Questionnaires administered	Total number of questionnaires returned	Non response
Rivers	23	23	6	167	166	1
Cross River	18	18	5	167	167	-
Edo	18	18	5	167	167	-
Delta	25	25	8	167	167	-
Akwa Ibom	31	31	9	167	167	-
Bayelsa	8	8	2	167	166	1
Total	123	123	35	1002	1000	2

3. The Geography of the South-South Region of Nigeria

The geographical South-South region of Nigeria is located in the deltaic region of the country Nigeria. It is one of the largest rivers in the delta. It is a densely populated region in Nigeria. It is sometime called the Oil Rivers because it was once a major producer of palm oil. The area was the British Oil River Protectorate from 1885-1893. It was later expanded and became the Niger Coast Protectorate. It was the coastal marshland of the Nigerian coast from the Escravos to the Bonny/New Calabar River. The major ethnic groups identified with the environment of the South-South region are the Ijaws, Itsekiri, Isoko and the Orhobos (Alagoa, 2003). Economically today, the area is the centre of petroleum and gas industries of Nigeria, supplying over 80% of the revenue of the Nigerian State (Ademola, 2008). It is therefore a very significant part of Nigeria. By the present political definition, the region houses more than 20 million people distributed among forty ethnic groups speaking about 250 dialects. Of this population, the Ijaws are the majority. The South-South people are predominantly into farming and fishing as their main occupation. This is because a greater percentage of the people live in small villages scattered along the banks of the rivers and creeks. The vegetation of the South-South region consists mainly of forest swamps. The forest is made up of two types.



Figure 1: Geopolitical Regions of Nigeria showing the South-South Region (SS)

It is one of the six geopolitical regions in the country.

Source: www.uspf.gov.nig

Nearest to the sea is a belt of saline mangrove swamp separated from the sea by sand beach ridges within the mangrove swamp. Numerous sandy Islands occur with fresh water vegetation. Fresh water swamps

gradually supersede the mangrove on the landward side. The region is close to the equator and this is the reason for the heavy rainfall usually experience in the area. Total annual rainfalls in the region vary from 2400 to over 4000 millimetres.

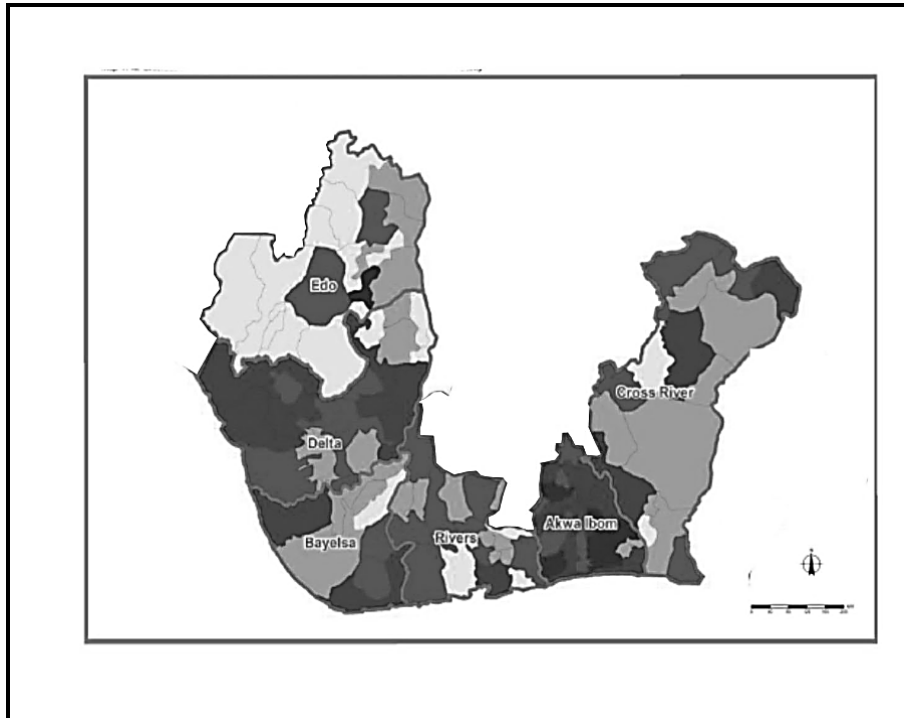


Figure 2. Map showing the component States of the South-South region; Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Edo and Delta States.

4. History of Family Therapy

Family Therapy is a branch of psychotherapy that works with families and couples in intimate relationships to nurture change and development. It tends to view change in terms of systems of interaction between family members. Family Therapy is based on the belief that family is a unique social system with its own structures and patterns of communication. As a therapeutic device, Family Therapy is useful in counseling situations of members of the family especially those who have abnormal behaviour. The root of Family Therapy can be traced to the child guidance clinics of the mid 1990's. It was in this setting that the idea of engaging not only the identified patient (the child in treatment) but also the parents was developed for the first time (Ayeni 2012). The belief was that the child's mental health does not exist in the vacuum but is influenced by the familial environment (Nicholas and Schwartz 2011).

This period saw the emergence of various schools of family therapy all with their perspectives regarding the nature of family functioning. As Halidu (2013) puts it, these differing perspectives led to relatively diverse ways in which practitioners of these assorted models approached family treatment.

By the end of 1990's existing models began to lose popularity because of lack of central figure to continue with the dissemination of the models. Sexton, Weeks and Pobins (2003) refer to this era as the "first generation of therapeutic modalities". Though there has been the erosion of original boundaries between these original thoughts, the greatest impetus for this dynamic lies in the growing recognition that families need to be approached with a flexible helping framework (Ayeni, 2012). Sexton, Weeks and Pobins (2003) posited that over the past twenty years schools of therapy have given way to common factors. Specifically they noted that the theoretical foundation of Family Therapy have become increasingly integrative, research-based and multi-systemic. Currently, Family Therapy is largely characterized by models that share common multi-systemic themes i.e. focusing on accessing and or altering the systems surrounding a client and are frequently problem specific (Sprenkle 2002). According to Muazu (2013) this multidimensional focus is to enable scholars accept the fact that children are embedded with multi-systems that influences their behaviour. This has led to a shift in the way in which child and adolescent behavioural and emotional problems are conceptualized. As a result of this understanding the child is no longer seen as an entity to be treated but as a part of other larger system which impact the child functioning (Heneggler, Schwenwald, Bourdin and Swenson, 2006)

5. Correctional Institutions in Nigeria for Juvenile Delinquents

Prior to the 19th century, children were harshly punished for every petty offences but in the 19th century there

was a serious concern about the increasing rates of juvenile delinquency and secondly about the manner in which juvenile offenders were handled. This concern spurred humanitarian and penal reformers to advocate lenient treatment for young offenders (Alemieka and Chukwuma, 2001). Their argument was that young offenders should be given opportunity for correction, reformation, rehabilitation and be restored into the society as useful and law abiding citizens.

These agitations led to the development of international legal instruments, conventions, charters and principles, rules and guidelines that regulate the promotion and protection of the rights of the child and treatment of juvenile offenders. Nigeria is a signatory to some of these instruments such as the Beijing Rules of the United Nation Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, the Children and Young Persons Act, the O.A.U Charter on the Right of the Child (Muazu,2013). The underlying principle of these charters and conventions is to allow the juvenile offender to have the same right with the adult offender under the same criminal justice system.

In line with the various international provisions on juvenile matters, Nigeria has also aligned its laws and policies on juvenile justice administration to the content of the international instruments.

According to Makinde (2010), the Children and Young Persons Act (CYPA) remains the most important legislation in the country that deals with the treatment of juvenile offenders. It was established to make provision for the welfare of the young person and the treatment of young offenders. It also has as part of its provision the establishment of juvenile courts to deal with only children and young persons. Under the Nigerian law a person between the age of 15 years and 17 years at the time of sentence who are guilty of a criminal offence may be sent to Borstal Institution for a period of three years for correction, educational and vocational training for the purpose of reformation. The Borstal Institution and Remand Centre Act (No. 32 of 1960) provides for the establishment of borstal home under the direct control of the Nigerian Prison Services. Children and Young people found guilty of crime or who are considered as “beyond parental control” are sentenced to borstal institution for a period of not less than three years unless given special State pardon (Ogundipe, 2011). There are three borstal homes run by the Federal Government of Nigeria with a total capacity of approximately 500 persons. They are located in Abeokuta, Ilorin and Kaduna.

6. Cases of Youths Violence in Rural South-South Nigeria

The South-South region until the late 1980's has been a very peaceful region. A former Head of State, Olusegun Obasanjo attested to it in 2004 when he stated that, in 1969, he was in the region and the region that he met was not that of violence(Ikporukpo, 2007). It was in this region that oil was first discovered in commercial quantity in 1958. Subsequent oil wells were discovered in the region and by the 70's and 80's the region was providing the resources that was servicing the economy of the country. It was expected that for such a region the government ought to pay adequate attention to the developmental challenges facing the region but unfortunately what was seen was total neglect and marginalization. This was responsible for the first incident of organized violence in the region; the Twelve days Revolution that began on the 23rd of February, 1966 led by Jasper Adaka Boro involving one hundred and fifty-nine Ijaw young men against the Nigerian State. Though the Nigerian government was able to crush the uprising, the same could not be said of the reason behind the revolution.

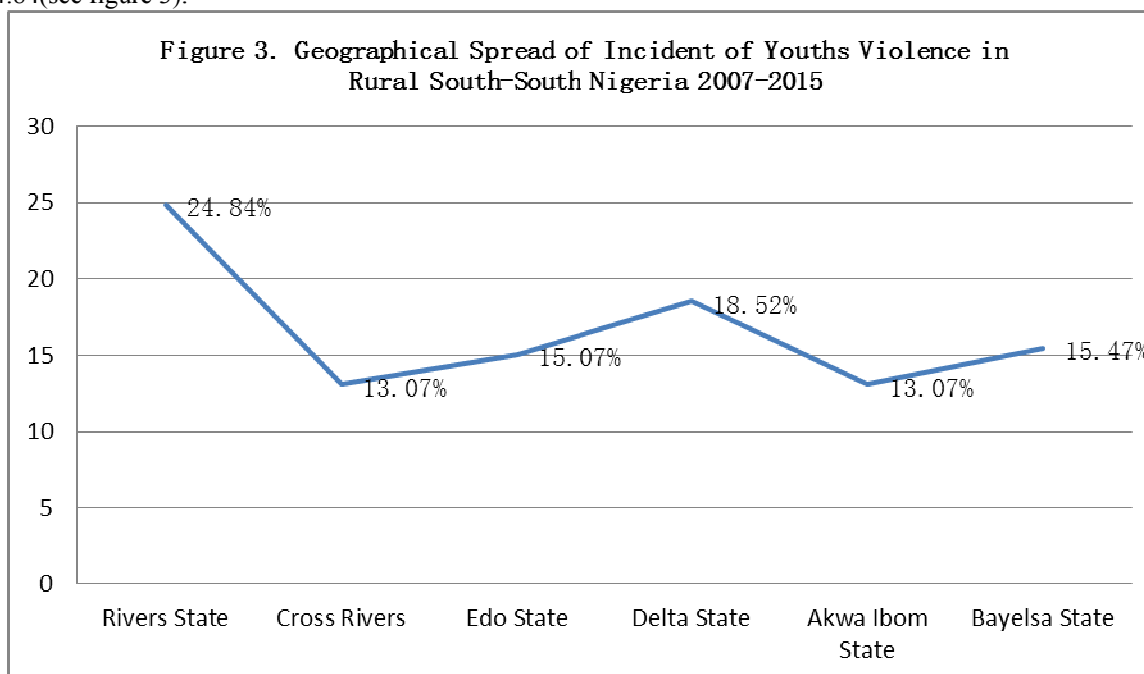
The late 1980's and 1990's saw the emergence of several associations who could not stand the level of backwardness, poverty and marginalization of the region despite their contributions to the national income.

According to Joab-Peterside(2006) the first reaction of the people of the region was the use of non violence means through the various associations to draw the attention of the Federal Government to their backwardness and environmental nightmare arising from the activities of oil exploration. Notable among these associations were the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People(MOSOP), Association of Minority States etc. However the Nigerian government adopted several methods to silence these associations, the high point of which was the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa, the leader of MOSOP in 1995.

This was followed by the use of military might by the Federal Government to intimidate and harass the leaders of the people in the region. The youths realizing that the use of non-violence method by their elites was not yielding any positive result for the region, took up arms against the Federal Government. Thus from the late 1990's emerged several militant organizations who employed several methods to draw the attention of the centre to the backwardness in the region. One of the methods adopted by these militant groups was a massive attack on oil installations and taking of oil workers as hostages.

This created panic in the oil market in the country. Between 1998 and 2003, there were about four hundred vandalizations of oil company facilities yearly across the region(Dimeari 2006). The arrest of a youth leader from the region in 2005 by the Obasanjo government and the charge of treason put on his neck heightened the war between the government and the youths in the region. The period saw the emergence of two youth leaders; Ateke Tom and Asari Dokubo each leading an army of militant group. Both men were angered by the marginalization, backwardness and poverty characterizing the region. The response from the Obasanjo

government was the militarization of the region to stop youth’s violence and protect the business of oil exploration. This singular act provoked the youths and led to the birth of more militant youth groups. With the enormous wealth reaped from the activities of oil bunkering by these youth groups, the groups were able to record a rise in their numbers; most youths started abandoning the classrooms to join the various “groups” in order to fight their ways out of poverty that has characterized the region. From 2007-2015, a total of 918 cases of youth’s violence were recorded in the South-South region with Rivers State recording the highest percent of 24.84(see figure 3).



Source: Author’s compilation from the Nigerian Police and various Nigerian Newspapers

Beside wealth, the groups were also able to buy the necessary firearms needed to protect themselves and their business. The return of democracy in the country soon created more jobs for these boys. The refusal of the country’s politicians to adhere to the rules of democracy introduced “violence” and “brutality” into the country’s politics. These youth groups soon became the ready-made tools in the hands of desperate politicians who want to win election at all cost. Thus youth’s violence took a new dimension and wore a new face in the region. It was not long when leadership crises started plaguing these militant groups resulting into split in camps. Some of these youths not satisfied with the so much wealth controlled by their masters parted ways to form their own camps. It became clear at this point that the battle against the Federal Government for the backwardness of their region has shifted to economic survival through oil bunkering. The youth groups who could not survive the hostility involved in the business of oil bunkering became street ‘foot soldiers’ for desperate politicians who were also paying handsomely(Kio-Lawson,2014).

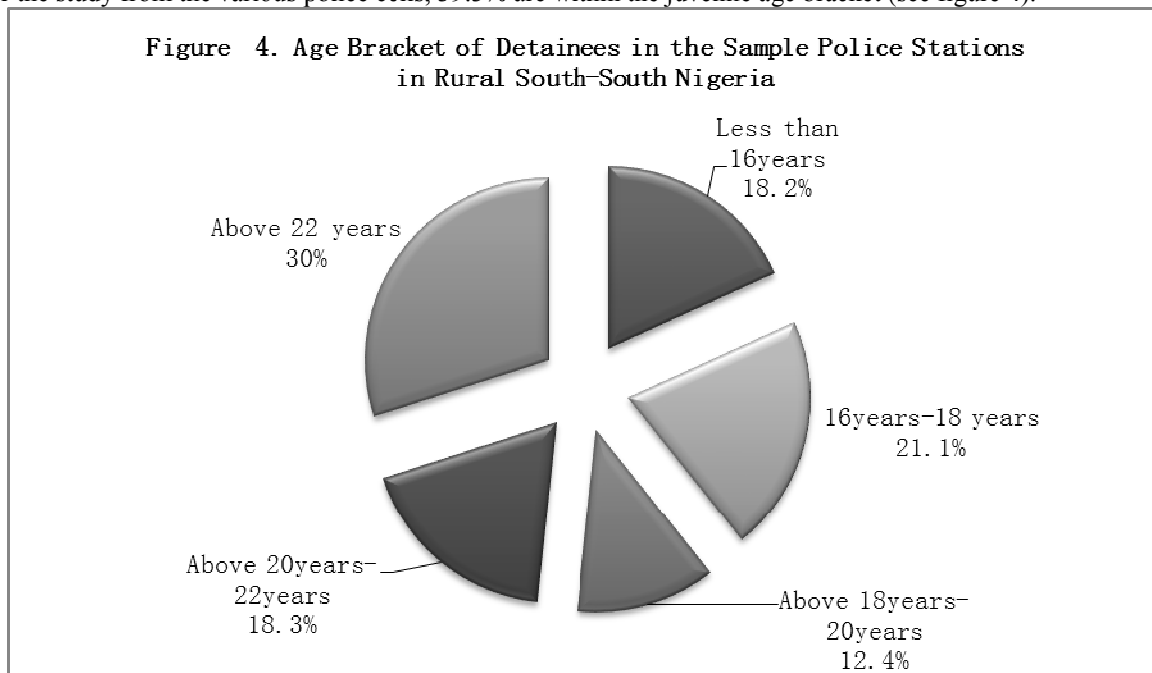
From the local council election, the State and National assembly election, to the Presidential election, the region recorded massive violence in 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 resulting into several economic and social tragedies. In 2015 alone 24 persons lost their lives during the Governorship, State and National Assembly elections to electoral violence in Rivers State. In Bayelsa State, 14 persons lost their lives in the governorship election that brought Governor Dickson back to power in 2016 through violence. In Rivers State post election violence has claimed 65 lives across the State and nothing less than 26 cases of violent attacks and counter attacks recorded between May 2015 and February 2016 involving the foot soldiers of the major political parties in the state. The re-run election into the State and National Assembly that took place on the 19th of March 2016, in Rivers State took seven lives.

On the 14th February, 2016 the government of Rivers State banned the operation of commercial motorcycle popularly called “Okada” in four local council areas; Abua, Ahoada East, Ahoada West and Ogba/Egbema/Ndoki. The reason for the ban was as a result of frequent violent conflict among youth groups in these council areas. That week alone 15 lives were lost to violent conflict between two cult groups in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoki local council (Okafor Ofiebor, 2016).

7. Involvement of Juveniles in Crime in the South-South Region of Nigeria

A survey conducted using available police record shows that a significant percent of juveniles are involve in one form of crime or the other in rural South-South Nigeria. It is also on record that the rural areas of South-South

Nigeria have suddenly become a bed of criminality (Ikporukpo, 2007). With such an atmosphere of violence and crime, it is very easy for juveniles in the region to be lured into it. A survey conducted in 35 divisional police stations across the rural communities in the South-South region revealed that out of the 1000 detainees picked for the study from the various police cells, 39.3% are within the juvenile age bracket (see figure 4).

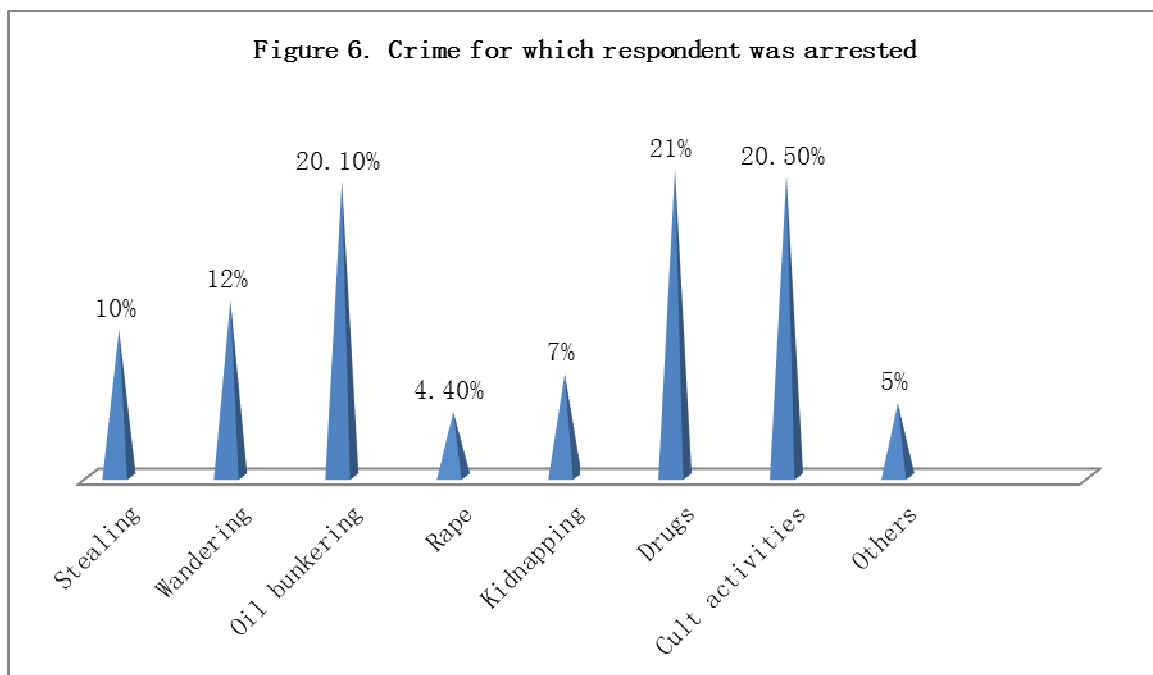
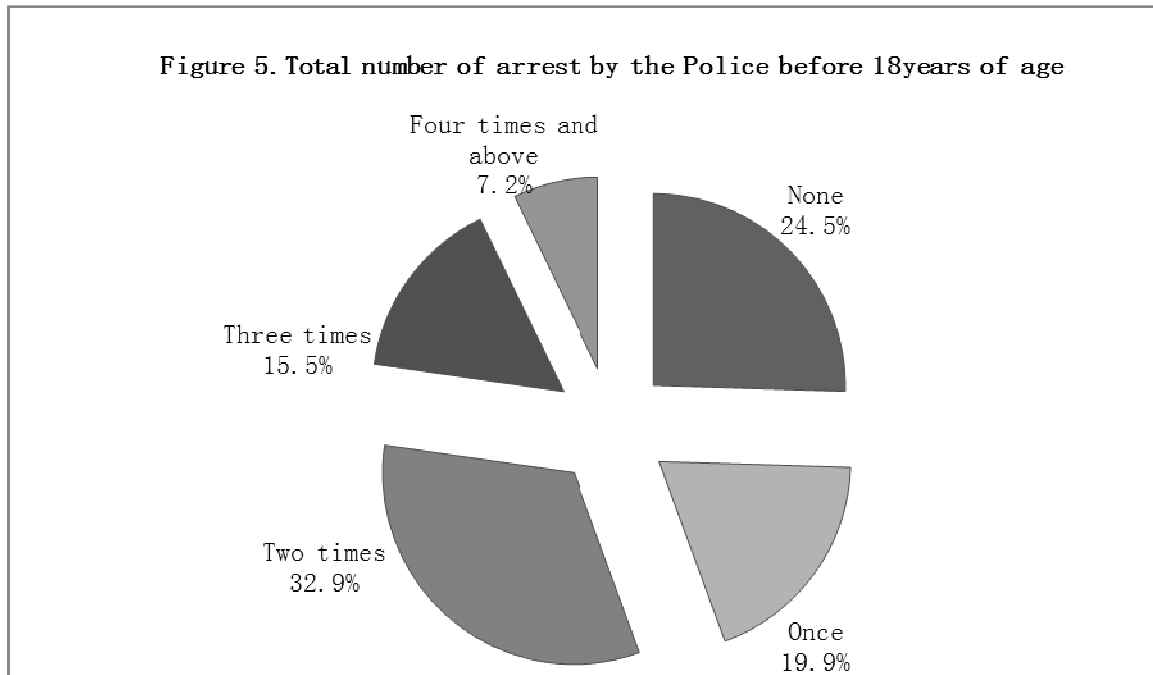


Source: Author's field work

It is also evidently clear that a bulk of the detainees who were used for this study had recorded their first clash with the law before they became 18 years of age (see figure 5). The volatile atmosphere characterizing the South-South rural communities is also reflected in the frequency at which these young people come in conflict with the law. The information in figure 5 also shows that out of 1000 detainees used for this study more than 50% have been arrested and detained in police cell more than once for various crimes ranging from kidnapping, drug abuse, oil bunkering, stealing, cult activities etc.

The implication is that rural South-South region of Nigeria is portrayed as an "unsafe" place to dwell and do business. Secondly because development cannot thrive in a hostile and unsafe environment, the region of recent has failed to attract development that would have improved the well being of its people. Most firms as well as rural development agencies are staying away from the region for fear and not wanting to endanger the lives of their workers (Kio Lawson, 2014). Juveniles are actively involved in the crimes listed in figure 6. The long time implication is that since some of these criminal activities are very lucrative in the region it will continue to attract the interest of more juveniles, that will also mean a rise in the future for the number of school drop-outs and adults that will take to criminality as a career.

Oil bunkering in the region for instance has turned most young men into lords. The army has made tremendous efforts in the past to stop it but the persistence scarcity of fuel in the country has brought the illegal local refineries back and their products are enjoying high patronage especially among owners of private electricity generators and commercial motorists.



Most of the workers recruited to work in these local refineries or hawk the product are young boys and girls who are enjoying the luxury of the business at the expense of their education. The fact that their “masters” are enjoying great luxury without any major educational qualification has raised several questions in their hearts concerning the place of education in “wealth creation”.

The information in figure 5 and 6 show that young people have become part of the criminality that daily occurs in the region. They may be tender in age but very dangerous and are part of the terror that has made the region an “unsafe” place to dwell and do business. They belong to the village gangs and groups that put fear into the entire rural community, intimidate the traditional institutions and sometimes used by the ruling political class to remain relevant in their local environment. Sometimes they are even used by one community to settle scores with neighbouring community. In a region where poverty is a major factor or monster, these young people have seen criminality as a way of breaking loose from the chains of poverty. Education which is a major factor in the development of one’s socio-economic status is no longer in their agenda. The educational status of the detainees used for the study reveals the following in table 2.

Table 2 Educational Status of the Detainees used for the study

Educational Status	No.
Illiterate	80
Primary school certificate	165
Primary school drop-out	180
Secondary school certificate	247
Secondary school drop-out	165
Post secondary school certificate	163
Total	1000

8. Establishment of Correctional Institutions in South-South Nigeria

Often young people in juvenile justice system are exposed to myriad traumatic experiences either as victims or as witnesses. Arrest and detention on their own part alone can be traumatic for such young people. Abram, Teplin, Charles, Longworth, McClelland and Dulcan(2004) maintained that such event can expose children to risk for additional traumatic experiences and can also trigger memories and reactions to previous traumatic experiences. Every year thousands of juveniles in the South-South region of Nigeria comes in contact with the Nigerian Juvenile Justice System and are thrown into police detentions and subjected to various form of traumatic experiences and at the end some are thrown into the Nigerian prisons, some into Remand homes or similar institutions(such as the Borstal Institutions; non is in the South-South region) while some highly connected to the ruling political class are released back into the society to continue with crime. The increasing rate of youths in crime and violence and the same in terms of adult prisoners in the region places a question mark on the effectiveness of the Juvenile Justice System in the country. Is the Juvenile Justice System in the country retributory or rehabilitative or reformatory of the offender? The Nigerian government had clearly stated its Justice System for Juvenile offenders which (The central objective of the Remand Homes, Borstal institutions and prisons) is purely rehabilitation and reformation. It can then be concluded that if much success had been recorded in this direction there would have been a reduction in the spate of juvenile offenders graduating into volatile and dangerous youths and subsequently adult prisoners. The increasing levels of involvement of juveniles in crime can be taken to mean more danger for the South-South region in the future. For over a decade now the region has been globally regarded as a restive region with high levels of criminality perpetrated by the youths.

Establishment of functional correctional institutions in the region for the purpose of rehabilitating and reforming juveniles involve in dangerous crime will help to prevent their graduation into dangerous youths. A very dangerous juvenile that could make the street of his community unsafe today for his people will mature into a more horrifying youth tomorrow and subsequently an irresponsible adult with criminal career. The three borstal schools located in Kaduna, Abeokuta and Ilorin are grossly inadequate considering the juvenile population they are accommodating. Secondly, the schools lacked the basic structure and programmes needed to rehabilitate or transform the juvenile population into useful youths.

Two correctional intuitions' should be established in rural South-South Nigeria to take care of the juvenile population involve in criminality and terrorizing the region. Such schools should have as a central objective the transformation of juvenile offender into a productive youth. Treatment programmes should offer juvenile offender the opportunity to develop oneself into legitimate occupation. Beside the introduction of vocational training programmes (Carpentry, tailoring, brick making, sign writing, weaving etc.), regular classes should also be organized to help school drop-outs or those who could not have the opportunity to taste formal education. To achieve both, there should be a section for primary and secondary education. Those who excelled brilliantly in the secondary school section can be granted scholarship by the government of the state of origin of the child to proceed to the university. Agricultural productivity should also be part of such correctional institutions. Agricultural farmland should be provided for the school and the offenders should be made to produce food to support that provided by the government. Some can also be sold in the local markets to make some revenue for the school. To ensure that ultimate success is recorded in the transformation and rehabilitation process, qualified staff should be recruited. Such staff should be those who will help to build and maintain caring and supportive atmosphere in the institutions. This by extension means staff who will not handle the juvenile offenders with disgust or as criminals. Qualified Counselors should be allowed to interact with the juvenile offenders in the institutions to help them in areas of interest in life so that supportive programmes can be introduced to assist them. Group counseling is needed from time to time in the institutions to educate them on the danger of drugs, alcohol, terrorism, cultism, militancy etc.

Most practitioners of social work, psychiatrists, and psychologist had noticed the improvement in condition of young patients in hospital following a visit from their parents or close family members. This has led to the understanding that the inclusion of the family in the rehabilitation or transformation process of a juvenile offender can help in achieving ultimate success(Halidu,2013). Thus for such correctional institutions or facilities

to record success we must allow the families to get involved in the rehabilitation process. Visiting days should be arranged for parents or family members to such institutions. This will help the juvenile offenders to keep in touch with their parents or family members. Family support and care can help the child to be more receptive to his new environment.

While such visits will afford the parents the opportunity to follow-up and be able to monitor the progress of the child it will go a long way in shaping the child behaviour.

Conclusion

The absence of comprehensive development plan on the part of government to develop socio-economic infrastructure in South-South, Nigeria is primarily responsible for the excruciating level of poverty experienced in the rural areas of the region. The pattern of rural development policies and programmes adopted in the region by the government is not targeted at the 'felt needs' of the people. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that despite the several rural development agencies and programmes introduced in the area, the geography of poor housing condition, high percentage of joblessness among her youths, poor educational development, lack of adequate health facilities etc. still exist in the region. We may therefore be bold to state that 'frustration' is the primary driving force behind the involvement of juveniles in criminality in the region. The number of this young persons getting involved daily in criminality, the astronomical rise in cases of youths violence and its geographical spread across the region are all indicative of the fact that the region is moving towards a more dangerous future. Rehabilitation centres (Remand homes) established in the 1970's by the government to check abnormal behaviour among juveniles have been abandoned by successive government in the region. Gross underfunding, lack of adequate qualified staff and training facilities are some of the problems that had contributed to the death of these homes. Development scholars like Ademola(2008) and Joab-Peterside(2006) have suggested that comprehensive rural development plans and programmes that will have a positive impact on the productivity, income and welfare of the rural people is what is needed for the region. While we agree with this opinion, it is our suggestion that for such policies or programmes to have an integrated platform, development of functional correctional institutions with the involvement of the family in the area should form an integral part of such comprehensive plan. Such institutions will serve the purpose of reformation and rehabilitation of the army of juveniles involved in criminality thus preventing further rise in the number of violent youths in the region. These institutions with effective programmes will on the long run bring forth a reduction in the number of juvenile offenders graduating into violent youths and subsequently adult criminals in the region. Subjecting such juvenile offenders constantly to police brutality or making them to go through what adult prisoners are going through does not transform them into responsible youths or adults with constructive roles in the society. Such treatment will rather serve the purpose of transforming them into hardened criminals and stir up murderous anger and hatred in their hearts against the society. The implication is vengeance against the society without any respect for human life or authority. Allowing juveniles to stay in the same police cell with adult criminals or allowing them to go through the same experience with adult prisoners will increase their level of criminal contamination. It is recommended that for the expected reformations and rehabilitation to take place in these correctional institutions the family must be actively involved in the treatment process. The fact that every family system has its own unique ways of life has made the involvement of the family necessary in the treatment process. It cannot be argued therefore that these family systems have their ways of establishing control or influence over members of the family than other systems. This is one basic factor that must be considered when designing family therapy. Understanding the influence of the peculiar character of the family will be very useful in the treatment of juvenile offender.

As part of the treatment process, those who had successfully gone through the treatment process and had been absorbed into the society as responsible youths and adults should be given the privilege to interact with those in the correctional homes through talk-shops. The testimony of change from these people can open a new page in the heart of these juvenile delinquents into believing that they stand to gain more in the society as responsible youths and adults than as criminals.

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