



ABSTRACT

Indigenous Hunters Association was created as an adjunct to traditional policing as a result of the rising tide of crime particularly in the rural communities. However, there had been a steady increase in the spate of insecurity in Nigeria. This caused the death of thousands of people and the destruction of property worth millions of Naira on account of banditry and kidnapping. The Nigeria Security Agencies had not been able to effectively combat these security threats in Odeda Community, Ogun State. This study, therefore investigate the role of Indigenous Hunters Association as a tool for battling banditry and kidnapping in Odeda

FIGHTING BANDITRY AND KIDNAPPING IN THE RURAL COMMUNITIES: THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS HUNTERS ASSOCIATION IN OGUN STATE

AKOJI, R. OKLAGBA (PHD) AND ODUNTAN, A. JOSEPH (PHD)

Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Babcock University, Ilishan Remo, Ogun State* Department of Political Science and International Relations, Caleb University, Lagos.

Introduction

Insecurity is a threat to the continued existence of mankind as a whole (Muhammed-Baba, 2012). Insecurity is a state of instability and volatility as a result of growing number of criminal activities which pose danger and threat to general peace. It involves all cases of armed groups challenging the legal authority of the state with reference to protection of lives and property of the citizens, considering that the primary duty of the state is to protect lives and property of the citizens through security agencies.

To Alemika and Chukwuma (2007), the police are an embodiment of the coercive powers of any modern state, and it is the agency with the closest and most frequent contacts with the citizens. A field survey conducted by Nwagboso (2015) revealed that Nigeria faces serious internal security threats which impaired negatively on the economy of Nigeria statehood. These internal security threats that may have impacted negatively on the statehood include kidnapping, militancy, ritual killing, armed banditry, cattle rustling, herder-farmer conflicts, and terrorism mainly linked to Boko Haram Insurgency.

Uhummwuango and Aluforo (2011) were of the view that the efforts of the government have not yielded enough positive results to curtail the level of internal insecurity ravaging the country. According to Barreto (2003), indigenous hunters and citizen involvement in the rural communities and with one another must be the foundation of any effective response to crime-related issues. This paper therefore,



community, Ogun State, Nigeria. The target population of the study was 100 comprising members of the Hunters Association, community leaders, religious leaders and the Nigeria Police in the 10 selected wards in Odeda Community. 5 out of 10 wards were chosen to act as clusters, and in each cluster, 20 respondents—a total of 100 respondents were chosen using simple random sampling. The qualitative information gathered through key informant interviews was transcribed and added to the quantitative information using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. The study found that the failure of formal security to safeguard citizens' lives and property led to the emergence of indigenous Hunters Association in Odeda Communities. The study therefore advises that mutual understanding between community leaders, the police, and the government is necessary, and that educating the public through workshops and the media will help to enhance Indigenous Hunters Association in reducing banditry and kidnapping in Ogun State, Nigeria. It is expected that the findings of this research should be used by the community leaders and any other security agency responsible for crime control in the rural communities in Ogun State.

Key words: Indigenous Hunters Association, Banditry, Kidnapping, Odeda Local Government, Rural Community.

focuses on the role of the Indigenous Hunters Association as a tool to compliment the efforts of the government in the fight against armed banditry and kidnapping in the rural communities of Odeda, Ogun State.

Statement of the Problem

Nigerian communities around the country have seen crimes of all kinds in recent years, and Ogun State is no different. As a result, crime is growing in importance in modern Nigeria. Uhumwungho and Aluforo (2011) were of the view that the efforts of Government have not yielded enough positive result to curtail the level of internal insecurity occasioned by banditry and kidnapping ravaging the country. The principal agency in the fight against crime, the police, is ineffectual. They may be ineffectual due to lack of resources, inadequate equipment, corruption, and insufficient support from the general public. As a result, Ogun State witnesses frequent banditry and kidnapping mostly in the rural communities. These violent crimes go unreported and unpunished (Alimika, 2011).

Despite significant government efforts in the fight against banditry and kidnapping in Ogun State, criminal activities currently seem to be on the rise and the police force appears to be breaking down. In order to combat banditry and kidnapping, this study will look at the role of Indigenous Hunters Association in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The study aims to investigate the emergence of Indigenous Hunters Association as a tool for combating banditry and kidnapping in Odeda, Ogun state, to investigate the success of the Indigenous Hunters Association in reducing the rising rate of banditry and kidnapping in Odeda, Ogun State, and to discover the Challenges of Indigenous Hunters Association in fighting Banditry and Kidnapping in Odeda, Ogun State.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Emergence of Indigenous Hunters Association as a tool for combating banditry and kidnapping In Ogun State.

Indigenous Hunters Association emerged out of the need to combat the upsurge in Banditry and Kidnapping in Ogun State. The current role has therefore overshadowed the initial role of hunting for animals for food. Hunting activities take place day and night, which the epi-center of hunting is in the bushes and forest where bandits and kidnappers take refuge. According to Ozuzu (2021), hunters have peculiar knowledge of track roads in the communities, they are the owners of bushes and forests, which give them the advantage of being in prime position to see and report any crime suspect.

In the light of this, Indigenous Hunters' participations appear to be gaining momentum as an alternative method of preventing and managing banditry and kidnapping in the Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State. Hunters are very important groups in every community. In his address to the officers of the Nigeria Police, Rabi, (2021), states that hunters can be engaged to provide security and vital information to security agents on the hideout of criminals in the bushes.

Effectiveness of Indigenous Hunters in Deterring and Combating Banditry and Kidnapping in Ogun State

One of the first assessments of the efficiency of Neighborhood Watch in Nigeria was carried out by Alemika (2019). The evaluation based in Katsina, Kano, Jigawa and Ogun, included a telephone and door-to-door surveys of rural residents. The results showed that the rate of burglary decreased by substantially greater amount in the experimental areas. The findings demonstrated that in the experimental locations, the rate of burglaries significantly dropped while the rate of banditry and Kidnapping increased.

In Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State, Indigenous Hunters Association tackled the upsurge of criminal activities by complimenting the efforts of security agencies especially the police to protect lives and properties and prevent crimes. Indigenous Hunters assisted the police in suppressing criminal activities of raping young girls, burglaries, and kidnapping of children.

Challenges of Indigenous Hunters Association in preventing and combating Banditry and Kidnapping in Odeda Local Government of Ogun State.

According to CLEEN Foundation (2019), the following issues pose obstacles to indigenous hunters' effectiveness: Low participation on the part of community members, low project knowledge in some communities, a lack of government money, a lack of police monitoring and evaluation, a lack of logistics, and a lack of police recognition are all contributing factors.

Methodology

The study employed a survey design. The target population of the study was 100 comprising members of the Hunters Association, community leaders, religious leaders and the Nigeria Police in the 10 selected wards in Odeda Community. 5 out of 10 wards were chosen to act as clusters, and in each cluster, 20 respondents—a total of 100 respondents were chosen using simple random sampling. The qualitative information gathered through key informant interviews was transcribed and added to the quantitative information using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.

Findings

The study showed that Indigenous Hunters Association developed as a result of the lack of official security's success in defending lives and property in the study area. It also revealed that limited community participation, lack of government financing in the area of provision of modern fighting equipment and logistics were the main challenges facing Indigenous Hunters



Association in their fight against banditry and kidnapping. The survey also showed that lack of adequate recognition from the government security agencies particularly the Nigeria Police impeded the activities of the members of the Indigenous Hunters Association in the fight against Banditry and Kidnapping in the study area.

Conclusion

From the recent security development in Odeda Community area of Ogun State, it is evident that Indigenous Hunters Association has made a remarkable impact in the fight against banditry and kidnapping in the state besides their traditional role of hunting for animals for the general consumption. The need for Indigenous Hunters efforts as a suitable measure to complement the efforts of the conventional policing in combating banditry and kidnapping is strategic.

Recommendations

The study therefore suggested that mutual understanding and trust be built between the Indigenous Hunters Association and the community leaders, the police, and the government, and that educating the public through workshops and the media will help to enhance indigenous hunters in the fight against banditry and kidnapping in Ogun State. The results of this study are anticipated to be used by policymakers, police, and other law enforcement agencies to re-evaluate crime reduction initiatives in Ogun State, Nigeria. Government of Ogun State should support the Indigenous Hunters Association in their efforts to fight banditry and kidnapping particularly in the rural communities of Ogun State, by equipping them with modern security apparatus to meet the challenges of the modern crime and criminality in order to enhance their performance.

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