

Insecurity and the Challenges of Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Is it possible to attain any meaningful development without durable peace? Can the goals of vision 20:2020 be achieved in an atmosphere of ethnic, economic, social and religious disharmony and sectarian crises? With these questions in mind, the paper shall seek to find out how insecurity has hampered development in Nigeria. The research observed that, insecurity has the potential of social dislocation and population displacement, social tensions and new pattern of settlements which encourages Muslims/Christians or members of an ethnic group moving to Muslim/Christian or ethnic dominated enclaves, dehumanization of women, children, and men especially in areas where rape, child abuse and neglect are used as instruments of war deepening of hunger and poverty in the polity and setting an atmosphere of political insecurity and instability including declining confidence in the political leadership and apprehension about the system. In this paper, religious, ethnic and political tolerance among Nigerians, creation of job opportunities to reduced youth restiveness thereby reducing poverty and tracing and tackling the remote, the redevelopment of Nigeria's educational curriculum include entrepreneurship to reduced over dependence of Nigerian graduates on government jobs to make them self employed after graduation, and immediate causes of the crises are suggested as ways through which the security challenges in Nigeria can be overcome.

Keywords: Insecurity, development, Consequences, Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

There is no gain saying that socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural development can only thrive in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility. This is because without an enabling environment in which production, industrial activities and trade can take place and prosper; development would forever remain elusive. As funds meant for developmental purposes are channel into handling of security problems. And private individuals will not like to invest their resources where it will not be secured. The level of insecurity in Nigeria is so alarming that it has affected virtually all nooks and crannies of the country and has permeated all aspects of our national life. Shettima, (2012) observes that the level of insecurity in the Nigeria can be seen in the following ways:

- The wanton and indiscriminate destruction of lives and properties which run into thousands.
- The dislocation of the local economy with serious implications for the living conditions of the inhabitants.
- Closure of schools due to fire-bombing of educational facilities which has put a lot of stress on existing facilities and created a climate of fear among pupils and parents.
- The psychological trauma of victims and survivors of the crisis, especially children, women and young adults.

These go to show that Nigeria is steadily sliding into a state of lawlessness. Institutions of government that should be responding promptly to the needs of the citizenry are showing non-challant attitude towards their responsibilities. As most Nigerians live in the fear of the unknown as suicide bombing has become the order of the day. The situation is so bad that Nigerians don't trust the person seated next to them. Like the Kano Bus Park bombing among various bombings that have taken place in the past.

Thus, the paper is structured into the introduction, insecurity in Nigeria, effect of insecurity on development in Nigeria and finally the recommendations.

2. INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Crises which were only heard in the news in Nigeria are now common events in the country. These days hardly a day, week or month passes without news about one crisis or another being carried as a headline story in any of the daily newspapers with soul-sapping violent clashes resulting in enormous losses of lives and property. This has so eaten into the fabrics of our nationhood that it is felt within the country and internationally. Insecurity in the country is seen in armed robbery, ethnic/and communal clashes, religious riots, kidnapping and upheavals leaving many dead and others maimed and homeless at the order of the day. Muhammed (n.d) citing Babangida (2002) notes that:

"The most fundamental underlying forces which propel ethnic nationalism in Nigeria are those of pervasive poverty, mass unemployment, underdevelopment of productive forces and non-absorbance of the economy. The absence of developed productive forces constraints the transformation of the structures of the economy and society. Mass poverty and unemployment

create alienation and insecurity, which in turn encourage Nigerians to experience and prefer accommodation within the social insurance system of ethnic nationalities. In this regard, people are easily excited about injustice of other groups against their own groups. Poverty also creates frustration and divisiveness.”

The inception of insecurity/conflict/crisis in Nigeria dates back to the pre-colonial era. As most of the crisis that the country is experiencing have their origin from that period. Issues that arise during that period were not handle as expected and grievances were accumulated all through the years. Ewetan & Urhie (2014) adds that the importation of large quantities of arms into the country for the use of the military during and after the Nigerian civil war, some of which got into the hand of the civilians also leads to the insecurity in the country.

The causes of crises in Nigeria are attributed to endemic poverty and mass unemployment particularly among the youths. Poverty is generally widespread in Nigeria. A situation where millions of youths are jobless will open them to strange religious doctrines like the *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda 'awati Wal-Jihad* (also known as *Boko Haram*), *Sarasuka*, and their likes. The youths have to be in school, and the young adults among them have to be in factories working (Babalobi, 2011). The multiplier effects of these are felt everywhere in the economy. To Ideyi (n.d) the causes of insecurity in Nigeria include selfishness, greed, injustice, do-or-die politics (money politics), love of money, wealth, accumulation of wealth, revolt, repression, immorality and ignorance.

These Crises are either religious, political, ethnic clashes or ethno-religious. In the southern part of the country what is experience in most cases are ethnic clashes between one tribe and another e.g the clashes between Apprarum and Osatura communities of Cross River State, communal clashes in Ado-Ekiti among others. In some cases they are reprisal attacks in response to conflicts in the North. But in the northern part of the country what is obtainable is political, ethnic, religious and/or ethno-religious. As most of the crisis in the region either starts with political coloration and later escalates into a religious one or as an ethnic one and later escalates into a religious one and so on. However some are reprisal attacks.

The examples of crisis in the regions include: Sharia riots in Kaduna in 2000, the Jos crisis of September 2001 and many others. It is suffice to note that in most cases in Nigeria, the law enforcement agencies are perpetrators of the insurgents. They do this by aiding the insurgents, either by participating directly in it or by given room for its perpetuation.

The foregoing problems and criminal activities therefore, individually and collectively create insecurity and breach of the peace that are likely to or indeed affect legitimate social and economic activities in the country thereby hindering sustainable development in the country. These problems also have the very damaging consequence of giving the signal to the rest of the world that Nigeria is not a safe and secure (scaring investors away) place and as such not suitable for economic investment and activities. This is particularly important in view of the efforts being made to create the desired atmosphere to attract foreign investment into Nigeria. Insecurity is a risk factor which investors all over the world dread, as security uncertainty is not only considered a bad omen for business, it sends warning signals to investors to take their investible fund to another country where there is adequate or a semblance of security (Adesina, 2013).

Shettima (2012) laments that

low level insurgency playing out in the streets of our towns and villages across the nation is a direct consequence of a combination of factors, chief among which are youth unemployment and under-employment, acute poverty, political thuggery, endemic corruption, proliferation of arms and ammunitions augmented by the peculiar geo-political setting of some states neighboring countries of Chad, Cameroun and Niger, a sub-region generally known for political upheaval and insecurity, and above all religious extremism and terrorism.

3. CONSEQUENCES OF INSECURITY ON DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

According to Ideyi (n.d), human beings knows that, a peaceful world is far better than the violent world because development, which is positive change and which enhances, promotes and advances his well being is a direct function of peace. While backwardness, which distorts, disfigures, diminishes and impoverishes his well being, is a direct product of insecurity. Eme & Anthony (2011) summarizes the impact of insecurity in Nigeria in the following words:

- i. Social dislocation and population displacement
- ii. Social tensions and new pattern of settlements which encourages Muslims/Christians or members of an ethnic group moving to Muslim/Christian dominated enclaves.
- iii. Heightens citizenship question and encourages hostility between “indigenes” and “settlers”.
- iv. Dislocation and disruption of family and communal life.
- v. General atmosphere of mistrust, fear, anxiety and frenzy
- vi. Dehumanization of women, children, and men especially in areas where rape, child abuse and neglect are used as instruments of war.

- vii. Deepening of hunger and poverty in the polity
- viii. Atmosphere of political insecurity and instability including declining confidence in the political leadership and apprehension about the system.
- ix. Governance deficit as a result of security agencies inefficiency and corruption.
- x. Loss of man hours due to shortened working hours by banks and commercial institutions and the unprecedented loss of man hours or closure of businesses by those who work at night due to the curfew consequent on the declaration of state of emergency on some states. This has affected the informal but widespread sector of the local economy such as *suya*, *shayi*, *kosai* vendors who make out their living on day to day basis. (Shettima, 2012)

4. CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

Thus, it is needless to note that for any meaningful social, cultural, economic and political development to take place in any country. There is need for peaceful co-existence, ethnic, political and religious tolerance on the side of the leadership and the citizenship at all levels of government-federal, state and local and the citizenship. This is because if these challenges of insecurity are not tackled. It will frustrate all developmental efforts of government and spirited individuals.

The panacea for solving insecurity challenge in Nigeria in other to accelerate the pace of development, to be able to achieve vision 2020:20 there should be religious, ethnic and political tolerance among Nigerians, the government should create job opportunities to reduced youth restiveness thereby reducing poverty, the redevelopment of Nigeria's educational curriculum include entrepreneurship to reduced over dependence of Nigerian graduates on government jobs to make them self employed after graduation, tracing and tackling the remote and immediate causes of the crises are suggested as ways through which the security challenges in Nigeria can be overcome.

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