



## COMMUNAL FEUD AND SOCIAL VICES AMONG YOUTHS IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

**Dominic Ipuole OGBAJI**

Department of Social Science Education  
Faculty of Arts and Social Science Education  
University of Calabar, Nigeria  
[dominicogbaji2@gmail.com](mailto:dominicogbaji2@gmail.com)

**Unimke Sylvanus UNIMTIANG, Usang Nkanu ONNOGHEN**

Department of Environmental Education  
Faculty of Arts and Social Science Education  
University of Calabar, Nigeria  
[usangonnoghen@Gmail.com](mailto:usangonnoghen@Gmail.com), [unimkefelaa@gmail.com](mailto:unimkefelaa@gmail.com)

**Timothy Okey OGAR**

Department of Geology Education  
Cross River State Collage of Education, Akamkpa, Nigeria  
[timexo2@yahoo.com](mailto:timexo2@yahoo.com)

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated communal feud and social vices among youths in Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, two specific objective and two null hypothesis were formulated. The review of related literature was carried out accordingly in line with the specific objectives raised. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The area of the study is Cross River State. The target population was all household members aged 18-35 years. Multiple sampling approaches were adopted in selecting the local government, wards and four hundred (400) respondents used for the study. To test the hypotheses formulated for the study, simple linear regression statistical tools was used as statistical tools for data analysis. The hypothesis formulated was tested at .05 level of significance. The results of the analysis revealed that inter-communal war significantly predict social vice among youths' in Cross River State. Engaged youth protest significantly predict social vice among youths' in Cross River State. It was concluded that communal feuds correlate with social vices in the study area. Based on the result it was recommended among others that community stake holders should shun violence and embrace peace and dialogue everyday interactions with man and the environment.

**Keywords:** Inter-Communal War, Engaged Youth Protest, Social Vices, Youths, Cross River State, Nigeria.

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## INTRODUCTION

The media, both print and electronic in Cross River State and the entire country are trilled daily with reports of crimes committed by youths. The seeming helplessness of the law enforcement agents especially the police, in curbing the ugly and disturbing trend has made it more worrisome. Crime in Cross River State is multidimensional and is capable of undermining our corporate existence as well as efforts towards sustainable development. The Nigeria corporate existence and development may be undermined by a number of factors among which is an escalating and uncontrolled crime. Security and crime have been deeply rooted in the political history of this country, particularly in recent time, which has emerged as a key concept in Nigeria's struggle for good governance, sustainable democracy and development.

Sadly, there are reports of crimes committed mostly by the youths at virtually every corner of the country including Cross River State. Criminality has become an integral part of the State and nation's daily life. The question is what might be the main causative factors influencing social vices? Could it be connected to the protracted communal feuds that are plaguing all corner of the county? This is what this research is aimed at investigating.

Communal feud as we are painfully aware has been a recurrent decimal in human history. There are not new to human society and are in existence in all spheres of human life since the beginning of human history. In Nigeria, communal feud has continued to besiege the country for decades, every community has experienced at one time or the other communal feud ranging from ethnic/tribal, religion, political, cultural, economic and land dispute. Cross River State and in fact the entire country has been witnessing an increasing upsurge in communal conflicts in recent times.

The problem of communal violence is universally recognized as one of the most overwhelming criminal associated problems with which the human race is presently confronted. Cross River State comprises eighteen Local Government Areas. It is worrisome to see the trend of this phenomenon in Cross River because it is complex with diversity of culture, language and ethnic groups. These ethnic groups rather than nurse or nurture unity, tend to breed crises such that communal feud have become part of their existence (Edwards, 2020).

Mufutau et al. (2020) in Effiom et al. (2021) in the study titled; Effect of communal conflict on economic activities in Osun State, Nigeria; examined the effect of communal conflict on entrepreneurial activities in Osun State, Nigeria using IFE indigenes and Hausa residents in Ile-Ife, Osun state, Nigeria as a case study looking inward into the effect of entrepreneurial activities for business growth. The study examined the various factors considered in establishing an enterprise, the challenge faced by entrepreneurs as a result of communal unrest which serve as a major hindrance in carrying out their activities. The researchers made use of questionnaire as a primary source of data collection and was used to derived conclusions. The communal conflict has negative impact on Business activities. The findings showed that communal conflict has negative effect on entrepreneurial activities and causes economic damage and seriously affect entrepreneurship development in that community. The researchers hereby recommended the following; various governments at all level should make sure they organize robust formal and informal public and private seminars that related to peace and conflict resolution among their people. Also, Good comprehensive review of previous practices that lead to better peaceful coexistence between the communities should be learnt by expert and inculcate into our educational system in order to reduce future conflict in our society because economic growth and entrepreneurship development can be survive in the communities where there is peace.

The study of Akpenpuun (2013) in Onnoghen et al. (2023) examined the incidents of communal conflicts and the implications of these conflicts on human health in the contemporary. Despite the fact that health problems associated with conflict are largely preventable, attention is yet to be directed towards communal conflict preventive approaches; hence societies are experiencing high human health problems. The persistence of the problem further suggests that there is little understanding of the dangers and effects of conflict on human health especially in conflict laden societies. The eruption of communal conflicts usually results in massive loss of lives and destruction of properties. It also hinders, man power growth, labour strength, socio-economic development, social cohesion and political stability. The result indicated that Communal conflicts have the proclivity or tendency to undermine the health of the society.

James and Muhammad (2019) in Edinyang et al. (2020) in a study titled; Communal Conflict and National Security in Nigeria: Selected Case Studies. Noted that post-colonial Nigeria has been engulf with series of communal conflicts that have threatening the country's collective existence and national security. The Ife-Modakeke and Zangon Kataf communal conflicts, for instance, remain reference cases of conflicts in the country. The study used qualitative data from the secondary sources and the psycho-cultural theory was adopted. The theory argued that ethno-cultural dichotomy was the bases of the Ife-modakeke and Zangon Kataf conflicts. The result of the study prove that the ethno-cultural differences brought discrimination along cultural cleavages which determined who get what, when and how in the communities. Thus, the paper concludes that conflict predicated on ethno-cultural origin are pathologically difficult to resolve as each conflicting parties/groups normally hold claim of their geneology and as such continue lingering as a threat to national security. It is, therefore, recommended that the notion of indigene-setler dichotomy should be addressed in the country's constitution. And above all, good governance should be institutionalized at all levels of government.

Godwin et al. (2018) assessed the Psychological consequences of communal conflicts in a sample of 850 inhabitants from two communities in South east Nigeria using the following instruments; (1) The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12), (2)The Short Screening Scale for Post traumatic stress disorder, (3) The Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7) and (4) the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-2). Result showed that 30.8% had psychological distress, 24.7% had post traumatic stress disorder; 22.5% and 14.5% had mild and moderate depression respectively. Furthermore, 27.9%, 16.4% and 3.6% had mild, moderate and severe anxiety disorder respectively. The results of the study were appropriately discussed with some recommendations.

The study of NBS and FMYD (2013) in Effiom et al. (2021) showed that out of a total number of youth recorded against different types of crime in Cross River State, 43% percent were male while the remaining 57% percent were female. Among the thirty two different crimes committed, Marijuana (Indian hemp) smoking had the highest figure, representing 15.7%. This was followed by Theft 8.1%, Murder and Violent protest 7.4% and 5.8% respectively. The least committed crime was Immigration/Emigration representing 0.04 percent. Among the four age groups created from ages 15 to 35 years, age group 25 – 29 were more into crime than any other age groups as revealed by the study. It is shown that out of the total of 6,836 youth recorded during the reference period, age group 25 – 29 recorded 34.13% percent while age group 15 – 19 recorded the least with 15.45% percent.

The study by NBS and FMYD (2013) in Effiom et al. (2021) further showed that different distributions of gender characterized the age groups though the trend was the same in that the males were consistently more than the female youths in crime in Cross River State. It was

however revealed that as the age increased, fewer males were getting involved in crime, and females were 8-10 times more likely to be involved in crime than males in the state. In age group 15 – 19, males accounted for 45.8% percent and females were 54.2% percent; in age group 20 – 24, males recorded 47.4% while females recorded 52.6%. In age groups 25 – 29 and 30 – 35, males accounted for 38.7% and 39.7% while females recorded 61.3% and 60.3% respectively.

A study by the Federal Government has shown that there is correlation between age and crime and that crime tends to decline with age. The ‘age crime curve’ assumes ‘that crimes are most prevalent during mid to late adolescence. That is, the incidence of crime increases with age until individuals reach about 16 to 20. The incidence of crime then decreases with age in adulthood’ (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

Going by the above records, the researcher got inquisitive and wondering if, the latest spike in insecurity and crime in Cross River State and Nigeria as a whole is mainly caused by the constant rise in communal feuds in the entire country in the past two decades. It is on this background that this research is poised to investigate inter-communal war and social vices among youths in Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Social ills perpetrated by youths are predominant in the society today and constitute a threat to peaceful coexistence among members of the society in Cross River State and Nigeria at large. It cut across ethnic nationalities and religious cleavages. Some of the social vices perpetrated by youth population include but not limited to cultism, drug addiction, targeted assassinations, armed robbery, pipe-line vandalism, vandalism of electricity installations, examination malpractice, indecent dressing and prostitution, political thuggery, and cybercrimes.

These vices are at variance to social norms and values which include beliefs, attitudes, honesty, hard work, customs and traditions, ideals, skills and taboos which a society cherishes. Social norms are ideals and values of the society that are passed on from one generation to another via formal and non-formal education.

Most crimes perpetrated by youths are directed toward home, travellers and private sectors entities in Cross River State seeking financial gain from victims. Residents and visitors have been victims of a wide range of violent crimes involving youths which includes armed robbery, assault, burglary, carjacking, rape, kidnapping, and extortion. The most commonly reported crimes perpetrated by youths are armed robbery, kidnap for ransom, drug trafficking and abuse, cultism, looting, pipeline vandals, thugs, domestic violence, prostitution and internet fraud. Kidnapping, drug abuse, internet frauds and robbery which are more prevalent is a huge concern to all stake holders including parents.

Going by the above observation the researcher ponder in doubt what might be the main predictor variable predicting the increase in crime in Cross River State. Could it be as a result of the protracted communal war that has plagued this State over the past decades? Does youth engaged protest predict social vices among youths in Cross River State, Nigeria?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate communal feud and social vices among youths in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to examine:

- The prediction of inter-communal feuds on social vices among youths in Cross River State.
- The prediction of youth engaged protest on social vices among youths in Cross River State.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

- How does inter communal feud predict social vices among youths in Cross River State?
- To what extent does engaged youth protest predict social vices among youths in Cross River State?

## **Hypotheses**

The following hypothesis was formulated to guide the study:

- Inter-communal war does not significantly predict social vices among youths in Cross River State.
- Engaged youth protest does not significantly predict social vices among youths in Cross River State

## **METHODS**

The research design adopted for this study is correlational research design. According to Isangedihi et al. (2004) this type of design is a systematic empirical enquiry in which the researcher does not have direct control of the independent variables because their manifestation had already occurred or because they cannot be inherently manipulated. Inferences about relation among variables are made without direct intervention from concomitant variations of independent and dependent variables. This design was adopted because the researcher had no control of the independent variables social inequality and communal feuds as well as the dependent variable which is social vices.

The population of Cross River State for household members for all age brackets is 4,351,017, while the youth population for household members age 18-35, is 1,824,580 which is approximately 41.9% of the entire population. Out of this population 882,212 are male and 942,368 are female. The research adopted multistage sampling approach. Cross River State is made up of three Educational zones namely Calabar Zone, Ikom Zone and Ogoja Zone. Educational zone was therefore, the basis for stratification. Each Educational Zone has unequal number Local Government Areas.

Simple random sampling technique was used to select 50% of the local government areas from each zone that participated in the study. To do this, names of local government areas in each education zones (stratum) were written each in piece of paper, folded and put in a container and properly shuffle together. Accidental sampling technique was used to administer the instruments to the number of subjects used as sample in each Local Government Area and Education Zones. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula (1973). This formula is use to generate sample size for large population.

The sample of this study was made up of four hundred (400) respondents randomly selected from ten (10) LGA's in Cross River State. A breakdown of the figure shows that forty (40) respondents which consist of twenty (20) male and twenty (20) female were randomly selected from each of the ten (10) LGA's chosen for the study. The instrument used for data collection is a survey questionnaire titled "Communal Feud and Social Vices Questionnaire (CFSVQ). The questionnaire consisted of two sections A and B. Section A, focused on the personal data of the students such as sex, age, local government area, educational qualification and name of the ward while section B is a twenty (20) items drawn based on a modified four-point Likert scale of strongly agree (SA) Agree (A) Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D) designed to elicit information on Communal Feuds and Social Vices. Five (5) items were drawn to measure each of the sub variables of the independent variables (inter-communal war and youth engaged protest) while 10 items were drawn to measure the dependent variables "Social Vices".

The researcher visited the study area which were urban and semi-urban areas and seek for permission from Community Heads to carry out the study. The validated questionnaire was administered by the researcher and three (3) trained research assistants. During data collection, a verbal informed consent was sought from respondents, stating clearly about the confidentiality of their responses and protection, including their voluntary participation in the study and freedom to withdraw from the study at any time. The research assistants were trained on how to use questionnaire to gather important information by carefully explaining the meaning of each item in local dialect to the respondents. Four hundred (400) copies of questionnaire were administered, properly filled and returned.

The researcher with help of research assistance collected the questionnaire. Codes/scores were assigned to each item. For ease of data preparation, a coding schedule was prepared by developing a key for each of the constructs in the instrument in a tabular form. The positively worded items were assigned numbers in an increasing order of Strongly Agree - 4 points, Agree - 3 points, Disagree - 2 points and Strongly Disagree - 1 point, while the negative worded items were in decreasing order of Strongly Agree - 1 point, Agree - 2 points, Disagree - 3 Points and Strongly Disagree - 4 points.

## RESULT

The main independent variables are communal feud which were categorized into; inter-communal war and engaged protest by youths. The dependent variable is social vices. The population of the study are all household members age 18-35 in Cross River State, Nigeria. A sample of four hundred (400) respondents age 18-35 year was used for the study.

In this section, each of the study hypotheses is restated in the null form. The results of data analyzed and their interpretation are presented. The presentation is done hypothesis by hypothesis followed by interpretation of results obtained from the analysis of data. Each hypothesis is tested at .05 level of significance.

**Research Question 1/Hypothesis One:** Inter-communal war does not significantly predict social vices among youths in Cross River State. The independent variable in this hypothesis is inter-communal war while the dependent variable is social vices. Simple linear regression statistical tool was used for data analysis. The result of this analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Simple linear regression analysis of the prediction of inter-communal war on social vices among youths' in Cross River State (N = 400)

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj.R <sup>2</sup>	Std error of estimate	
1	.123	.015	.013	2.13489	
Source of variance	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig
Regression	28.050	1	28.050	6.154	.014
Residual	1813.990	398	4.558		
Total	1842.040	399			

The result of analysis presented in Table 1 showed that the predictor or independent variable (inter-communal war) significantly predict the predicted variable (social vices). The predictor variable accounted for only 1.5% of the variance in social vices among youths' in Cross River State. This showed a very weak relationship between the predictor and predicted variables.

Furthermore, the regression ANOVA revealed there was a weak positive significant prediction of inter-communal war on social vices among youths'  $F(1, 398) = 6.154$ ;  $p > .05$ . It was on this note that the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was upheld. Based on this result, it was revealed that if community stake holders shun violence and embrace peace in the study area, youths may not engage themselves on criminal activities. This further stipulated that the increase in inter-communal war, increases youths' involvement in criminal activities in the study area.

**Research Question 2/Hypothesis Two:** Youth engaged protest does not significantly predict social vices among youths in Cross River State. The independent variable in this hypothesis is youth engaged protest while the dependent variable is social vices.

Table 3: Simple linear regression analysis of the prediction of youth engaged protest on social vices among youths' in Cross River State (N = 400)

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj.R <sup>2</sup>	Std. error of estimate	
1	.220	.048	.046	2.09858	
Source of variance	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig
Regression	89.236	1	89.236	20.262	.000
Residual	1752.804	398	4.404		
Total	1842.040	399			

The result of analysis presented in Table 2 showed that the predictor or independent variable (youth engaged protest) significantly predict the predicted variable (social vices). The predictor variable accounted for only 4.8% of the variance in social vices among youths' in Cross River State. This showed a very strong relationship between the predictor and predicted variables. Furthermore, the regression ANOVA revealed there was a strong positive significant influence of engaged protest on social vices among youths'  $F(1, 398) = 20.262$ ;  $p > .05$ . It was on this note that the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was upheld. Based on this result, it was revealed that if youth groups shun violence protest and embrace peaceful protest in the study area, criminal elements may not have the opportunity to hijack protest. This further

stipulated that the increase in violent protest, increases youths' involvement in criminal activities in the study area.

## **DISCUSSION**

The result of hypothesis revealed that inter-communal war significantly predicts social vices among youths. The finding of this hypothesis is in line with the view of Mufutau, Shittu and Fatimah (2020) whose study titled; Effect of communal conflict on economic activities in Osun State, Nigeria; showed that communal conflict has negative effect on entrepreneurial activities and causes economic damage and seriously affect entrepreneurship development in that community.

The finding of this hypothesis is in line with the view of Mufutau and Shittu (2020) whose study examined the incidents of farmers and herdsmen conflicts with the interest in the experience in South Western Nigeria; attested to the fact that farmers and herdsmen conflicts are not caused by a single reason but are stimulated by multi-causal factors which majorly includes limited resources in face of greater need, reprise attack and shortage of pasture lands even climate change among others and this have great effect on entrepreneurial practice and economic activities of the people. The study also discovered that farmers-herdsmen conflicts have disintegrative consequence on the Nigerian state in spite of the region.

The result of hypothesis revealed that youths' engaged protest significantly predict social vices among youths. The finding of this hypothesis is in line with the view of NBS and FMYD (2013) whose study shows that out of a total number of youth recorded against different types of crime in Cross River State, 43% percent were male while the remaining 57% percent were female. Among the thirty two different crimes committed, Marijuana (Indian hemp) smoking had the highest figure, representing 15.7%. This was followed by Theft 8.1%, Murder and Violent protest 7.4% and 5.8% respectively. The Federal Government has shown that there is correlation between age and crime and that crime tends to decline with age. The 'age crime curve' assumes 'that crimes are most prevalent during mid to late adolescence. That is, the incidence of crime increases with age until individuals reach about 16 to 20. The incidence of crime then decreases with age in adulthood' (National Bureau of Statistics & Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2013).

## **CONCLUSION**

Communal feuds and social vices among youths in Cross River State, Nigeria, are deeply intertwined and contribute significantly to the challenges facing the state. These issues have far-reaching consequences, not only disrupting peace but also hindering social development and economic progress. The escalation of communal feuds often results in violent conflicts, displacement, and loss of life, which in turn fuels a cycle of resentment, poverty, and further violence. This volatile environment provides a breeding ground for social vices such as drug abuse, cultism, and criminal activities, which affect the youth population most acutely.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that includes both short-term conflict resolution strategies and long-term social and economic reforms. Peace-building efforts should focus on promoting understanding and cooperation among communities, while also providing the youth with alternative opportunities to channel their energy positively. Social programs aimed at curbing vices and promoting education, entrepreneurship, and vocational training can empower young people to make better life choices. It is imperative for both



governmental and non-governmental organizations to collaborate in creating a supportive environment for the youth, encouraging them to be active contributors to the peace and prosperity of Cross River State.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- Community stake holders should shun violence and embrace peace and dialogue everyday interactions with man and the environment
- All stake holders should ensure that employments are issued without sentiments.
- Generated income should be distributed to all natural groups without bias.
- Government and political parties should ensure less unbiased in the selection of representatives

## **Implication to the Study**

This study is of great benefit to researcher, government/policy maker and the entire society. The research can be of more benefit to the above listed groups: The study can be of great importance to researchers in Cross River State, Nigeria and the world in general who are interested in carrying out research trying to unravel the level of inequality in Nigeria, Cross River State and the entire world. It can give researchers guide on the level of inequality among youths in Cross River State and Nigeria. The study can also give the direction on the consequences and impact of inequality in the entire world.

This study can aid experts in education curriculum planning distribute vital resources evenly across board without bias. This study can also aid education testing experts in Nigeria rid modern exams of such culturally biased questioning. This research can pave way for other experts who intend to take up a research on the level of inequality in this zone and Nigeria as a whole.

The government of Cross River State and Nigeria can also benefit from this study. The study can aid the government to make policies decisions, which will help in cutting down inequality in the State and entire country.

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