

**DESIGNING INDICATORS OF SAFETY AND JUSTICE:  
LESSONS FROM THE CLEEN FOUNDATION'S  
NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS SURVEYS  
IN NIGERIA**

Paper by Innocent Chukwuma<sup>1</sup>, Executive Director, CLEEN Foundation, to the workshop on Indicators for Safety and Justice: Their Use, Implementation and Use in Developing Countries, holding at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, March 13-15, 2008.

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## **Introduction**

In a paper on measuring impact in human rights, Michael Ignatieff, argues that ‘a measurement revolution has been underway in the fields of development and governance.’ By this he meant the increasing number of and spreading influence of numerical indices in measuring development and governance issues such as social inequality (the Gini coefficient), corruption (Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index), civil liberties (Freedom House’s *Freedom in the World* country rankings) and human development (the UNDP’s Human Development Index and related indicators) (Ignatieff, 2005).

This observation is also true about recent developments in the field of public safety and justice. Increasing citizens’ concerns for safety, security and justice; governments’ and international bodies’ quest for reliable data and indicators for measuring progress, have combined to ignite a growing search for better measurement and indicators for determining progress in justice sector reform.

However, Sub-Saharan Africa appears to have been left behind in this ‘measurement revolution’, as decisions of government and other policy makers are not often based on systematically collected and analyzed information. This tends to produce a culture of planning and administration based on anecdotal evidence, experience, tradition and hunches with attendant ineffectiveness and inefficiency (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2007). It is against this background that the workshop on Indicators of Safety and Justice: their Design, Implementation, and Use in developing countries is welcomed. This discussion paper focuses on lessons learned by the CLEEN Foundation in conducting victimization surveys in Nigeria, which may be useful in designing and utilizing indicators of safety and justice. It is divided into four sections. Section I is on why we set out to conduct victimization surveys in Nigeria. Section II discusses the design and construction of the surveys. Section III looks at lessons learned. Finally, section IV examines the impact of the surveys. We begin with purpose of conducting victimization surveys in Nigeria.

## **Why the Conduct of Victimization Surveys in Nigeria**

A number of factors informed CLEEN Foundation’s decision to get involved in conducting victimization surveys in Nigeria. The first factor, which is commonplace in criminology is the problems associated with official statistics on crime, which are that not all victims of crime report to the police and not all reported crimes are recorded by the police, thus giving rise to search for alternative or complimentary sources of information on crime which would aid formulation of policies on crime prevention and control. These are often acknowledged as the problems of ‘dark’ and ‘grey’ crime figures. These problems indicate that the crime statistics produced by criminal justice agencies such as the police, courts, prosecutors and prisons do not

give the total picture of the extent and pattern of criminal activities and victimization in society (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2007). In the Nigerian situation, these problems are made acute by the fact that those who report crimes to the police are rarely satisfied with the outcome and that there are no incentives to the police to accurately keep records of crimes reported to them. If anything, accurate recording of reported crimes might lead to sanctions on police commanders as they may be queried about why crimes are high in their jurisdictions.

The second set of push factor had to do with problems peculiar to developing countries, especially Nigeria with regard to collection of reliable official statistics on practically everything. This has to do with national and organizational failures and capacity with respect to information management as tool of planning, decision making, monitoring and evaluation.<sup>2</sup> With specific reference to crime and victimization statistics, the following problems are observed:

- Some countries, including Nigeria, do not appreciate the significance of grounding public policy and decision-making in reliable information and statistics;
- Police forces in many developing countries, including Nigeria, neglect collection, analysis and utilization of crime information as essential input to their planning, operations and administrations. As a result good hands are not often posted to their planning research and statistics department, which should have been seen as the engine of a police organization. And those posted to these department view their posting as punishments and would do anything to be posted out;
- Countries and police forces that ignored the collection and utilization of vital statistics for planning and administration usually lack necessary capacity for the collection, analysis, utilization, storage and retrieval of essential data and information.

. In Nigeria, the result is that policies on crime and justice reform are often formulated, implemented and trashed without any rigorous data on whether they worked or not. And if they did not work, what was responsible etc. This no doubt creates the need for a search for a way out, which victimization surveys can contribute to by providing reliable data on crime and policing in the country on which policy making could be grounded on.

The third and final factor that encouraged our getting involved in conducting victimization surveys had to do with program needs of CLEEN Foundation. In 2003, when we marked our fifth anniversary, we decided to include the promotion of public safety and security in our mission. At the time we took this decision, there were no reliable baseline data on crime and conflicts in Lagos on which to ground our project. All we had were police statistics on crime which were not only unreliable because of the issues highlighted above but also infrequently

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<sup>2</sup> Etannibi EO Alemika 2004. "Crime statistics and information management in Nigerian justice and security systems" in EEO Alemika and IC Chukwuma (Eds.) *Crime and Policing in Nigeria: Challenges and Options*, Lagos: Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN).

published or made available to members of the public. With support from Ford Foundation, we decided to first conduct a victimization survey in Lagos metropolis in 2004, which would produce a baseline data on crime, fear of crime and victimization levels in Lagos.

With the extensive publicity generated by the Lagos Victimization Surveys in the electronic and print media as well as the attention it received in public discourses, we were able to raise funds from MacArthur Foundation to begin the conduct of the survey at a national level in 2005. We are now in the third year of conducting the surveys at a national level and on an annual basis.

### **Design and Construction of the Surveys**

The design and construction of the victimization surveys Nigeria were not fundamentally different from those of that surveys of its kinds in other parts of the world such as the British Crime Surveys (BCS) and the International Crime Victims Surveys (ICVS) as the methodology used and the construction of measurement instrument and types of questions asked borrowed significantly from these other surveys that began before it.

#### *Research method*

The research method was wholly quantitative, using multi-stage probability sampling procedure, which neutralizes any known form of bias that may affect the findings of the study and gives every person within the study location who meets the requirement of being eighteen and above and have lived in the study location for a minimum six months an equal and calculable chance of either being included or excluded in the sample. However, the mode of enquiry adopted was face-to-face interview in which interviews were conducted in the homes of the respondents instead of postal or telephone surveys. The primary reason for adopting this mode of enquiry is because of the significant level of illiteracy in Nigeria and low level of telephone penetration. Any attempt to use postal or telephone survey method in conducting the interviews would automatically exclude the majority of the people, thus calling to question the validity of the findings. The other reason is that face-to-face interviews 'is more flexible, has a higher completion rate and when used by skilled interviewers could extract more information than a postal survey (Newell, 1993: 97).' Interestingly, it is also the method used in the ICVS conducted in developing countries and by Afro barometer in Africa (Beaty et al, 2006; Lewis, et al, 2001). The sampling procedure is discussed below.

#### *Selection*

- Locations: The capitals of all 36 states of the federation of Nigeria including Abuja were considered as urban locations. Rural locations within each state were selected through a random process, with every rural location, however small, having a probability of being part of the sample. No rural, was purposely excluded from the sampling process.
- Sampling Sectors: Sectors were defined as being between 300 - 500 households in urban areas and at least 70 - 100 households in rural areas. Selection was made using indicators

of high, medium and low density. The sample allocation to each group of sectors i.e. high/medium/low density, was proportionate to the number of sectors in each group

- Dwelling Structures: Structures were selected using sampling gaps/intervals which are created based on the size of the sample and hence, number of interview to be selected within each sector, depending on the density.
- Households: For this selection a grid for random selected was designed where building structures, floors and households were represented. Depending on the day's code, selections of households were made.
- Respondents: A Kish Grid was also used for this selection on which the size of the household and eligible respondents according to age and sex was represented. The questionnaire codes were used in this selection.

### *Sample Size*

The total sample size for the 2006 survey was 11,161, while that of 2005 was 10,036. The sex distribution of the sample was about equally split between the sexes: Males 50% and Females 50%, mainly because the country's population (as obtained in the 1991 census). The sample distribution amongst the different states was based on Probability with Population to Size (PPS). Find in appendix I, a breakdown of the respondents in the 36 states of Nigeria and Abuja, the federal capital. What informed the decision to interview this sample size compared to other national surveys conducted in the country such as the Afro barometer surveys was the need to provide national, regional and state distribution of the results. Given the diverse nature of the Nigerian population in terms of geography and ethnicity, national distribution alone do not always tell the whole story and this we would see in the section on lessons learned.

### *Measurement Instrument*

The measurement instrument used in the surveys did not differ fundamentally from those of the BCS or ICVS as it borrowed significantly from them and consist of structured close-ended questionnaire. It contained standards questions used in measuring crime levels, fear of crime, perception of safety, attitudes to the police and other justice institutions, cost and impact of crime etc. However, we did not simply Xerox the instruments used in the BCS, ICVS or any other conducted elsewhere in the world (which of course would have easier to do) because the purpose of the survey as explained earlier was not to simply produce cross-national comparable data on victimization but largely to address the problem of lack of information on crime victimization, public perception of justice institutions and level of disputing in the country which would assist both policy makers in Nigeria in developing policies that would reduce the high level of crime in the country and improve public confidence in justice institutions and of course CLEEN Foundation's program needs. Nevertheless, the survey data contains a lot of cross-national comparable information on crime levels, fear of crime, perception of safety, impact of crime, corruption in criminal justice institutions, attitude to the police and other justice institutions.

### **Lessons learned**

We have learned a number of lessons in conducting victimization surveys in Nigeria in the last four years that may be useful in designing indicators of public safety and justice. These lessons relate to the findings of the surveys and their dissemination. We begin with the findings.

*Fear of crime and experience of crime victimization*

Among the striking lessons we have learned in the conduct of the surveys is the apparent contradiction between the respondents expression of fear of crime and perception of safety. You would ordinarily expect expression of high level of fear of crime to go hand in hand with low perception of safety. In our 2005 survey, 68.7% percent of the respondents were fearful of crime, comprising 46.9% who were very fearful and 21.8% who were fairly fearful, while 81.3% felt safe at night<sup>3</sup>, comprising 49.6% who felt very safe and 31.7% who felt fairly safe. Similarly, in 2006, 72.6% of the respondents were fearful of crime, comprising 52.2% who were very fearful and 20.4% who were fairly fearful, while 76.4% felt safe at night<sup>4</sup>, comprising 42.5% who felt very safe and 33.9% who felt fairly safe. One possible explanation for this finding is that people tend to express more positive feeling of safety in their neighborhood, especially during the day, than they are about becoming a victim of crime in the larger society.

The other lesson, which is consistent with the literature on the subject and therefore not surprising, is the huge disparity between level of fear of crime in Nigeria and actual experience of criminal victimization (Braithwaite, *et al*, 1982). In our 2006 survey, the national average for those who experienced crime victimization was 23.1%, while that of those who were fearful of crime, as we discussed above was 72.6%. Similarly, in the 2005 survey, the national average for victimization was 21.5%, while 68.7% were fearful of crime.

It is also important to point out that at the national level there was there was a noted stability in crime victimization in the sense that there was no statistically significant difference between the national average for 2005 and 2006 in major crimes covered in the survey. The only exception was theft, which dramatically reduced from 15.9% in 2005 to 6.5% in 2006. However, when we disaggregated the data into state level analysis, we began to see dramatic increase in some crimes in some states and equally dramatic reduction in others. Refer to Appendix II and table I below. This suggests that for you to really understand trends in crime within a country you have to disaggregate the data using socio-demographic variables such as geography, age, gender, socioeconomic status etc. In Nigeria, geography and ethnicity are the most significant variable given our rich cultural diversity.

**Table I: Victimization of household members**

<i>Over the past twelve months did you or anyone in your household experienced any of the following crimes?</i>	% that responded yes, once or more times - 2005	% that responded yes, once or more times - 2006
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<sup>3</sup> The figure for those who felt safe during the day in 2005 is even higher at 96.3%.

<sup>4</sup> The figure for the respondents who felt safe during the day in 2006 is even higher at 94.9%

Something stolen at home	15.9	6.5
Physically attacked at home	4.2	3.8
Physically attacked outside home	5.6	5.5
Raped at home (females only)	1.0	0.9
Raped outside home (females only)	1.1	0.9
Killed at home	0.8	0.8
Killed outside home	1.0	1.3
Robbed at home	3.7	3.6
Robbed outside home	4.8	4.7

Aligned to the above is the lesson from the survey that socio-demographic variables that matter in some societies in explaining crime and vulnerability may not be that significant important in others. For instance, the literature on criminal victimization postulates strong relationships between socio-economic characteristics and victimization. As a result, victim surveys always analyze the association between the two factors. In our surveys in 2005 and 2006, we were surprised to find that although slight differences can be observed, they were not statistically significant enough to corroborate the literature. The only exception was on marital status were divorce and separated people reported more experience of crime victimization that married people. Refer to table II. The lesson here is that in designing indicators, we should note that not all socio-demographic variables are significant in understanding public safety and justice issues in every society. Some are more significant than others. Understanding which one is and which is not and for which country, becomes a challenge.

**Table II: socioeconomic characteristics and victimization experience**

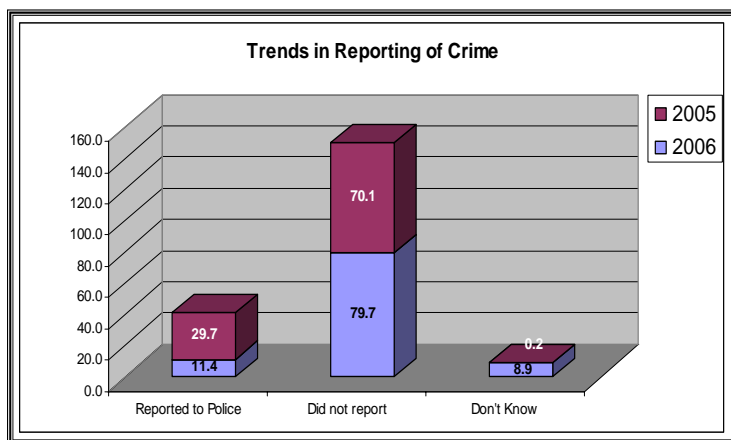
Socio-economic Characteristics	Criminal Victimization	
	Yes (%)	No (%)
<b>SEX</b>		
• Male	24.4	74.6
• Female	21.8	77.4
<b>Age (years)</b>		
• 18-24	22.4	76.5
• 25-30	24.5	74.6
• 31-35	24.6	74.8
• 36-40	22.0	77.1
• 41-50	22.3	77.2
• 51 and older	21.1	78.3
<b>Marital Status</b>		
• Never married	24.8	74.1
• Married	21.1	78.2
• Divorced	31.1	67.9
• Separated	37.9	62.1
• Widow and widower	19.4	78.8

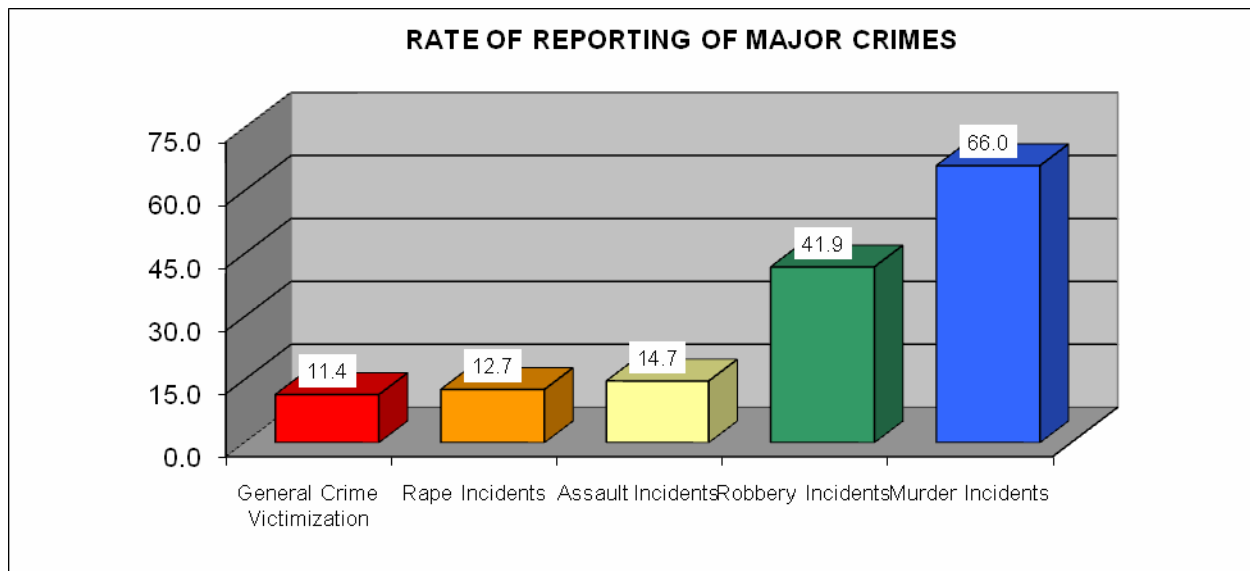
Residential Neighborhood		
• Higher income	22.6	76.2
• Middle income	25.6	73.6
• Lower income	21.6	77.5

Source: Alemika and Chukwuma, 2007:56

*Reporting of crime and Public confidence on the police*

Another major lesson of the surveys is the extent of public confidence in the Nigeria Police Force measured through rate of reporting of crime. In our surveys, the respondents that indicated experience of crime victimization were asked whether they reported to the police. In the 2005 survey, 29.7% percent reported. In the 2006 edition, the figure had dropped to 11.4%. Those who did not were asked reasons for not reporting. In 2005 survey, the number reason was which is a bit surprising considering the extent is the low and declining rate of reporting of crime to the police, which is an indicator of public confidence in them. In the 2005 survey, 29.7% of the respondents reported to the police, by 2006 the number had gone down to 11.4%. When asked their reasons for not reporting to the police, the number one reason in 2005 was that the police would not do anything about it (22.1%). In the 2006 edition, the number reason was that they solved it themselves (23.6%). This often means resort to self-help measures including patronage of informal policing systems, which sometimes employ extra-legal approaches in solving crime problems brought to them. This development is not only an indication of declining rate of public confidence on the police in Nigeria but also a challenge to rule of law and formal justice systems. The lesson here for a conference of this nature involving experts involved in the construction of indicators for public safety and justice is that we should not only focus on formal institutions but also on informal justice systems, which people in developing countries embrace because of problems they face in accessing formal justice systems beginning with the police who are the gate keepers.





### *Dissemination of Survey Findings*

The other useful lesson we have learnt in conducting the surveys is determining the best way of disseminating the results so that they would achieve the objectives of the surveys. This is a key question that needs to be asked before results of surveys are published. It bothers on deciding who the target audience(s) are and how best to influence them before the results are released. If the purpose is to galvanize public opinion to press government to do something about the subject of the survey, then choosing a significant date that matters to the public and releasing the study would make sense. However, if demonstrating to the government the need to change or introduce a particular policy is the major objective of the survey, releasing the findings first to the public and approaching the government agencies later may be counterproductive in developing countries where governments do not take kindly to publication of reports that ‘embarrassment’. We learnt through the hard way. In our 2005 surveys, we released the findings to the media and members of the public before approaching the police, our partners, to agree on what we could jointly do to implement some of the recommendations. Unfortunately for us, the press picked and highlighted the sensational aspect of the report, which indicated that the Nigeria Police Force was the most corrupt public agency in Nigeria. The police did not take it kindly and went ahead to arrest the reporters that wrote the story. They could not come to arrest us for reasons best known to them as I was expecting them to come.

It took us quite some time to repair the relationship and we agreed to present the findings of the survey to senior police officers in Nigeria for them to know that the purpose of the survey was not to embarrass them but to provide them with a rich information that would help them in

deploying police resources to areas where they are mostly needed. When we eventually did the presentation, they were so thrilled by the findings and their potential usefulness that we entered into agreement with them to first present summaries of the surveys to the monthly meetings of senior police officers in Nigeria before they are made public. We did not have any problem with this request before the purpose of the surveys were to influence public policy and police performance in crime prevention and control in Nigeria.

The second lesson we learned on dissemination, was the challenge to develop strategies of disseminating results of our surveys in such a way that members of the public would actually have access to them beyond publishing them in book forms with limited print runs. With declining reading habits in Nigeria in Nigeria, this was a major problem. One innovation we introduce was reducing the findings to graphs and charts, which were colorfully printed in posters and distributed. The posters were inserted in major newspapers that are widely read in Nigeria as loose inserts. The result is that were able to disseminate the key findings of the survey across the country. We found out that newspaper readers who saw the colorful posters removed and took them home where their family members and friends also had access to them. We also, of course, published them on our website, where they have enjoyed considerable hits.

### **Impact of the Surveys**

It may be too early to concretely measure what impact two editions of national crime victim surveys we conducted have had on influencing changes in the operation of justice in Nigeria and understanding of crime, insecurity and public attitude to them. However, it I think it is safe to say that they have contributed significantly in making policy makers on public safety and security in Nigeria realize that there are alternative or supplementary sources of information on the issues to those collected by the police, courts and prisons.

For instance, the two presidential commissions that have been established in the last three years on police reform and reform of criminal justice administration in Nigeria have relied heavily on the findings of the survey in carrying out their assignments and their recommendations have also reflected the survey. The presidential commission on reform of criminal justice administration recommended the development of a national crime prevention strategy that would incorporate the views of the community in the determination of policing priorities. Similarly, the appointment of the lead consultant to the survey project, Prof. Etannibi Alemika, as a member of the presidential Committee on Police Reform ensured that the findings of the survey used by the committee and reflected in their report and recommendation.

The yearly presentations of the findings to the senior police officers meetings in Nigeria, which includes commissioner from the 36 states of the country and Abuja the Federal Capital and the distribution of the publications and posters to them, have assisted them in the planning and distribution of policing resources to areas serious need. Periodically, we get request from state commissioners of police to pull out and analyze for them data concerning their jurisdictions in the survey.

Finally, the survey reports are now widely quoted by researchers in government and civil society who are conducting studies on crime and justice Nigeria around the world and comparing them with those of other countries.

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**Appendix I:**

**Breakdown of Effective calls by State & Urbanization**

Region	State	Location	Urban		Total	Rural		Total	Cumulative Total
			M	F		M	F		
<i>Lagos</i>	Lagos	Lagos	234	234	468	108	108	216	684
<i>South West</i>	Ogun	Abeokuta	90	90	180	36	36	72	252
	Oyo	Ibadan	144	144	288	72	72	144	432
	Osun	Oshogbo	90	90	180	36	36	72	252
	Ondo	Akure	90	90	180	36	36	72	252
	Ekiti	Ado-Ekiti	90	90	180	36	36	72	252
<i>South South</i>	Akwa-Ibom	Uyo	108	108	216	54	54	108	324
	Bayelsa	Yenagoa	90	90	180	36	36	72	252
	Cross River	Calabar	90	90	180	36	36	72	252
	Delta	Asaba	108	108	216	54	54	108	324
	Edo	Benin	90	90	180	36	36	72	252
	Rivers	Port Harcourt	90	90	180	36	36	72	252
<i>South East</i>	Enugu	Enugu	72	72	144	36	36	72	216
	Anambra	Akwa	108	108	216	54	54	108	324
	Imo	Owerri	108	108	216	54	54	108	324
	Abia	Aba	108	108	216	54	54	108	324
	Ebonyi	Abakaliki	72	72	144	36	36	72	216
<i>North West</i>	Kano	Kano	198	198	396	54	54	108	504
	Sokoto	Sokoto	90	90	180	36	36	72	252
	Kaduna	Kaduna	162	162	324	72	72	144	468
	Katsina	Katsina	162	162	324	72	72	144	468
	Zanfara	Gusau	90	90	180	36	36	72	252
	Kebbi	Bini-Kebbi	108	108	216	54	54	108	324
	Jigawa	Dutse	126	126	252	54	54	108	360
<i>North East</i>	Bauchi	Bauchi	180	180	360	72	72	144	504
	Gombe	Gombe	54	54	108	18	18	36	144
	Borno	Maiduguri	108	108	216	54	54	108	324
	Adamawa	Yola	54	54	108	18	18	36	144
	Taraba	Jalingo	72	72	144	36	36	72	216
	Yobe	Damaturu	72	72	144	36	36	72	216
	Plateau	Jos	72	72	144	36	36	72	216
	Nasarawa	Lafia	72	72	144	36	36	72	216
<i>North Central</i>	Benue	Makurdi	108	108	216	54	54	108	324
	Kogi	Lokoja	90	90	180	36	36	72	252
	Kwara	Ilorin	72	72	144	36	36	72	216
	Niger	Minna	108	108	216	54	54	108	324
	FCT/Abuja	Abuja	90	90	180	36	36	72	252
<b>Total</b>			<b>3870</b>	<b>3870</b>	<b>7740</b>	<b>1710</b>	<b>1710</b>	<b>3420</b>	<b>11160</b>

## Appendix II

### Personal Experience of Victimization in 2005 and 2006

States	<i>Over the past 12 months, have you personally suffered any crime victimization?</i>	
	% Yes in 2005	% Yes in 2006
Abia	26.2	35.5
Adamawa	25.0	32.4
Akwa Ibom	25.0	20.5
Anambra	22.9	26.9
Bauchi	23.1	32.3
Bayelsa	47.7	28.6
Benue	32.3	34.7
Borno	15.0	32.4
Cross River	33.5	23.4
Delta	21.2	31.5
Ebonyi	31.3	26.4
Edo	24.6	23.4
Ekiti	9.1	11.6
Enugu	13.8	28.2
Gombe	11.6	14.6
Imo	26.4	31.2
Jigawa	12.5	21.7
Kaduna	31.0	25.4
Kano	28.5	17.7
Katsina	16.8	14.1
Kebbi	13.7	19.4
Kogi	42.1	18.5
Kwara	15.6	14.6
Lagos	9.1	16.5
Nasarawa	11.1	15.3
Niger	11.8	13.0
Ogun	7.3	27.4
Ondo	11.8	12.3
Osun	16.5	6.7
Oyo	13.7	35.9
Plateau	33.3	13.0
Rivers	57.5	46.0
Sokoto	19.4	28.6
Taraba	40.0	18.8
Yobe	8.1	14.8
Zamfara	12.7	17.5
FCT Abuja	14.6	34.1
<b>National</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>23.1</b>