

Insecurity Situation in Nigeria: Implications for National Security and Development

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Abstract

Insecurity is one of the most glaring and much talked about issue in Nigeria today. Acts of insecurity occur on a daily basis throughout the country. This has propelled some right-thinking Nigerians to be concerned about this ugly trend. Similarly, Security remains the bedrock for social, cultural, political and economic development of any nation. Again, lack of security engenders national development in all spheres of a nation's life. Over the years Nigeria has relatively enjoyed peaceful atmosphere until recently, the coming of terrorism and insurgency in the North, kidnapping, armed robbery and other forms of insecurity ravaging the entire length and breadth of country, to the extent that each day that passes by, without having cases and reports of killings, wanton destruction of lives and properties. To further buttress this assertion, the paper examined insecurity situation in Nigeria and its implications for National Security and Development. Methodologically, the study made use of secondary source of data collection such as textbooks, journals and other relevant documents. The armed-robbery and wobble economy theories were jointly adopted as the theoretical frame work of analysis. Research findings revealed that insecurity has increased the level of poverty, hunger, disease, corruption, illiteracy and violence in Nigeria. At the end, the study recommended that more efforts should be deploy by government towards addressing and arresting the ugly trend. Secondly, there should be a deliberate effort by all stakeholders to equip the intelligent units and the populace on the need to be more tactical in her approach. Lastly, there should be awareness campaign programmes to educate the populace on the need to be more vigilante and conscious of the happenings around them.

Keywords: Insecurity, National development, Poverty, Conflict, Corruption.

Introduction

Nigeria is a complex and heterogeneous society with diverse ethnic groups, languages and religions. The struggle for economic, social and political supremacy among those groups has caused tension, often culminating in needless dissipation of energies and other resources superiority tussles, to the detriment of security and national development (Karim, 2014). Conflict and insecurity are at the verge of being the identity of Nigeria as no single day passes without cases of killing, wanton destruction of lives and properties. Consequently, this has slowed down national development in Nigeria over these years. Rapid economic development and social well-being constitute the development imperative of developing countries of the world and indeed, remain the normative goal of the international community. This involves the attainment of sufficient levels of economic growth to allow for a progressive improvement in national standard of living of the populace. However, for Nigeria and most African countries, their economies are in abysmal state. The worsening economic conditions have been generating a mix of domestic, social and political tension in the country. Normally, citizens expect their governments to provide them with the basic necessities of life such as provision of shelter, socio economic security, employments, healthcare, the non-fulfillment of which breeds discontent and social unrest. (Adegoke, 2016).

Nigeria is today plagued with social disorder, insecurity, high level of poverty, illiteracy, balance of payment deficit, poor health facilities, ethnic and religion conflict, corruption, high

level of crime and criminality, political crisis on the high. In this connection, it is easy to establish a nexus between national security and development. Accordingly, it is meaningless to talk about development in the absence of national security, in other words, insecurity is a national threat to development. In Nigeria, struggle for survival and protection of economic livelihood (including farm lands, crop and cattle) appears to precipitate conflict between herdsmen and farmers across many communities in Nigeria. security tracker security incident report, there has been 5.800 deaths between January and June 2021, as a result of herders and farmer's conflicts (Satisense statistics, 2021). This disagreement over the use of essential resources such as farmland, grazing areas and water between herders and local farmers remains the major source of the conflicts in those communities. Environmental change and security challenges are known as factors forcing herdsmen into new communities in search of adequate pasture to feed their cattle, by so doing, encroaching on farmer's resources and causing conflicts. However, conflicts between herdsmen and farmers are not limited to Nigeria alone. In fact, herdsmen-farmer's conflicts are emerging and disrupting communities in Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Mali and across West Africa Region. In West Africa, conflicts between farmers and nomadic cattle herders have been a common feature of economic activities for ages (Eku & Maoko, 2018). Herdsmen attacks do not only cause significant human casualties and displacement of local population but also large-scale destruction of properties and angro-pastoral economies. Cross border incursions, posed a great security challenges to the nation as such it encourages growing population, unemployment, ill-equipped security agencies, increased ethnic militias and the fight against marginalization/resource control which has compounded the magnitude of the problem. Today, ethno-religions and communal conflicts in many parts of the country have been on the increases. It is estimated that there have been 250 cases of such conflicts in Nigeria since the maitatsine crises of 1980 which, together with the Tafawa, (1991) and Zangon (1992) conflict, constitute some of the most serious society conflicts in recent times. Communal violence still rages in Delta State between the Urhobo, the Igbo and the Itsekeri, in Osun State between the Ife and Modakeke, in Benue State, crisis exist between the Tiv and Idoma and in Taraba State between the Fukun, Tiv and the Kutebs. Similar conflict still ranges in other parts of this country (Kuna cited in Jatau, 2024). Recently, incessant armed robberies cum kidnapping have taken a worrisome dimension to the extent that it has made it difficult to sleep with both eyes closed. The menace of armed robbery has increased tremendously as a result of the worsen economic hardship situation in the country and also cases of kidnapping, occasional rise of violence and conflicts in Jos, Maiduguri, and Niger Delta etc. Ugochukwu, cited in Jatau (2014) comments on the worsening security in the nation in these words:

After the return of democratic rule in 1999, the police became the main security arm charged with ensuring law and order. They are assisted by the army, the navy, customs and the mobile police unit, who also patrol the borders and the flow of goods and services into the county. The lengthy and porous nature of the borders contributes to these logistical problems. Poor police capacity has also led to the development of insecurity which communities have often been forced to make local security arrangements. The use of vigilante groups is widespread. All these put together establishes the fact that the Nigerians nation is under siege in terms of insecurity. Arising from the above, this paper therefore, is set out to investigate the challenges of insecurity and its implications on national security and development in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study employed qualitative method. It relies on the secondary data sources. This entails the use and examination of documentary source of relevant literature such as textbooks, journals, official documents, newspapers and magazines, internet materials, etc. to extract basic

facts related to the subject matter. i.e. conflict and insecurity in contemporary Nigeria: implications for national development.

Conceptual/Theoretical Analysis

Insecurity: The concept has different meanings and interpretations to different people depending on the perspective one is viewing it from. The concept of insecurity connotes absence of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. Agbebaku, Muhammed and Uche (2016), insecurity is a state of being subject to danger or threat. Insecurity on the other hand, is the antithesis of security. However, because of the many ways in which insecurity has been described in association with the various ways it affects individuals in society negatively.

Security: Security must be understood in a wider and subtler terms than the crude employment of violence. This resulted in the further broadening of the concept of security to include resources, demographic agriculture, ecological and environmental issues (Myene, 1986). Imobighe (2007) sees security as not necessarily the proliferation of arms and small-arms, high-presence of military men and large numbers of police vehicles on our street or roads, but human security which is the provision of the basic necessities of life by the government to her citizenry that could guarantee her security.

Conflicts:

Otite and Albert (1999) citing the work of Coser Lewis conjoin up what we term an elaborate definition of conflict. He opines as follow: Conflicts may be defined; as struggle over values or claims to status power, and scarce resources in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. Such conflicts may take place between individuals. Between collectivities, or between individuals. Coser, (1957). Deducing from the above definition by Coser, we therefore, see conflict as a social or psychological condition in which individual, groups or collectivities punishing incompatible goals or values, struggle to allocate values to themselves while at the same time strive to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals.

National Development

National development refers to the progressive changes and transformation in the social, economic, political demographic, scientific ecological as well as technological, lives of a nation today; without jeopardizing the development of tomorrow (Gboyega, 2003), National development therefore is described as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation. This is best achieved through development planning; which can be described as the country's collection of strategies mapped out by the government. Egwemi (2010) recast that development represents an infinite struggle between man and his environment in which man seeks to understand his physical, social, biological and political environment, exert control over them and use the knowledge to advance the cause of humanity. The development must be seen as a situation in which there is considerable advancement in the maternal conditions of the people which enable them to achieve more effectively their hopes and aspirations. Development involves an attempt to build a better society characterized by significant improvement in the people's capacity to understand and to tap the resources of their environment for their own good and the good of the community, a society which opens up new opportunities or personal growth and collective advancement.

National Security

This is the requirement to maintain the survival of the state through the use of economic power, diplomacy, power of protection and political power. Ekweremadu (2013) defined national security as the ability of a state to ward off all forms of threat to the survival and sustenance of a state and its people as well as the ability of a state to protect its legitimate interest with all measures including war. According to Ribadu, (2011), national security is the pivot on which the prosperity, governance and the general welfare of the citizens of any country turns. Security is an essential aspect of life. It is an assurance of self-preservation and stable environment. In a secured environment, people perform their activities without harm and fear of molestation. According to Omario (2003), National security is the quality or state of being secure, freedom from danger or freedom from fear or anxiety. National security as a dynamic condition which involves the ability of a state to protect its citizen against threat and danger. Security is related to the presence of peace, safety, happiness and protection of human and physical resources. In line with this idea, national security is the protection of human and physical resources from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life in homes, offices or communities. There is significant relationship between national security and national development, because in any country where there is national insecurity, there cannot be development.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the armed-robbery theory by Robert Merton in 1939. Armed robbery theory was postulated Robert Merton in 1939. He argued that society's dominant cultural values and social structure and how it contributes to crime and criminality in society. This theory posits that the high wave of armed robbery in Nigeria is primarily responsible for high level of insecurity in the country. The choice of this theory is based on the fact that it explains societal ills involving crime and criminality. It also argues that in Nigeria, politics is extremely competitive and elections are perceived as zero-sum contests. This fallout of this is the increasing militarized nature of politics, the use of violence as an electoral tool, and the inculcation of a culture of violence in society, this theory also recognized the existence of armed groups of varying character and intent operating in Nigeria. The theory concluded that as a result of zero-some politics combined with the prevalence of armed groups taken advantage of the opportunities presented by being hired and have now developed their own bases of economic support (armed robbery) thereby freeing themselves from their political patrons. The major proponents of this theory include former president Olusegun Obasanjo and other government apologist.

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

Insecurity has been defined as the condition or quality of being insecure, lack of safety, being in danger or hazard or state of uncertainty or lack of confidence. Insecurity from the psychological perspective, means lack of sense of belonging, including not being sure about who they are or what they believe in. An insecure person is a vulnerable person, easily shaped by the views, opinion, and ideas of others because they are uncertain about their values and they are unwilling to question the ideas of other people or stand up for themselves (Abdulsalam, 2014). The unparalleled spate of insecurity ranging from terrorism, kidnapping, bombing and other violent crimes, is alarming in the Nigeria. According to Otto and Ukpere (2012), insecurity is a result of malignant environment dominated by man's insensibility to man. Those in authority take advantage of the positions to force down policies that impoverished the masses in so much as it benefits the elicits in the system (2012). Ethnicity and corruption are also causes of insecurity. The justice delivery system does not encourage the fight against

insecurity, offenders of grievous cases may get very light sentences where they are not completely let go.

Poverty and proliferation of small arms have also been blamed in Nigeria as a factor responsible for the increasing level of crime and criminality in Nigeria. For example, 70% of the population lives in abject poverty (Adamu, 2022). This predisposes the poor to violence which is fueled by the ease of access to small arms Ujomu, (2001). It is also ascertaining that the prolonged periods of military dictatorship with the attendant economic decay, corruption, abuse of human rights, depreciation of human dignity and general collapse of social infrastructures have ensured that there is a degeneration of the quality of life of the Nigeria people. Nigeria government and the state agencies that existed over the decades were unable to ensure adequate protection, defense, peace, survival, well-being and progress of the citizens, the state and society at large. Another area of insecurity in Nigeria today is the terrorist's activities by the Boko Haram group. Before the bombing activities of the Boko Haram group became a major security issue in the country, it was the youths in the Niger Delta that constituted themselves as security risks to the Nigerian state. But after the implementation of the amnesty policy by the administration of former president Musa Yar' Adua, this problem of insecurity in Nigeria Delta has reduced. In the last few years, the Boko Haram had demonstrated through its several attacks in many parts of the Northern Nigeria, including the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, that its objective is to create panic in the country, promote political instability and make the country ungovernable.

Impact of Insecurity on Development in Nigeria:

According to Oriakhi and Osemwengie (2012), the unending state of insecurity and bombing especially in the Northern part of the Nigeria has continued to pose serious challenges and threat to the peace and stability of Nigeria. The nation has suffered colossal loss in terms of infrastructure, properties and human lives and also economic disruption leading to crowding out effect of foreign investment. No business can thrive in tensed and unsecured environment, some states of the North have become dreaded places for domestic and foreign investors, tourists and the likes. They argued further that domestic terrorism and social unrest do not only breed uncertainty in the investment and financial climate but also increase security cost, reduction in output and productive capacity, reduces tourism, damage infrastructure and displacement of foreign direct investment which has severe implications for national development of emerging economics. Eme and Onyishi (2011), highlights the following as a checklist of the impact of insecurity in Nigeria. Social dislocation and population displacement, social tension and new pattern of settlement, heighten citizenship questions and hostilities between indigenes and settlers, dislocation and disruption of family and communal life, general atmosphere of mistrust, fear, anxiety and frenzy, dehumanization of women, children and men especially in areas where rape, child abuse and neglect are used as instrument of war, deepening of hunger and poverty, atmosphere of political insecurity and instability including declining confidence in the political leadership and apprehension about the system, governance deficit as a result of security, agencies inefficiency and corruption. Insecurity stunts personal development and interferes with the individual's ability to develop his/her full potentials. The mind and energy of the average Nigerian is consumed with issues of safety and security that he/she has little energy left to contribute to Nigeria's development. Albert (2012) gives the impact of insecurity in Nigeria as, public safety is in question and fracturing of ethnic and religious relationship. Nigeria is gradually being driven towards disintegration, Nigeria is gradually becoming a police state given the number of special task forces around the country, capital flights, from Nigeria to neighbouring countries, reduction in new foreign investment. Image of Nigeria is dented as a terrorist nation in the international scene. All these put together

have seriously impacted on National security and development as nothing meaningful can be achieved in such environment. Violent conflicts in Nigeria have birthed new consequences, further reinforcing the nation's security threats. Several communities have been turned into piles of ruin, with their residents forcefully displaced. The affected population faces a significant humanitarian crisis, which increases their vulnerability to armed conflicts as potential perpetrators and victims. According to (Ogbemudia, 2022) the Nigerian state's ability to uphold the social contract is significantly threatened by the proliferation of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs). Successive governments at both federal and state levels have implemented different strategies and programmes targeted at addressing the issue of insecurity in Nigeria. While the federal government deployed kinetic and non-kinetic measures, some state governments created regional and state-level quasi-security units to complement traditional security agencies. The government extended peace deals to armed groups, especially in the North-west, North-central and South-south regions. Yet, there are brazen attacks on hard and soft targets. Non-state armed actors continue to threaten Nigeria's ability to serve as a security guarantor to its citizens. Given the terror trajectory across the country, various self-defense militias have emerged with mixed results. In recent time, particularly in some parts of the North-east and South-south Nigeria experienced a spike in the number and activities of armed robbery and kidnappings actors. This has drastically affected economic activities in the area as farmers and business people finds it difficult to carry out their legitimate activities.

Security and National Development: The Central Nexus

There is no gainsaying the fact that an atmosphere of security is prerequisite for any human endeavor without a reasonable level of guarantee of protection from unprovoked attacks and injuries and the threats they pose to personal life, liberty and property, life itself becomes a daily nightmare. On the other hand, development, the quest for the preferred individual and collective standards of living, is an inherent nature of humanity, security offers the basis for growth and economic prosperity to the individual group and the state; a secured environment engenders long time planning and projections. Safety assurance and predictability of human actions and sequence socially, a secured environment foster, social cohesion and cultural harmony, it breeds the growth of an environment devoid of rancor and acrimony and stems the growth of deviant behaviour among the citizenry. Economically, security of life and property encourages economic growth through peace and stability in the nation's economy. A secured state promotes respects for fundamental human rights and the democratic principles and by extension respect for the international community (Otubu cited in Odia, 2016). Nonetheless, the provision of security as a function of the adequate management of conflict is a direct translation of a country's level and capacity of development.

There is thus, a direct correction between security and development. Conflict facilities change and when managed appropriately, it leads to the provision of security, on the other hand, could facilitate development. Aloysius (2009) Danjuma (2014) and Olarenwaju (1990) similarly noted that a good national security policy engenders socio-political and economic development. Security broadly defined, is a sine-qua-non to national development. It could be stressed with the benefit of hindsight, that security may be an outcome and consequence of national development. A developed state is one that demonstrates and promotes all the indices of security, such as protection of life and property of citizens, security from hunger and starvation. The business environment, small and medium scale enterprises foreign direct investment in critical sectors are all negatively impacted by insecurity in Nigeria (Otto and Ukpere, 2012). Since independence in 1960, Nigeria still rank low in socio-economic indicators such as life expectancy, standard of living and health status and literacy rate. Similarly, it ranks high in immorality rate; poverty rate, crime rate and unemployment rate. Health, housing,

transportation, education and recreation infrastructures are grossly inadequate, and adversely affected by insecurity.

The Nigeria state is replete with the obvious signs of institutional ability to respond to the challenges of governance. The absurdities of political class have weakened the institutional capability to regulate political excesses and interference that constitutes a gigantic threat to governance and security in country. Hutchful (2002) asserted that national security, translate into law and order, is the fulcrum of social development and survival. Insecurity and conflict are therefore, authentic to development. It has been proven that all forms of development whether political, economic, or social will come to naught in any society which cannot guarantee its citizens protection of life, property and livelihoods. In fact, a threat to national security can be translated to a threat to national development. Osondu (2010), the Boko-Haram Insurgency in Nigeria has brought a level of insecurity and carnage in the polity that even the paltry gains of the past decades in developmental efforts especially in the north east Nigeria has been wiped off, with the region sinking of an unimaginable level of underdevelopment. The terrorist's activities of the Boko-Haram have compounded the ethno-religious tension which Nigeria has been contending with since independence and which has reassured a major factor inhibiting National development. It has heightened the mutual suspicion which exists among the ethnic nationalities in the country. The insurgency has once again reignited activities in the Niger Delta where palpable calm had been maintained.

Conclusion

The paper attempted to reveal the problem of insecurity in Nigeria and its implications on national security and development in Nigeria. The presence of insecurity in any environment constitute threat to lives and properties, hinders economic growth and discourages local and foreign investors all of which stifles and retard socio-economic development with serious implications on national security and development in Nigeria has resulted to problems such as unemployment, infrastructural decay, poor health status, poor image of Nigeria at regional and global scene, low participation of investors in Nigeria's economic development, relocation of existing investors to other countries, amongst others. In consideration of the consequences of this challenge on the national security and development of the Nigerian state and to save the country from the blink of total collapse.

Recommendations

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

- i. There is the need for good governance, justice, equity and tolerance among ethnic nationalities as well as religious groups in Nigeria is advocated,
- ii. The federal government should formulate and effectively implement policies and programmes capable of addressing the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria.
- iii. The government should put more efforts in issues relating to poverty reduction in Nigeria

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