



EFFECTS OF INSECURITY ON NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The issue of security has been the concern of government at all levels in Nigeria with much effort from different security personnel. But in spite of attempts by the government to ensure that all lives and properties are duly preserved and protected, insecurity still manifests in different dimensions. This paper examines the pertinent issue of insecurity in Nigeria and its implications on socio-economic development. Available data on the level and dimensions of insecurity in Nigeria reveals an increase over time, which constitutes serious threat to lives and properties, hinders business activities and discourages local and foreign investors, all of which stifles and retards Nigeria's socio-economic development. This rising wave of insecurity has not abated but has assumed a dangerous dimension which is threatening the corporate existence of the country as one geographical entity. In light of the above, the paper recommends that government must be proactive in dealing with security issues and threats, through modern methods of intelligence gathering, and sharing among security personnel, training, logistics, motivation, and deploying advanced technology in managing security challenges. The real solution lies in government accelerating the pace of economic development through creating an economy with relevant social, economic and physical infrastructure to support business and industrial growth.

Keywords: Insecurity, Security, Socio-Economic Development

1.0 Introduction

According to Omoyibo and Akpomera (2013), security is a concept that is prior to the state, and the state exists in order to provide security. Security is the prime responsibility of the state (Thomas Hobbes, 1996). The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria specifically states that "The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government". Unfortunately, government on this constitutional responsibility has failed to provide a secured and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of business and economic activities. The alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria has fuelled the crime rate and terrorists attacks in different parts of the country, leaving unpalatable consequences for the nation's economy and its growth. To address the threat to national security and combat the increasing waves of crime the federal government in the 2013 budget made a huge allocation to security, and the national assembly passed the

Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011 (Ewetan, 2013). Despite these efforts, the level of insecurity in the country is still high, and a confirmation of this is the low ranking of Nigeria in the Global Peace Index (GPI, 2012). Despite the plethora of security measures taken to address the daunting challenges of insecurity in Nigeria, government efforts have not produced the desired positive result. This has compelled the Nigerian government in recent time to request for foreign assistance from countries such as USA, Israel, and EU countries to combat the rising waves of terrorism and insecurity. Amidst the deteriorating security situation in the country, Nigeria is also confronted with daunting developmental challenges which pose a serious threat to its socio-economic development. These developmental challenges include endemic rural and urban poverty, high rate of unemployment, debilitating youth unemployment, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, very large domestic debt, and rising stock of external debt (Ewetan, 2013). According to the National Bureau of



Statistics, Nigeria's unemployment rate increased to 23.9 percent in 2011 compared with 21.1 per cent in 2010 and 19.7 per cent in 2009. The country has a youth population of 80 million, representing about 60 per cent of the total population with a growth rate of 2.6 per cent per year, and the national demography suggests that the youth population remains vibrant with an average annual entrant to the labour force at 1.8 million between 2006 and 2011. In 2011, 37.7 per cent of Nigerian were aged 15-24 years and 22.4 per cent of those between ages 25 and 44 were willing to work but did not get jobs. The current level of social insecurity is alarming and unacceptable. The United Nations Children Fund reports that every day, Nigeria loses about 2,300 under-five year olds and 145 women of childbearing age, making the country the second largest contributor to the under-five and maternal mortality rates in the world. A greater proportion of the population do not have access to pipe borne water, health care facilities, electricity and affordable quality education. Although Nigeria is a signatory to the UN resolution on the MDG goals the attainment of these goals by 2015 remains elusive and doubtful (Ewetan, 2013).

Against this background, this paper therefore seeks to examine the pertinent issue of national in security, a crisis of the Nigerian state, and its implication for Nigeria's socio-economic development.

2.0 Conceptual Clarifications

There are divergent approaches to conceptualizing security which is the antithesis of insecurity. This paper therefore seeks to examine the concept of security to facilitate a good understanding of the concept of insecurity. Security need was the basis of the social contract between the people and the state in which people willingly surrendered their rights to an organ (government) who oversees the survival of all. In this light security embodies the mechanism put in place to avoid, prevent, reduce, or resolve violent conflicts, and threats that originate from other states, non-state actors, or structural socio-political and economic conditions (Stan, 2004). For decades, issues relating to security were on the front burner in the development discourse. Several attempts have been made since the cold war ended to redefine the concept of security from a state-centric perspective to a

broader view that places premium on individuals, in which human security that embodies elements of national security, human rights and national development remain major barometer for explaining the concept. At the heart of this debate there have been attempts to deepen and widen the concept of security from the level of the states to societies and individuals, and from military to non-military issues (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013; Kruhmann, 2003).

According to Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013), the divergent approaches to the conceptualization of human security in the theoretical literature can be categorized into two major strands. One is a neo-realist theoretical strand that conceptualizes security as primary responsibilities of the state. The second strand, a postmodernist or plural view, conceptualizes security as the responsibilities of non-state actors and displaces the state as a major provider of security. Proponents of this approach argue that the concept of security goes beyond a military determination of threats. They are of the view that government should be more concern with the economic security of individual than the security of the state because the root causes of insecurity are economic in nature.

Some scholars in conceptualizing security placed emphasis on the absence of threats to peace, stability, national cohesion, political and socio-economic objectives of a country (Igbuzor, 2011; Oche, 2001; Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013). Thus, there is a general consensus in the contemporary literature that security is vital for national cohesion, peace and sustainable development. It is therefore apparent that national security is a desideratum, sine qua non for economic growth and development of any country (Oladeji and Folorunso, 2007). In the intelligence community there is a consensus that security is not the absence of threats or security issues, but the existence of a robust mechanism to respond proactively to the challenges posed by these threats with expediency, expertise, and in real time.

2.1 Concept of Insecurity

The concept of insecurity connotes different meanings such as: absence of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. According to Beland (2005) insecurity



is a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection. Achumba et al (2013) defines insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. This definition of insecurity underscores a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur. In the context of this paper insecurity is defined as a breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, ethno - regional, civil, social, economic, and political that contributes to recurring conflicts, and leads to wanton destruction of lives and property.

2.2 Concept of Development

The issue of ideology of development posed a problem to conceptualizing development. Growth theorists argued that development is an outcome of economic growth while other scholars like Rostow (1952), Harrod- Domar (1957) posited that economic development and growth result from structural changes, savings and investments in an economy. In this light, Chandler (2007) sees development as a broader concept that recognizes psychological and material factors that measure human well-being. Development therefore is a multifaceted phenomenon and man centered. It is the process of empowering people to maximize their potentials, and develop the knowledge capacity to exploit nature to meet daily human needs (Rodney, 1972; Nnoli, 1981; Ake, 2001). The transformation of the society and the emergence of new social and economic organizations are critical indicators of development (cited in Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013).

2.3 Socio-Economic Development

Socio-economic development is a product of development that can be defined as the process of social and economic transformation in a society. Socio-economic development embraces changes taking place in the social sphere mostly of an economic nature. Thus, socio-economic development is made up of processes caused by exogenous and endogenous factors which determine the course

and direction of the development. Socio-economic development is measured with indicators, such as GDP, life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. Changes in less -tangible factors are also considered, such as personal dignity, freedom of association, personal safety and freedom from fear of physical harm, and the extent of participation in civil society. Causes of socio-economic impacts are, for example, new technologies, changes in laws, changes in the physical environment and ecological changes.

Scholars have identified strong links between security and development since the cold war ended (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013; Chandler, 2007). They argue that development cannot be achieved in any nation where there are conflicts, crisis and war. There is a consensus in the literature that security and development are two different and inseparable concepts that affect each other, and this has naturally triggered debates on security-development nexus (Chandler, 2007; Stan 2004).

3.0 CAUSES OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Insecurity like many essentially contested concepts has not escaped the attention of scholars. Many scholars have identified several causes of conflict and insecurity in Nigeria that are inimical to socio-economic and national development (Ali, 2013; Okorie, 2011; Jega, 2002; Salawu, 2010; Onyishi, 2011; Ezeoba, 2011; Lewis, 2002). These causes have been classified into external and internal causes. In Nigeria, the internal causes of insecurity pose major challenge to socio-economic development than the external causes of insecurity. This paper therefore focuses on the internal causes of insecurity in Nigeria. These causes include:

- I. **Ethno-religious Conflicts:** These conflicts are caused by suspicion and distrust among various ethnic groups and among the major religions in the country. Ethno- religious conflict is a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious and another of such group in a multiethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontation (Achumba et al. 2013; Salawu , 2010). The frequent and persistent ethnic conflicts and religious



clashes between the two dominant religions (Islam and Christianity) is a major security challenge that confronts Nigeria. Since independence, Nigeria appears to have been bedeviled with ethno-religious conflicts. There are ethno-religious conflicts in all parts of Nigeria and these have emerged as a result of new and particularistic forms of political consciousness and identity often structured around ethno-religious identities (Ibrahim and Igbuzor, 2002). Ethno-religious violence is also traceable to the inability of Nigerian leaders to tackle development challenges, and distribute state resources equitably. Other causes are accusation, and allegation of neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism and bigotry. In all parts of Nigeria, ethno-religious conflicts have assumed alarming rates. It has occurred in places like Shagamu (Ogun State), Lagos, Abia, Kano, Bauchi, Nassarawa, Jos, Taraba, Ebonyi and Enugu State respectively. These ethno-religious identities have become disintegrative and destructive social elements threatening the peace, stability and security in Nigeria (Eme and Onyishi, 2011).

- II. Politically Based Violence:** Political contests are characterized by desperation, and violent struggle for political power among politicians. Recurring political violence in Nigeria could be attributed to over-zealousness and desperation of political gladiators to win elections or remain in office at all cost. These misadventures have often been catastrophic leading to decimation of innocent lives, disruption of economic activities, and the destruction of properties among others.
- III. Acute Corruption (Systemic and Political Corruption):** This is a twin evil and hydra-headed monster that has held the Nigerian state spell-bound. The state of insecurity in Nigeria is greatly a function of government failure, traceable to systemic and political corruption. It has added another dimension of violent conflicts which has eroded national values. Corruption is bad not because money and benefits change hands, and not because of the

motives of participants, but because it privatizes valuable aspects of public life, bypassing processes of representation, debate, and choice. It has been described as cancer militating against Nigeria's development, because corruption deeply Nigeria society (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013). Corruption hampers economic growth, disproportionately burdens the poor and undermines the effectiveness of investment and aid (Iyare, 2008).

- IV. Economic-Based Violence:** Cries of resource control and revenue sharing regularly rent the air between proponents and opponents also leading to violent agitations among the contending actors and between the state and proponents. The Niger-Delta crisis in Nigeria presents a classic case of this violent struggle that has been on since the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970. These violent agitations have claimed many lives of Nigerians and foreigners, military and para-military personnel, and properties worth billions of naira. It has also resulted in economic misfortune in Nigeria through loss of oil revenue as a result of shortfall in crude oil exports by the oil companies occasioned by disruption of oil exploration activities by the Niger-Delta militants. Although by no means limited to oil in the Niger Delta, the most prevalent campaign about the link between resources and conflict in Nigeria focuses on oil and the Delta region. No doubt oil has given rise to vertical and horizontal conflicts between National, State and society or between dominant and subordinate geopolitical zones, classes and groups across Nigeria, given the pivotal role that oil plays in the political economy, and power relations in Nigeria. It is however true those other types of resource driven conflicts have received less attention in the debate. Assets such as grazing and farming, and water resource, have tended to give rise to horizontal conflicts that involve communities across the geopolitical zones.
- V. Pervasive Material Inequalities and Unfairness:** A major factor that contributes to insecurity in Nigeria is the growing awareness of inequalities, and disparities in life chances which lead to



violent reactions by a large number of people. There is a general perception of marginalization by a section of the people in areas of government development policies, political patronage, and these are triggers of disaffection, resentment, and revolt (Achumba, et al. 2013). The incessant strikes by labour, professional groups and demonstrations by civil society groups are mainly due to pervasive material inequalities and unfairness. Their agitations are aimed at drawing public sympathy for their struggle for just and fair treatment by the government.

VI. Unemployment/Poverty: According to Adagba et al (2012) unemployment/poverty among Nigerians, especially the youths is a major cause of insecurity and violent crimes in Nigeria. In particular youths unemployment have contributed to the rising cases of violent conflict in Nigeria. Also, one of the major causes of insecurity in the country is the failure of successive administration to address challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities.

VII. Organized violent groups: Organized violent groups such as ethnic militia, vigilantes, secret cults in tertiary institutions and political thugs contribute significantly to security challenges in Nigeria in different dimension and forms. Their emergence have been linked to a number of factors which include the culture of militarism that has its antecedents in military rule, the failure of the state and its institutions, economic disempowerment, the structure of the state and Nigeria's federalism, non-separation of state and religion, politics of exclusion, culture of patriarchy, ignorance and poor political consciousness (Ibrahim and Igbuzor, 2002 as cited in Eme and Onyishi, 2011).

VIII. Weak Security System: This is a major contributory factor to the level of insecurity in Nigeria, and this can be attributed to a number of factors which include inadequate funding of the police and other security agencies, lack of modern equipment both in weaponry and training, poor welfare of security personnel, and inadequate personnel

(Achumba et al. 2013). According to Olonisakin (2008) the police-population ratio in Nigeria is 1:450 which falls below the standard set by the United Nations. The implication of this is that Nigeria is grossly under policed and this partly explains the inability of the Nigerian Police Force to effectively combat crimes and criminality in the country.

IX. Porous Borders: Achumba et al. (2013) observe that the porous frontiers of the country, where individual movements are largely untracked have contributed to the level of insecurity in Nigeria. As a result of the porous borders there is an unchecked inflow of Small Arms and Light Weapons into the country which has aided militancy and criminality in Nigeria (Hazen and Horner, 2007). Available data show that Nigeria host over 70 percent of about 8 million illegal weapons in West Africa (Edeko, 2011). Also, the porosity of the Nigerian borders has aided the uncontrollable influx of migrants, mainly young men, from neighboring countries such as Republic of Niger, Chad and Republic of Benin responsible for some of the criminal acts (Adeola and Oluyemi, 2012).

4.0 INSECURITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA.

After six decades of independence, Nigeria still ranks low in all socio-economic indicators such as life expectancy, death rate, access to water, poverty rate, mortality rate, and crime rate, and still carries the tag of a developing economy. The country is a classic illustration of an oxymoron, a poor country in the midst of abundant human and natural resources. This scenario has contributed to security challenges that have bedeviled the country since independence till now with grave consequences for socio-economic development. There is no nation that can achieve socio-economic development in an environment of socio and physical insecurity. The increasing challenge of insecurity in Nigeria has also been linked to failure of leadership to deliver good governance, and secure the welfare of persons on the principles of freedom, equality, and justice. The ruling elites in Nigeria in both the military and democratic dispensation are dependent, parasitic, and very corrupt in nature, and mal-administration (Ali, 2013).



The various constitutions that Nigeria has operated including the 1999 constitutions make provisions for the rights of citizens to include; right to life, right to social security, right to work, right to livelihood, just and favourable remuneration, right to a standard of living adequate for the health, and well-being of individual and his family, including food, clothing, housing, and right to education. No doubt, Nigeria is blessed with abundant human, and natural resources to guarantee the attainment of these rights (Ali, 2013; Bako, 1998). Regrettably, previous and present governments have failed to guarantee these rights and thus the onus is on individuals to seek for means to provide the basic necessities of life for him and his family.

The inability of government to provide a secure and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of business and economic activities has led to resentment and disaffection among ethnic groups. This has resulted in ethnic violence, communal clashes, and religious violence in different parts of the country that has destroyed lives and properties, disrupted businesses and economic activities, and retarded economic growth and development of Nigeria. There is no investor whether local or foreign that will be motivated to invest in an unsafe and insecure environment. In a globalized world investors are not only looking for high returns on their investments but also safe haven for their investments. Thus the alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria has made the economy unattractive to foreign investors, and this has impacted negatively on economic growth and development.

Socio economic development is the primary goal of every well-meaning government, and it is essentially dependent on the level of economic activities in a country; the level of economic activities is in turn enhanced by peaceful co-existence by people. In the absence of security, socio-economic development cannot be sustained as it destroys economic, human and social capital. The Boko Haram insurgency in Northern Nigeria has almost crippled economic activities in that region. Also activities of other militia groups in other parts of the country pose serious threat to the economic health of these regions. The security crises in different parts of Nigeria is destroying existing infrastructure and preventing a peaceful environment for the development of

further infrastructure, and a safe environment for economic activities by individuals to give them economic empowerment that will enable households not only to cater for their present generations, create wealth, but also to provide for future generations. The report by World Bank (2011) on "Conflict, Security and Development" reveals that about 1.5 billion people live in countries affected by political and criminal violence, which has exacerbated human misery, and disrupted development. The bane of Nigeria's development is insecurity. Insecurity situation is costing Nigeria its leadership role in Africa in terms of development. Consequently, more proactive initiatives regarding tackling menace of insecurity are needed in Nigeria since security is central to development, and the national transformation agenda of the current administration may not be achieved if there is no solution to the menace of insecurity ravaging the country.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

Insecurity constitutes threat to lives and properties, hinders business activities, and discourages local and foreign investors, all of which stifles and retards socio-economic development of a country. In Nigeria there has been rising wave of insecurity since the country attained independence in 1960. This rising wave has not abated but has assumed a dangerous dimension which is even threatening the corporate existence of the country as one geographical entity. The elimination of these threats should be the number one goal of governments in Nigeria at all levels as the country cannot achieve any significant development amidst insecurity and its attendant consequences.

In light of all above submissions on the effects of insecurity on socio-economic development in Nigeria, the paper makes the following suggestions:

1. Government must be proactive in dealing with security issues and threats, through modern methods of intelligence gathering, and intelligence sharing, training, logistics, motivation, and deploying advanced technology in managing security challenges.
2. The real panacea for solving insecurity challenge in Nigeria is for government to accelerate the pace of development. Development in this context consists of



creating an economy with relevant social, economic and physical infrastructure for business operations and industrial growth, to provide gainful employment, high level of educational facilities, and medical care for the people.

3. Governments at all levels should ensure that rising poverty indices are reversed and a realistic social security programme is pursued and systematically implemented to ensure that the populace meets their basic needs.
4. The elimination of these threats should be the number one goal of governments in Nigeria at all levels as the country cannot achieve any significant development amidst insecurity and violence.

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