



INSECURITY AND NIGERIA'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: *Many scholars have identified insecurity in Nigeria as one of the major reasons for the country's continuous under-development. This paper analyzes the effects of insecurity on the socio-economic development of Nigeria, with the main objective of proffering policy solutions to address insecurity challenges that have almost brought the county to her knees and stunted her development. The paper adopted the conflict theory propounded by Karl Marx as the theoretical framework to interrogate the causes of insecurity and the effects on various aspects of the Nigerian socio-economic system. The study employed qualitative research methods to critically assess the relationship between insecurity and Nigeria's socio-economic development. It is theoretically based, with the use of secondary data, using in-depth explanatory analysis that produces results with understanding, meanings and views. The study identified severe unemployment, endemic poverty, ethno-religious conflicts, corruption, deprivation, inequalities and small arms and light weapons proliferation as the major causes of the unending insecurity challenge in Nigeria. These have led to population displacement, social dislocation, depression and trauma among the people, declining health situation, worsening school attendance, food insecurity and lack of foreign investment. The study recommended that governments at all levels should implement policies that will ensure serious reductions in unemployment rate, poverty and general inequality, by providing infrastructures and the enabling environment that will encourage entrepreneurs and small-scale industries to thrive, revamp the country's entire security architecture, strengthen border security, tackle the proliferation of firearms, improve the legal system, among many others.*

KEYWORDS: Insecurity, Socio-economic development, Conflict theory, Small arms and light weapons, Nigeria.



INTRODUCTION

In the words of Garga (2015), the socio-economic landscape of Nigeria has been blighted by the endemic twin evils of crime and violence. The abysmal failure of successive administrations to address the challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among the various ethnic nationalities, has ultimately led to anger, agitation and violent crimes against the Nigerian state by non-state actors, individuals and militant groups. Such crimes include militancy, kidnapping, bombing, armed robbery, destruction of government properties, among several others. The activities of these groups have consequently resulted in low income for the government from oil revenue, decline in the Gross Domestic Product growth rate, low participation of local and foreign investors in national economic development and insecurity of lives and properties of the citizenry.

According to Akanle and Shittu (2021), Nigeria is not just a country in Africa; but a major and critical one. This is based on her massive human population size, her diverse economic and natural resources and the dynamism of her people of various ethnicities. Nigeria is strategic to leadership provision in Africa and this has been proved over the years by her frontline roles in ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), AU (African Union), the Commonwealth, and NEPAD (New Economic Partnership for African Development). This is why the negative multiplier effects of Nigeria's continued underdevelopment have been widely acknowledged and remain of great concern; since the consequences of this underdevelopment not only impact the country and Africa negatively, but also the world at large. There is therefore a continuous need for the continued examination and engagement of the development question, that has remained unanswered for so long in Nigeria. It is against this background that this study contributes to the burgeoning body of literature on the causes of the persistent underdevelopment of Africa, using Nigeria as a case study, with a view to further understanding the issues at stake and proffering workable solutions.

Insecurity is widespread in Nigeria and manifests in various forms and dimensions. Despite huge bureaucratic machinery to deal with insecurity, Nigeria's security profile tends to be uninspiring. This is so because Nigeria's security apparatuses have been patently reactive rather than proactive, in dealing with the endemic security threats. In the views of Arisuku (2017), insecurity challenges can be traced to the early years of military rule when large quantities of arms were imported into the country for the use of the military, during and after the Nigerian civil war, when some of these got into the hands of civilians. These arms were thereafter used by the civilians and ex-military men for wrong purposes, such as armed robbery, banditry, kidnapping and hostage-taking, among others. The level of insecurity assumed dangerous dimensions in the prolonged years of military rule beginning from the 1970s, during which people procured arms and light weapons for personal defense. Some of these arms and light weapons got into the hands of the teeming unemployed youths, who then used them for deviant and criminal purposes.

The unfortunate September 11, 2002 attacks on Washington DC, USA has compelled experts, researchers, academics and politicians to beam searchlights on the various factors that incite terrorism. The 2014 global report on security indicated that Nigeria is one of the crime-ravaging countries in the world (Adeniyi, 2015). The report rated Nigeria high on the following critical variables: unlawful possession of arms, forgery, receiving stolen properties, false pretenses, burglary, theft, Boko-Haram banditry, armed robbery, kidnapping, attempted murder, assault, raping, slave dealing and human trafficking, irregular migration, suicide, murder cases, and



man-slaughter, among others. Whereas under Chapter II (Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy), Section 14 (2)(b) of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution (as amended) states clearly that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of the government”, government has been found wantonly wanting in this regard (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2003: 30).

Flowing from this provision, the government tends to lose its relevance when it is unable to guarantee the basic internal security requirements of a peaceful society. It is, therefore, a fundamental responsibility of every state to ensure the safety of her citizens and others living within her territorial jurisdiction. In this regard, the incidence and character of insecurity in Nigeria continue to raise serious doubts about the commitment and capability of the Nigerian state to provide adequate security for her citizens.

Many scholars have identified insecurity in Nigeria as one of the several causes of her continuous under-development (Ali, 2013; Ezeoba, 2011). The Global Peace Index (Global Peace Index, GPI, 2020) has ranked Nigeria 148th among 163 independent countries on the peace ladder. More disturbing is the fact that Nigeria ranks as the 3rd Most Terrorized Global Nation, just after Iraq and Afghanistan (GPI, 2020). According to Okolie-Osemene (2019), security is an important requirement in the sustenance of every modern state in the international political system. This is based on the need for states recognised as independent to maintain their territorial integrity without the control of their territories by other states.

Insecurity in Nigeria has reached such an alarming proportion, rearing its ugly head in various facets of our national life. Lives are lost on a daily basis, populations depleted, businesses left comatose, investments nose-diving, multinational corporations closing shops and exiting the country in droves, unemployment soaring and the populace living in perpetual fear (Onime, 2018). Despite government’s burgeoning recurrent expenditure on internal security, at both the National and State levels, individuals in their various rights, workplaces and homes, spend heavily to provide security for safeguarding their personal lives and properties.

Despite these efforts, the menace keep exacerbating - ethnic conflicts in several parts of the North, kidnapping in almost all parts of the country, but prominent in the South-South, North-West and most recently in the South-West, militancy and pipeline vandalisation activities in the Niger Delta, terrorism and religious extremism by Boko Haram in the North East, agitations for self-determination by IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra) in the South-East and MASSOB (Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra) in South East, herdsmen disturbances in the North- Central, ritual killings in the South West and South- East and other political and economic disturbances.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Insecurity

The concept of insecurity connotes different meanings to different people, such as absence of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, lack of protection, and lack of safety. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpan-Robaro (2013) define 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.

According to Beland (2005), insecurity entails lack of protection from crime (being unsafe) and lack of freedom from psychological harm, unprotected from emotional stress resulting from paucity of assurance that an individual is accepted, has opportunity and choices to fulfill his or her own potentials, including freedom from fear. Igbuzor (2011) conceptualized security by placing emphasis on the absence of threats to peace, stability, national cohesion, political and socio-economic objectives of a country.

In its 1994 Report that introduced a new concept of human security, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994) equated security with people rather than territories, with development rather than arms. The report addressed the issue of human security from the angle of understanding what insecurity entails. According to the body, human security means, first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression (UNDP, 2015, 1). And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs or in communities.

Williams (2008) sees security from the socio-political perspective and averred that security involves the capacity to pursue cherished political and social ambitions. That is, security is socio-political in nature, as without security, there can be no political stability and consequently social activities will be in chaos.

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.

Socio-Economic Development

There are quite a number of approaches to defining development in the economic literature. As yet, there is still no agreement on this issue (Litwiński, 2017). Until the second half of the 20th century, economic growth and development were identified only with material progress and the phenomenon was believed to be linear. Nevertheless, in the 1960s, development was somehow separated from economic growth and, later, got a wider definition as its social dimension was strongly emphasized. It is from this wider definition that the concept of socio-economic development evolved.

Social development has been defined by Fritz (2004) as a process which results in the transformation of social institutions in a manner which improves the capacity of the society to



fulfill its aspirations. It implies a qualitative change in the way the society shapes itself and carries out its activities, such as through more progressive attitudes and behavior by the populace, the adoption of more effective processes or more advanced technology. Fritz (2004) believes that social development, as a phenomenon, is associated with qualitative changes in social structures, like social integrity and social trust and changes in opportunities of individuals whose goals are to achieve higher social statuses.

Myrdal (1968) proposed a pretty wide definition of development, indicating that this process means enhancement of essential conditions in the social system that may be causes of underdevelopment. Thereafter, the importance of social dimension of economic development became recognised. Singer (1965) underlined important aspects of development like education, health and nutrition; indicating that the problem of underdeveloped countries is not only to stimulate growth, but also to induce development. Since then, economists began to understand development as a combination of two elements: economic growth and a significant change (social and cultural, quantitative and qualitative) of the system and participation of every agent in the process.

In recent times, the definition of socio-economic development has become wide-ranging and is now associated with not only the economic science, but also other areas in the social sciences. According to Bellu (2011), the preferred definition of socio-economic development (SED) is influenced by the understandings of multilateral international institutions and development agencies, like United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. From the foregoing, we can summarize the meaning of socio-economic development from the works of Belly (2011), Chojnicki (2010), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2012) as a process of quantitative, qualitative and structural changes, that are a result of actions taken within social and economic practices to improve well-being.

Theoretical Review

The Conflict Theory was propounded by Karl Marx with the idea of social classes' engagement in struggles and competitions over scarce resources, with resulting inequality and conflict which are present in every society (Hayes, 2022). This is perhaps the dominant theoretical framework for scholarly understanding of social conflict, cohesion, and consent in modern society. Conflict theory was first developed by Karl Marx (1818-1883) in mid-nineteenth century to explain inequality and conflict resulting from struggle and competition between two antagonistic social classes. The theory provides a classical and contemporary theoretical perspective of conflict from sociological, historical, and socio-economic methods of analysis of power relations (Hayes, 2022). Later strands of the theory now look at other dimensions to analyze and explain a wide range of social phenomena, including wars, revolutions, poverty, structural inequality, discrimination, and domestic violence.

The Relative Deprivation Theory was propounded by Gurr (1971) in his bid to explain the cause of insecurity across societies. According to the theorist, the tension emanating from the imbalance between people's expectation from the society and the provisions from the society in terms of value satisfaction, leads the dissatisfied members of the society to violence. The relative deprivation theory is of the view that people will be most likely to engage in acts that endanger the security of the state when their societal values have become hopeless and the



possibility of actualising their goals is jeopardized by the degree of hardship they are being subjected to, mostly through the activities of the state actors.

The human security approach introduced in the 1994 Global Human Development Report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994) broadened the scope of security beyond the narrow definitions of territorial protection of nation-states from external aggression, to encompass widespread and cross-cutting challenges to survival, livelihoods, and dignity of peoples across the world. This new perspective to security that hinged on the human rights approach broadens the concept of security to incorporate issues such as the 'freedom from want', 'freedom from fear', and 'freedom to live in dignity' (UNDP, 2015, 1). Central to the human security approach, hence, is the idea that people have the right to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair, with an opportunity to enjoy all their rights fully and develop their human potential. The fundamental thesis of this theory is that all humans have basic needs which they seek to fulfill and failure caused by other individuals or groups to meet these needs could lead to conflict.

The Relational/Vengeance Theory attempts to provide explanations for violent conflicts between groups by exploring sociological, political, economic, religious and historical relationships between such groups (Faleti, 2006). The belief is that cultural and value differences as well as group interests all influence relationships between individuals and groups in different ways. Thus, a number of conflicts grow out of a past history of conflict between groups that has led to the development of negative stereotypes, racial intolerance and discrimination.

Empirical

Stewart (2004) analyzed the effects of conflict and insecurity on development for twenty-five countries between 1960 – 1995 in his research titled "Development and Security". He found that whenever there is conflict in any region, economic growth was almost always affected, agricultural sector was badly hit, exports were negative, production fell, imports went up, dominated by military expenditure and essential consumption goods, usually leading to shortages of foreign exchange for economic inputs, consumption per head fell, government revenue as a share of GDP mostly fell and foreign and private investments including government investment fell.

Eneji and Agri (2020) investigated the root causes and socio-economic impacts of insecurity in Nigeria in their study titled "Insecurity, Conflict and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria". They used the survey method of structured questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. The study showed that Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented spate of insecurity occasioned by terrorism, kidnapping, ritual killings, cultism, corruption, injustice, poverty, inflation and bad governance. The study recommended inclusive growth and participatory development for the pro-poor with policies and programmes to integrate the rural areas and the disadvantaged segments of the population into the mainstream of development.

Using elements of descriptive qualitative analysis and data from secondary sources, Onime (2018) examined the effect of insecurity in Nigeria on some economic parameters. The analysis showed that insecurity affects economic growth by drying-out investments, increases unemployment and dwindles government revenue, amongst others. Despite these effects, government capital expenditure on internal security did not grow astronomically to match the



hydra-headed problem. This paper therefore recommended an increase in capital expenditure on internal security and concludes with a discussion of some policies that can be designed and targeted at addressing the economic effects of insecurity.

Danjuma, Dare, Umaru and Kajo (2023) examined the effects of insecurity on small businesses performance in Nigeria. The study adopted ex-post facto research design, descriptive statistics, while Correlation and Multiple Regression of Ordinary Least Square technique were used to test the hypotheses. The study concluded that insecurity (Boko Haram and armed banditry) has significant negative effects on SMEs Performance in Nigeria. The study recommended that the Federal Government should grant legislative powers to state and local governments to establish local security structures to curtail Boko Haram insurgency and ensure secured business environments to boost SMEs' performance; government should support security agencies with modern equipment, improved welfare package that motivate them in identifying dens of bandits and neutralizing them to enhance a safe environment for SMEs performance in Nigeria;

Ezeajughu (2021) examined the relevant issue of insecurity in Nigeria and its effect on socioeconomic development. To ensure economic development in Nigeria, the study recommended various measures of curbing insecurity, including preventive community policing, human development-centered growth perspective, equitable distribution of resources as well as channeling of resources to frontline sectors of the economy among others. The paper also recommended effective leadership and good governance as panacea to solving problems of insecurity, unemployment, poverty, hunger, disease, among other negative indices.

Olu-Adeyemi (2017) examined the activities of the Fulani herdsmen against the background of their persistent violent attacks on farms, farmers and communities across Nigeria. Applying the theory of deprivation, frustration and aggression, the author situated the Fulani herdsmen attacks as the nexus of the deprivations emanating from the plethora of economic, social, environmental and political situations in Nigeria. In order to checkmate their attacks on farmers in North-central Nigeria, he recommended that the government should, as a matter of urgency, consider and adopt a sedentary grazing policy/practice in the country. This is because the growing complexities of the modern world, coupled with environmental challenges, no longer make nomadic grazing attractive as a business and way of life.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs qualitative research methodology to critically assess the relationship between insecurity and Nigeria's socio-economic development. It is theoretically based, with in-depth explanatory descriptions, producing results that give understanding, experience and views. Using such descriptive qualitative analysis and data from secondary sources like textbooks, journals, magazines, newspapers and online resources, we analyzed the effects of insecurity on critical socioeconomic parameters and established the direction of such effects.

This study adopted the Conflict theory that was propounded by Karl Marx as the theoretical framework. It is the dominant theoretical framework for scholarly understanding of social conflict, cohesion, and consent in modern society. It recognises the idea of materially based social classes being engaged in class struggles and competition over scarce resources; thereby resulting in inequality and conflict, which are very present in today's Nigerian society.



Causes of Insecurity

There are a plethora of causes of the high level of insecurity being experienced in Nigeria today. Various scholars from many academic persuasions have proffered several reasons for this. Prominent among these are the following:

Massive Unemployment and Endemic poverty

Several studies have maintained that heightened insecurity in Nigeria is a consequence of economic and political factors such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption and poor governance (Olawale, 2003; Ikelegbe, 2006). Unemployment leads to crime and its attendant effects; kidnapping for ransom, robbery, oil bunkering, and other nefarious activities. It is also well known that the army of unemployed and idle youth population of this country is the major group perpetrating these security problems across the country. According to Evans and Kelikume (2019), unemployment and poverty are two economic conditions that pose a serious threat to world peace and development and, if not tackled, may yield multiples of economic disasters.

Ethno-religious Conflicts

The problem of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria is caused by a multiplicity of factors, but the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) is responsible largely for its spread. The prevailing ethnic structure in Nigeria with the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and the Igbo constituting the three major groups has made the situation particularly unstable and often in conflict. The interplay of religion and ethnicity has drastically affected the ways and manner that the authorities can address the situation.

Politically Based Violence

The Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR, 2002) stated that the return to democracy in Nigeria created the propensity for competition for political opportunities. This propensity often leads to increased violence in Nigeria. Competition for resources has often been aggravated by inter-elite rivalries over privileges such as political and public service appointments, oversight of projects and admission into schools (IPCR, 2002). The spillover of political bitterness and acrimony amongst political elites in their quest for supremacy of power and who controls resources of the state, further compounds the problem making the whole issue look like never-ending. The enthronement of democracy, inciting/intemperate utterances of some sectional leaders, arming of thugs for electioneering campaigns, weak leadership personality, absence of political will, and politicization of security issues all caused insecurity in Nigeria.

Systemic and Political Corruption

Nigeria has been labeled as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Nigeria is the 145th least corrupt nation out of 180 countries surveyed, according to the 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index reported by Transparency International (Transparency International, 2023). Corruption Rank in Nigeria averaged 126.36 from 1996 until 2023, reaching an all-time high of 154.00 in 2021 and a record low of 52.00 in 1997 (Transparency International, 2023). The concomitant effects of this phenomenon include unfair distribution of resources, alienation and other social vices; all eventually leading to insecurity.



Economically-based Violence

Agitation over access to resources, especially in the South-South geo-political zone, has been a major source of insecurity over the years. Cries of resource control and revenue sharing regularly rent the air between proponents and opponents, leading to violent agitations among the contending actors and between the state and proponents. Ethnic and political unrest over competition for oil wealth between ethnic groups, caused militarisation of the entire South-south region by ethnic militia groups, Nigerian military and police forces. Over time, the struggle deteriorated to criminal opportunism, driven by the imperatives of economic profiteering. The organic dynamics of militancy in the Niger Delta have variously manifested in the fashion of oil pipeline vandalism, oil theft/bunkering, piracy, and kidnapping (Evans & Kelikume, 2018; Okoli & Nachanaa, 2016).

Pervasive Material Inequalities and Unfairness

Ostentatious living and unbridled show of wealth acquired through illegal means have been sources of insecurity in the recent past, especially leading to incidents of kidnapping for ransom. Even though the largest economy in Africa, the national income distribution is highly skewed, meaning that the vast majority live in poverty, while a very small minority live in opulence (Hendrix, 2016). These issues cause anger, frustration and bitterness as well as negative orientations. This creates a large pool of disgruntled people amenable to all sorts of political, cultural and other manipulations, which easily transform their bitterness and frustration into violence (Okoli & Nachanaa, 2016). Thus, the violence in Nigeria can be said to be as a result of the prevailing unpleasant socio-economic conditions pertaining to issues relating to survival, economic deprivation, structural inequities, environmental degradation, governance deficits and political marginalization.

Weak Security System

The inability of the security and law enforcement forces in Nigeria to arrest the deteriorating security situation in the country is attributable to, but not limited to several factors which include failure of governance at all levels, poor leadership, lack of respect to human life, high youth unemployment and the inadequate enforcement of the law. A number of challenges hindering the effectiveness of the Nigerian Police Force and other security agencies, include manpower shortage and elite policing, poor public perception, the issue of politicization, and overly centralized and non-meritocratic leadership.

Porous Borders

Nigeria's extensive land and maritime borders continue to be major sources of threat as they are largely porous and unmanned. This has aided smuggling, narcotics trafficking, illegal immigration, movement of arms and ammunition, irregular migrations associated with terrorism and transnational crimes.

Arms Proliferation

The widespread proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) in Nigeria and across the West African sub-region has over the years, been a recurring issue of concern for policy makers, security agencies and citizens. In Nigeria, the possession of SALWs in private hands has been a major threat to security; and fueled several violent crimes such as armed robbery,



kidnapping and banditry, herder-farmers clashes, terrorism, communal warfare, human and drugs trafficking, insurgency, and other forms of organized crimes (Anyadike, 2013). This growing menace of the proliferation of SALWs is enabled by the poor regulatory capacity of the Nigeria state which has widened the ungoverned space for non-state actors to operate more or less without restraints.

Payment of Ransom to Kidnappers

It has been established that the payment of ransom to kidnappers to free hostages is the major reason motivating the relentless invasion of schools and abduction in most villages and communities. Thus, this issue of payment of ransom has now become a life-threatening dilemma facing both the government, security agencies and the parents of kidnaped school children in the affected states.

Poor Correctional Service

The Nigerian Prison system is far from being reformatory or correctional. Rather, the correctional facilities have become avenues for further criminalisation of inmates, where first-timers with light sentences become more hardened through interactions with serial and habitual criminals. The system has no way of rehabilitating and following up with prisoners who have served their sentences. Invariably, they go back to criminal activities and end up in prison again; thus, further complicating Nigeria's national security.

Socio-economic Impact on Nigeria

Determining the actual impact of insecurity on the economy and livelihoods in Nigeria is extremely difficult, given the absence of accurate data and under-reporting. However, the insecurity situation has not only displaced people, but also stalled and sometimes completely shut down life in the affected areas. Investors have equally moved out of the affected regions, relocating to other parts of the country leading to serious losses of revenue to individuals, organizations and governments. Hitherto vibrant commercial centers have been seriously destabilized. For instance, Kano City that has for centuries served as a commercial hub for Northern Nigeria and neighboring countries such as Chad, Niger Republic, and Cameroun, is now a shadow of its former self due to insecurity.

The cost of insecurity can be quite enormous. This cost is not easy to measure in real, financial terms. People who are killed or forced to flee, can no longer work productively. Schools, power stations, worship centers, roads and other infrastructures that are destroyed, reduce the productive capacity of the economy. Further, displacement of people further aggravates food insecurity, reduces the production of export goods, thereby reducing foreign exchange earnings, import potentials and consequently further constraining output, leading to a decline in employment and earnings.

The following are some of the specific implications of insecurity on the Nigerian socio-economic development:

Population Displacement

Of the 33.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world (excluding development induced displacement), 15 million internally displaced persons can be found in Africa, with an



increase of 7.5% between 2013 and 2014. Of this figure, Nigeria hosts over 3,300,000 of these IDPs (Eweka & Olusegun, 2016)). With the Boko Haram menace, many people have been forced out of their ancestral homes because the security of their lives cannot be guaranteed. The socio-economic effects of displacement, which is a byproduct of insecurity on the IDPs, have been devastating. It has been reported that in the North Eastern part of Nigeria, 71.5% of the population live in abject poverty, over half of the residents are malnourished, about 85% are illiterates, with 60% formally unemployed (Ejiofor, Oni & Sejoro, 2017)

Social Dislocation and Disruption of Family and Communal Life

Due to real or perceived insecurity challenges, there is dislocation and disruption of family and communal lives. Due to fear of attacks in most cases and as a result of a breakdown of the socio-economic structures during armed conflict, people are usually left with no option, but to flee. General atmosphere of mistrust, fear, anxiety and frenzy exists in these areas. There are dehumanisations of women, children, and men, especially in areas where rape, child abuse and neglect are used as instruments of war and granting of favours. Deepening hunger and poverty exist, with an atmosphere of political insecurity and instability, including declining confidence in the political leadership and general apprehensions about the system.

Health Situation

There are links between human security and health, as insecurity leads to the collapse of the health care delivery system. The associated effects of insecurity include fear, coercion, displacement and deprivation of basic daily needs, such as drinking water, food and health care. Human security entails access to food, nutrition, clean drinking water, hygiene, sanitation and housing which could only be obtained through peace. IDP camps experience malnutrition, overcrowding, epidemic and lack of sanitation.

Educational Consequences

Education in the country has recently come under significant threat due to an increased number of mass kidnappings of students from their schools. Kidnappings in schools have become a great disincentive for both parents and students alike for enrolling in schools; opting to stay at home in order to ensure their safety. The first major school kidnapping incident in Nigeria that shocked the entire world was that of the over 276 innocent, mostly Christian schoolgirls, who were abducted from their school hostels in Chibok, North-eastern Nigeria in 2014 (Abdulkabir, 2017). This was followed by that of Dapchi school girls kidnapping that involved over 100 girl-students in 2018 (Verjee & Kwaja, 2021). These two major events stunned the entire world and as at now, some of the girls are still yet to be recovered. Today, Nigeria has one of the world's highest numbers of out-of-school children. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, n.d.), one in every five of the world's out-of-school children is in Nigeria. Even though primary school education is officially free and compulsory, about 10.5 million of the country's children aged 5-14 years are not in school. This wave of school kidnappings has worsened the educational situation in Nigeria, especially girl-child education in the Northern part of the country, with some state governments closing boarding schools in their states for security reasons.



Economic Activities

Production by most industrial entities depends on the availability and regular supply of raw materials for production. Loss of man hours due to shortened working hours (of less than 40 hours per week) by banks and commercial institutions and the unprecedented loss of man hours or closure of businesses by those who work at night due to curfews imposed, consequent on the declaration of states of emergency in some states have become serious issues. Insecurity has cut off the supply of sources of raw materials; thereby jeopardizing production activities. Besides this, insecurity affects marketing of finished products as there are continuous exodus from areas of insecurity. There is also an increase in security spending as most business organizations operating in Nigeria spend a lot in maintaining private security outfits and security equipment. The destruction of their business buildings, properties and equipment is tantamount to loss of capital which has ruined many businesses in Nigeria.

Food Security

Between January and March 2021, the agricultural sector contributed up to 22.35 percent of the total Gross Domestic Product of Nigeria, with over 70 percent of Nigerians engaged in the agriculture sector mainly at a subsistence level (Food and Agricultural Organisation, FAO, 2024). Agriculture is thus a major socio-economic activity in Nigeria, especially in the country's Northern region. However, banditry and violence in the North East and North Central geo-political zones have forced farmers to abandon farms and markets due to risks to their lives, thereby posing a huge threat to food security and socio-economic development in the region. It is important to note that agricultural production has multiplier effects on economic development. For example, some farm produce serves as raw materials in the value chain for agro-allied industries, while their byproducts have various uses, including poultry and fish feeds, as well as other applications. Apart from the risk of food and nutrition insecurity, banditry has greatly impacted negatively on socio-economic activities in the region leading to rising inflation, unemployment and people dislocation.

Foreign Investment

Insecurity undermines the perceived safety and confidence of investors in affected nations, thus impeding Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows (Bezić, Galović & Mišević, 2016). The presence of political and civil strife and the threat of insurgency further dissuade both international and domestic investors from engaging in commercial ventures within tumultuous regions, leading to declines in FDI inflows and economic growth. In Nigeria, the observed decrease in FDI and economic development is primarily attributed to an escalation in security concerns and political unrest, which has eroded investor confidence in the country. This is in line with the assertion by Oladeji and Folorunso (2007) that national security is not only a prerequisite but an essential condition for the advancement and prosperity of any nation, with the potential for progress being severely compromised in the absence of stability.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Even though Nigerian governments at the Federal and State levels have undertaken several initiatives to curtail the insecurity situation in the country, the situation has not abated. Initiatives like the establishment of the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE), the deployment of Special Task Forces in various states like Plateau, Kaduna and Rivers, establishment of state security apparatuses like the *Amotekun* outfit in the South-West geopolitical zone, among other initiatives, have not stemmed the wave of insecurity prevailing in Nigeria. It does appear that the seemingly elite conspiracy and government leniency that underlie the inability of the security agencies to apprehend and prosecute the perpetrators of violent crimes, tend to have compounded the problems. The recommendations that follow will proffer policy recommendations to tackle Nigerian insecurity challenges, taking into consideration the highlighted root causes of insecurity in Nigeria.

Recommendations

- Nigerian governments at the Federal, State and Local Government levels should be radically committed to meeting the basic needs of the people through the provision of basic infrastructures such as roads, pipe borne water, and improved electricity. Government should focus on policy and programmes that will generate employment especially in the agricultural sector. This can be achieved through the involvement of youth massive cultivation and the development of agricultural value chain. The solution to the current high level of insecurity for the government is to provide an enabling environment and infrastructures for employment and growth of entrepreneurship, thereby leading to reduction of poverty at various levels.
- In collaboration with Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) operating in the crisis-prone areas, governments should engage stakeholders (community leaders, youth leaders and other leaders of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in town hall meetings and collectively come up with lasting solutions to these insecurity issues that impede socio-economic development. This is because there is evidence of collaboration between residents in an area and those who come to attack them.
- Government should revamp the entire security apparatus by recruiting more and better-educated security officers, ensuring increased funding, better training, improving the logistics and welfare packages of officers and moving towards independent and community-based policing.
- Tackling cross border activities and strengthening border security is critical to addressing the multi-faceted threats in Nigeria. Governments should ensure an effective border control system to support Nigeria's counterinsurgency efforts. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as a body should strengthen cross-border cooperation to ensure effective regulation and control of movement of persons in line with ECOWAS Protocols.
- To curb further proliferation of SALWs and the circulation of arms among private citizens in the country, Federal and State Governments should enact strict laws to effectively regulate the activities of vigilante groups. The Federal Government should review and update national legislations in line with the convention on small arms and light weapons, including



the control of the local manufacture/fabrication of arms by blacksmiths and the civilian possession of arms.

- The legislature should consider and enact a law that criminalizes the payment of ransoms to bandits either by individuals or groups. Thus, the criminalisation of payment of ransom to the abductors and hostage takers especially of students will discourage those that indulge in such activities since it has now become lucrative.
- Government should address the deteriorating conditions in Nigerian correctional centers through adequate funding, de-emphasising imprisonment as being punitive, except where absolutely necessary, carry out judicial reforms to make dispensation of justice faster, fair and equitable, rehabilitate prisoners after serving their sentences to ensure they do not re-offend, create national database of prisoners in order follow up individual cases to prevent re-offending.

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